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REPORT OF THE 147<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-  
PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU) AND RELATED  
MEETINGS  
HELD IN LUANDA, ANGOLA  
23<sup>RD</sup> TO 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2023

Clerks Chambers,  
Parliament Buildings,  
**NAIROBI.**

February, 2024

*Hon. Speaker*  
*You may approve*  
*for the ship.*  
*[Signature]*  
*22/2/24*

*[Signature]*  
*22/2/24*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b> .....	4
<b>PREFACE</b> .....	5
<b>A. BACKGROUND: ABOUT THE IPU</b> .....	9
<b>B. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	11
<b>C. AGENDA OF THE 147<sup>TH</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY</b> .....	11
<b>D. PARTICIPATION IN THE 148<sup>TH</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS</b> .....	12
<b>E. GENERAL DEBATE: PARLIAMENTARY ACTION FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS (SDG 16)</b> .....	13
<b>F. CHOICE OF AND DEBATE ON THE EMERGENCY ITEM</b> .....	17
i. Special accountability segment.....	18
<b>G. GOVERNING COUNCIL</b> .....	23
i. Election of the President of the 147 <sup>th</sup> Assembly ... <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>	
ii. Election of the President of the 147 <sup>th</sup> Assembly .....	23
ii. Report of the IPU President .....	25
iii. Report of the Secretary General .....	25
iv. Financial results for 2022 .....	26
v. Financial situation of the IPU .....	27
vi. IPU Cremer-Passy Prize .....	27
<b>H. 291<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</b> .....	28
i. Activities report by the President .....	28
ii. Interim report of the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU since the 211 <sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council .....	29
iii. Members and permanent observers .....	30

<b>L. OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL..</b>	<b>44</b>
i. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians .....	44
ii. Committee on Middle East Questions .....	44
iii. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law	
45	
iv. Gender Partnership Group .....	48
v. Advisory Group on Health .....	50
vi. High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent	
Extremism (HLAG) .....	51
vii. Working Group on Science and Technology .....	53
<b>M. OTHER ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS .....</b>	<b>54</b>
i. Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Geopolitical Groups and the	
Presidents of the Standing Committees.....	54
ii. IPU-ASGP Joint Workshop on the digital transformation of	
Parliaments .....	57
iii. IPU-UNICEF joint event on the role of parliaments in securing	
effective public spending for children’s rights.....	60
iv. IPU-WHO Joint Workshop on Unpacking the development of the	
Pandemic Accord .....	61
v. Panel discussion on Parliamentary action on biodiversity:	
<i>Translating global commitments into national action</i> .....	62
vi. The Call of the Sahel: A global response - Meeting series on	
counter-terrorism Mitigating the impact of security threats by	
building resilience in the Sahel.....	64
<b>N. DECLARATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE 147<sup>TH</sup> IPU</b>	
<b>ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS.....</b>	<b>66</b>

iv. Reporting by Members on IPU-related activities .....	31
v. Financial questions.....	31
vi. Regional offices .....	33
vii. Anti-harassment policy .....	33
viii. .... Amendments to the Statutes and Rules	
34	
ix. Election of a new IPU President .....	34
x. Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine.....	34
xi. Questions relating to the Secretariat.....	34
xii. Future inter-parliamentary meetings.....	34
xiii. .... Working Group on Transparency, Accountability and Openness	
35	
xix. Cooperation between the IPU and the Association of Secretaries	
General of Parliaments (ASGP).....	35
xx. Election of IPU Vice-Presidents and of the Vice-President of the	
Executive Committee.....	35
xxi. Other business .....	35
<b>I. MEETINGS OF STANDING COMMITTEES .....</b>	<b>36</b>
i. Standing Committee on Peace and International Security .....	36
ii. Standing Committee on Sustainable Development .....	37
iii. Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights .....	37
iv. Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs .....	39
<b>J. FORUM AND BUREAU OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>K. FORUM AND BOARD OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE</b>	
<b>    IPU.....</b>	<b>41</b>

i. Luanda Declaration: <i>Parliamentary Action for Peace Justice and strong institutions</i> .....	66
ii. Orphanage trafficking: <i>The role of parliaments in reducing harm</i> .	72
iii. Report of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development Noted by the 147 <sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Luanda, 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2023 .	87
iv. Expert hearing on the theme Ensuring global food security.....	91
<b>O. RECOMENDATIONS BY THE KENYA DELEGATION</b> .....	<b>93</b>

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix 1</b>	Proposed Amendments to the Draft Resolution by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights on Orphanage Trafficking: The Role of Parliaments in Reducing Harm
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**REPORT OF THE 147<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU) AND RELATED MEETINGS HELD IN LUANDA, ANGOLA 23<sup>RD</sup> TO 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2023**

**PREFACE**

**Honorable Speaker,**

1. At the invitation of the National Assembly of Angola, the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the IPU and its related meetings was held in Luanda, Angola, from Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> to Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023.
2. All IPU statutory bodies, including the Governing Council, Standing Committees, Committees on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and on Middle East Questions, as well as the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the Forum of Young MPs convened during this Assembly. The Governing Council was invited to elect a new IPU President at its session in Luanda.

**Honorable Speaker,**

3. The General Debate focused on the overall theme of “Parliamentary action for peace, Justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)” and provide a platform for delegates to deliberate, exchange views and galvanize parliamentary action in this area. The Assembly will adopt resolutions on the emergency item and on the subject item taken up by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights entitled Orphanage trafficking: The role of Parliaments in reducing harm. The Assembly is expected to conclude with the adoption of an outcome document on the overall theme of the General Debate.

**Honorable Speaker,**

4. The 31<sup>st</sup> President of the IPU Member Parliaments, Ms. Tulia Ackson, was elected from among the four women contenders to serve a three-year term. As the organization's political leader, the IPU President will preside over its statutory meetings and represent it at significant international gatherings.

**Honorable Speaker,**

5. The 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly garnered attention for its discussions on global issues and fostering Parliamentary cooperation. Notably, the Kenyan Mission in Lunda, Angola played a pivotal role in supporting and enhancing the participation of the Kenya Parliamentary delegation. The Kenyan delegation engaged in constructive dialogues, exchanged insights, and formulated strategies to promote peace, democracy, and sustainable development worldwide.
6. The Kenyan delegation to the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and related meetings comprised the following-
  - i. The Rt. Hon. Amason Jeffah Kingi, EGH, MP- Speaker of the Senate –Chairperson
  - ii. Sen. Catherine Mumma, MP, (Member of the Bureau of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians)
  - iii. Hon. Millie Odhiambo, MP (Member of the IPU Committee on Human Rights of Parliamentarians)
  - iv. Hon. John Kiarie, MP (President of the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law)
  - v. Hon. Naisula Lesuuda, MP (Member of the IPU Committee on Sustainable Development)
  - vi. Hon. Rebecca Tonkei, MP (Member of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs)
  - vii. Sen. Beth Syengo, MP
  - viii. Sen. Raphael Chimera, MP
  - ix. Sen. Paul Karungo Kamunyu Thangwa, MP
  - x. Hon. Ferdinand Kevin Wanyonyi, MP
  - xi. Hon. Kagiri Jane Wangechi, MP Member of the Delegation
  - xii. Hon. Joshua Chepyegon Kandie,
  - xiii. Mr. Stephen Njenga Ruge, OGW Director, Legislative and Services (Senate)
  - xiv. Mr. Innocent Mbaya Mghanga, Senior Clerk Assistant - Secretary to the Delegation (Senate)
  - xv. Mr. Noah Kiplangat Too, Principal Clerk – Secretary to the Delegation (National Assembly)
  - xvi. Ms. Abigael Nabalayo, Clerk Assistant III – Secretary to the Delegation (Senate)

xvii. Ms. Vivian Wambui Njoroge Clerk Assistant III – Secretary to the Delegation (National Assembly)

**Honorable Speaker,**

7. Kenya proposed six (6) amendments to the draft resolution put forth by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights concerning orphanage trafficking and the role of Parliaments in reducing its harm. Out of the six (6) proposed amendments, one (1) was rejected (No. 5 - Clause 10d) while the rest were carried.
8. The amendments reflected Kenya's commitment to addressing the complex issue of orphanage trafficking while ensuring that the resolution is comprehensive, effective, and respectful of national sovereignty and cultural contexts. The proposed amendments reflected a holistic and rights-based approach to addressing this pressing issue. By focusing on prevention, protection, and accountability, these amendments sought to strengthen international efforts to combat orphanage trafficking and ensure that all children are afforded the opportunity to grow up in safe, nurturing environments. **See Annex 1.**

**Honorable Speaker,**

9. On behalf of the delegation, I take this opportunity to thank the Offices of the Speaker and the Clerk for the support in ensuring that Kenya was well represented during the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

**Honorable Speaker,**

10. Article 7 of the IPU Statutes requires IPU Members to present IPU resolutions in the most appropriate format to their respective parliaments, communicate IPU resolutions to the government, encourage IPU resolutions to be implemented, and provide the IPU Secretariat with frequent and comprehensive updates on the actions taken and outcomes achieved, especially through its annual reports.
11. It is my pleasure and humble duty to submit this report, which highlights the proceedings, declaration, and resolutions of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Related Meetings, to Parliament for noting and required action in compliance with Article 7 of the IPU Statutes.



.....  
**SEN. CATHERINE MUMMA, MP**  
**LEADER OF THE DELEGATION**

**DATE.** 22/02/2024  
.....

## **A. BACKGROUND: ABOUT THE IPU**

1. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was established in 1889 as the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue. It exists to protect and build global democracy through political dialogue and concrete action. The IPU currently has a membership of 180 national parliaments and 12 associate members. The IPU facilitates parliamentary diplomacy and empowers parliaments and parliamentarians to promote peace, democracy and sustainable development around the world. The IPU works closely with the United Nations and other partner organizations with similar ideals. To this end, the IPU aims at –
  - i) Fostering contacts, coordination and the exchange of experience among Parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;
  - ii) Considering questions of international interest and express its views on such issues with the aim of bringing about action by Parliaments and their members;
  - iii) Contributing to the defense and promotion of human rights, which are universal in scope and respect for which is an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development; and
  - iv) Contributing to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.
2. The IPU's main areas of activity are representative democracy, international peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian law, women in politics and education science and culture.
3. The IPU Assembly is the principle 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.

4. The organs of the IPU are the Assembly, the Governing Council, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat. IPU also works through committees, working groups and other *ad hoc* bodies. The following committees and bodies are currently in place:
- i) Standing Committee on Peace and International Security;
  - ii) Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade;
  - iii) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights;
  - iv) Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs;
  - v) Committee on Human Rights of Parliamentarians;
  - vi) Committee on Middle East Questions;
  - vii) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus;
  - viii) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law;
  - ix) Advisory Group on Health;
  - x) Gender Partnership Group;
  - xi) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism;
  - xii) Forum of Women Parliamentarians; and
  - xiii) Forum of Young Parliamentarians.
5. The current President of the IPU is Ms. Tulia Ackson from Tanzania.

## **B. INTRODUCTION**

6. At the invitation of the National Assembly of Angola, the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the IPU and its related meetings was held at the National Assembly of Angola in Luanda, Angola from Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 to Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023.



*Honorable Members at the Parliament of Angola*

7. All IPU statutory bodies, including the Governing Council, Standing Committees, Committees on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and on Middle East Questions, as well as the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the Forum of Young MPs, convened during this Assembly. The General Debate focused on the overall theme of **“Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)”** and provided a platform for delegates to deliberate, exchange views and galvanize Parliamentary action in this area.

## **C. AGENDA OF THE 147<sup>TH</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY**

8. The following outlines the Agenda of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly -
  - i. Election of the President of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly.
  - ii. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda.
  - iii. General Debate on the theme Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16).

- iv. Special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions.
- v. Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights).
- vi. Reports of the Standing Committees.
- vii. Approval of the subject item for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 149<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs.

#### **D. PARTICIPATION IN THE 148<sup>TH</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS**

9. Delegations from the following 128 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

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

## **E. GENERAL DEBATE: PARLIAMENTARY ACTION FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS (SDG 16)**

10. During the three days of deliberations, some 146 legislators from 111 Member Parliaments, including 34 Presiding Officers and 21 young parliamentarians, as well as representatives of five Associate Members and nine permanent observers, contributed to the General Debate. The proceedings of the Debate were webcast, and many of the good practices and recommendations that emerged were reflected in the outcome document.
11. Ms. C. Cerqueira, President of the National Assembly of Angola, opened the General Debate on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and noted the relevance of its theme in the context of growing conflict around the world. The three main aspects of SDG 16 – peace, justice and strong institutions – held the key to responding to the many challenges the world was facing. She hoped that delegates would take the opportunity of the Assembly to condemn all acts of warfare, attempts to destroy strong institutions and incitements to intolerance and hatred. She believed that dialogue and understanding could lead to consensual solutions in the interests of peace and development. She had been heartened to hear the Secretary General report at the inaugural ceremony the previous evening on encouraging signs of improvements in the representation of women and young people in Parliament, in particular in Africa. Unfortunately, the continent was also facing widespread armed conflict, which could only ever lead to social inequality. Angola was making considerable efforts to support peacebuilding in neighboring countries. A final aspect of fulfilling the targets of SDG 16 would be for parliaments to reflect on how to become more transparent and accountable at all levels. Angola had made great strides in this regard in recent years, to become a thriving multi-party democracy.
12. Mr. D. Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, said that the theme of the General Debate corresponded directly to the core mandate of the IPU as a democracy-building organization. Without more effective institutions, it would be impossible to combat poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation and many other

problems. SDG 16 offered a valuable roadmap for fixing the many ways in which politics had become dysfunctional, turning people off from participating and making it harder to achieve consensus. No country could be considered perfect in terms of the operating methods of its institutions. The level of development of a country was no signifier of the strength of its institutions; many developing countries had diverse and accountable parliaments while many developed countries were falling behind, in areas such as transparency or violence against women, for example. He discouraged speakers from using the General Debate as an opportunity to denounce other Members for their failures, instead encouraging delegates to learn from one another the many ways in which parliaments could strengthen governance in the interests of sustainable development for all.

13. Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, encouraged participants in the General Debate to consider the theme through a gender lens, putting the needs of women and girls, representing over half the world's population, at the Centre. In its landmark resolution 1325 in 2000, the United Nations Security Council had recognized the importance of including gender perspectives in efforts to build peace and security. Increasing the number of women in Parliament was part of that goal, given the potential for strong parliamentary contributions to peace processes. Access to justice was another vital issue for women, and parliaments had a unique opportunity to reform legal frameworks to make justice systems gender-responsive. Parliaments themselves also needed to become more gender-sensitive, as per the commitment made by IPU Member Parliaments in the Kigali Declaration at the 145<sup>th</sup> Assembly.
14. In a video message, Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, said that there was a certain resonance between the theme of the Assembly and the location in which it was being held, a country that had travelled a difficult road since its independence in 1975 to become a peaceful and just society with strong institutions. Around the world, many glaring examples of exclusion were still being experienced, of which the participation of young people was just one. The IPU was the custodian of indicators

under SDG 16 on youth and women's participation, and its latest report on youth participation showed that progress was still falling short. The young MPs of the IPU were the designated change makers in improving that situation. Over 300 of them had gathered for the recent Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Hanoi, Vietnam. The IPU's *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* Campaign continued to gain support for its pledges on youth quotas, lowering the age of eligibility, and other means of supporting youth involvement and empowerment. As part of the ongoing process to revise the IPU Statutes and Rules, the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians had put forward a proposal to lower the threshold below which an MP would be considered as young from 45 to 40 years of age.

15. Mr. J.S. Caholo, Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), said that, although he believed that the Great Lakes region of Africa had boundless potential, it was also facing immense challenges, in the form of conflict, violence, poverty, arms trafficking and a lack of access to justice. The primary mission of the ICGLR was to promote peace, security, stability and development in the region, and thus SDG 16 provided a highly relevant framework in which to address those challenges and advance reconciliation and prosperity. Parliamentarians had a duty to achieve the targets set out in SDG 16, by shaping legal frameworks, overseeing government action and voicing the aspirations of the people. Parliaments had a particular role in promoting peacebuilding and resolving conflicts and were an ideal forum in which to ensure inclusivity by considering the perspectives of women, youth, and minorities and marginalized groups. Parliaments also had a responsibility to uphold justice and the rule of law, and finally to function efficiently and transparently. Parliamentary action constituted a formidable force for advancing peace, justice and strong institutions, the foundations on which a more prosperous and sustainable future could be built.
16. Ms. P.F. Maharavo, together for a New Africa Organization, said that, growing up in Madagascar, she had been driven by a desire to make her village and her country a better place to live. Following studies in Italy, she had returned to become a university lecturer. In parallel, she

had participated in the *Come back to Africa* and later Together for a New Africa movements, which aimed to use mentoring and networking to promote peace and justice education among young people throughout the continent. Young people currently made up the majority of Africa's population and should therefore be a force for prosperity. However, conflict, unemployment, corruption and injustice prevented them for participating as active citizens. The growth of a more individualistic outlook on life around the world was having a particular impact in Africa as it ran contrary to the continent's tradition of ubuntu, or "humanity towards others". Moreover, climate change, authoritarianism, violence, a loss of confidence in institutions and mass migration were all driving people to leave their countries in search of a better life or to stay and participate in one of Africa's growing number of coups d'état. Parliaments and other governing institutions needed to engage in co-responsibility, or even co-leadership, with young people and civil society more generally.

17. Sen. Catherine Mumma, MP, made a statement on behalf of the Speaker of the Senate. In the statement, she emphasized that in order to ensure effective parliamentary action to enhance Kenya's progress towards achieving peace, justice and having in place strong institutions, the following measures can be adopted;
- Parliaments should be well resourced for effective functioning since there is a need for enhanced investment in training and capacity strengthening programs for Members and staff to enhance their understanding of issues related to peace, justice and strong institutions.
  - Parliamentarians should engage with civil society organizations and the public for better-informed decisions and increased accountability.
  - Through international cooperation, there is need for collaboration with international organizations and neighboring countries to provide valuable resources and expertise for conflict resolution and institution-building efforts.
  - Parliaments should establish effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to help track progress and identify areas that need improvement.

- Combating corruption and promoting transparency and accountability: There is need to strengthen parliamentary efforts to combat corruption and promote transparency and accountability within government wish to reiterate that the Assembly's theme

She reiterated the theme "*Parliamentary action for peace, justice, and strong institutions*" which underscores the integral role of parliamentary bodies in shaping societies that are characterized by stability, fairness, and effective Governance.



*Sen. Catherine Mumma, MP, issuing her Statement at the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly*

## **F. CHOICE OF AND DEBATE ON THE EMERGENCY ITEM**

18. On 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the IPU President informed the Assembly that the following four requests for the inclusion of an emergency item had been received as follows –

- i. *Countering Islamophobia and the rise in extremist Islamophobic events through understanding and education, the promotion of tolerance and interfaith harmony, and fostering an environment that encourages respect and empathy among different faith communities (Pakistan)*

- ii. *Stopping the war and violations of human rights in Gaza (Algeria and Kuwait on behalf of the Arab Group, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), and South Africa on behalf of the African Group)*
  - iii. *A multifaceted approach to the question of Palestine: Parliamentary diplomacy and Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Malaysia)*
  - iv. *Towards common ground for peace (Canada, on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden and United Kingdom)*
19. In the subsequent presentations, Pakistan and Malaysia withdrew their proposals and expressed their support for the joint proposal entitled '*Stopping the war and violations of human rights in Gaza*'. Algeria expressed opposition to the joint proposal entitled; '*Towards common ground for peace*', describing it as biased and lamenting its failure to condemn the aggressions committed towards the Palestinian people.
20. The Assembly then proceeded with a roll-call vote on the two remaining proposals. The President announced the result of the votes: neither of the two proposals on the table had obtained the requisite two-thirds majority. The President informed the Assembly that such an outcome meant that neither could be included on the agenda of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The IPU Secretary General confirmed that the President's statement was in accordance with the Rules of the Assembly. (Rule 11.2(a)).

#### **i. Special accountability segment**

21. As in the last three Assemblies, the General Debate included a special accountability segment chaired by the IPU President, Mr. D. Pacheco. Delegations were invited to contribute with interventions on their actions to advance the IPU's declarations, resolutions and outcome documents, in line with the IPU's strategic focus on stronger accountability.
22. Ms. A. Filip, the IPU Director of the Division for Member Parliaments and External Relations, presented the annual Members' reporting exercise. Every year, on a rotational basis, a number of parliaments

from all geopolitical groups were designated to report on Parliamentary follow-up to IPU resolutions and decisions and, to that end, they were requested to complete a reporting survey. The rate of respondents to the 2023 survey had increased from the previous years to reach 71%. The survey's main finding was that 85% of reporting Members had shared Assembly outcomes within parliament and nearly half of the respondents had taken additional proactive measures towards implementing the 2022 IPU resolutions, particularly in the areas of climate change and gender equality. Good practices from IPU Members such as Fiji, Germany, Ghana, Latvia and Morocco were shared with the plenary. The IPU Members were encouraged to share Assembly declarations and resolutions within their parliaments, promote Parliamentary debates on Assembly outcomes, draft legislation aligned with IPU resolutions and recommendations, and engage in the IPU's annual reporting exercise.

23. A total of 13 delegations, including the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), an IPU Observer, took the floor to share their good practices in following up with recent IPU decisions, including the Nusa Dua Declaration Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change (144<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly), the Kigali Declaration Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world (145<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly), the Manama Declaration Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance (146<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly), decisions regarding the human rights of parliamentarians, and other recent IPU resolutions on the topics of human-trafficking, cybercrime and humanitarian crises.
24. Examples of Parliamentary action in follow-up to IPU resolutions included:
  - i. Bahrain: Following the Kigali Declaration, Bahrain established a committee to ensure equal opportunities for men and women.
  - ii. Canada: Parliament established a committee on the status of women and mainstreaming gender sensitivity into the budgeting process.

- iii. Fiji: Parliament took legislative action to address cyberbullying, harassment and cybercrimes.
- iv. Germany: The German Bundestag launched *the "Parliamentarians protect Parliamentarians"* initiative, which aims to defend parliamentarians and human rights defenders whose rights are violated.
- v. Guinea: The Transitional National Council has been holding consultations and workshops with women's rights Organizations and various international non-governmental organizations to mainstream gender issues into future legislation.
- vi. Guyana: The IPU Assembly resolutions are systematically communicated by the Speaker to all MPs, who are asked to mainstream the outcomes of IPU meetings into their work. As a result, for example, women must constitute one third of all parliamentary candidates in Guyana and the women's Parliamentary caucus has been reactivated.
- vii. India: A bill reserving 33% of seats in the lower house and state assemblies for women was recently passed.
- viii. Indonesia: Following the Kigali Declaration, the House of Representatives passed a bill on women's and children's welfare that aims at enhancing their rights, particularly in the workplace. Measures include an extension of maternity leave.
- ix. Morocco: A law on negative carbon footprint in forests was recently passed.
- x. Thailand: The Speaker referred the Universal Periodic Review recommendations issued by the UN Human Rights Council to the Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Human Rights Committees, which launched an inquiry into the measures that could be undertaken to meet those recommendations.

Other delegations that took the floor during this segment were from Argentina and Portugal.

## **ii. Conclusion of the sittings of the Assembly**

25. At the conclusion of the sitting of the Assembly on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Ms. C. Cerqueira, President of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly and Speaker of the National Assembly of Angola introduced the Luanda Declaration on Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16) (see page 42). The Assembly unanimously endorsed the Luanda Declaration.
26. Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), co-Rapporteur of the resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, presented the resolution Orphanage trafficking: The role of Parliaments in reducing harm (see page 45). The Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus with reservations expressed by India on one paragraph and the Islamic Republic of Iran on one paragraph.
27. The Assembly took note of; the reports of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, presented by Bureau member Ms. D. Bergamini (Italy); of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, presented by Bureau member Ms. M.S. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates); of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, presented by its President, Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname), and of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs presented by its Acting President, Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium).
28. The Assembly approved the subject item for the resolution to be drafted by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights for adoption at the 149<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, together with the rapporteurs that would be working on the draft resolution.
29. At the conclusion of the Assembly, the representatives of the geopolitical groups took the floor: Mr. M. Bouden (Algeria) on behalf of the African Group, Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, Mr. M. Nader (Iraq) on behalf of the Arab Group, Ms. D. O'Neill (Australia) on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, and Mr. M. Nadir (Guyana) on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean. They conveyed their thanks to the leadership, members and staff of the National Assembly of Angola for the warm welcome

that delegates had received, hailed the historic IPU presidential election with its four African women candidates, unanimously congratulated Ms. T. Ackson of the United Republic of Tanzania on her victory in that election, expressed appreciation for and bid farewell to Mr. D. Pacheco as his presidency came to an end, welcomed the IPU's newest Member, the Parliament of the Bahamas, and expressed hope that, at future Assemblies, Members could find ways to reach a consensual position on issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

30. Exercising its right of reply, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran rejected the comments made by the Chair of the Twelve Plus Group regarding a specific case that had passed through the Iranian judicial system (Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi); comments which it believed constituted meddling in the internal affairs of another country.
31. In his concluding remarks, Mr. D. Pacheco, IPU President expressed his sincere thanks to the National Assembly of Angola and the IPU Secretariat for their work in preparing for the Assembly, which had been a resounding success and had realized his ambition for the IPU to hold an Assembly in a Portuguese-speaking country before the end of his mandate. He also thanked delegates for the time they had committed to preparing for and attending the Assembly. In the General Debate, speakers had presented many inspirational examples of good parliamentary practice with a view to achieving the objectives of SDG 16, many of which were reflected in the Luanda Declaration. He urged Member Parliaments to make the most of the IPU in difficult times, in particular in efforts to put an end to hostilities in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to address the many recent coups d'état in the Sahel region. As his presidency drew to a close, he thanked the Members of the IPU for their trust in him and congratulated Ms. T. Ackson on her successful election.
32. In her concluding remarks, Ms. C. Cerqueira, President of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly and Speaker of the National Assembly of Angola, said that she felt a sense of great accomplishment at the closing of the Assembly, which had brought together the global parliamentary

community in a spirit of friendship, cooperation and unity. She congratulated Mr. D. Pacheco on his resolve to bring an Assembly to a Portuguese-speaking country and for his highly successful tenure at the head of the IPU. She congratulated Ms. T. Ackson on her election as the first African woman President of the IPU and also congratulated the Parliament of the Bahamas on becoming the IPU's 180<sup>th</sup> Member Parliament.

33. During the Assembly, Member Parliaments had demonstrated the importance of diversity by including many women and young parliamentarians in their delegations, which had facilitated discussions on a wide variety of issues. She thanked President João Lourenço for his support of the Assembly and encouraged delegates to experience Angola's rich culture before returning home. She further thanked delegates for their participation, wished them safe travels and looked forward to seeing them again at the 148<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Geneva. Ms. C. Cerquiera declared the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly closed and the IPU anthem was played.

## **G. GOVERNING COUNCIL**

The following agenda items were considered during the meetings of the 212<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council: -

### **i. Election of the President of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

34. Ms. Tulia Ackson of the United Republic of Tanzania was elected the 31<sup>st</sup> President of the IPU by the Governing Council which is the main decision-making body made up of Parliamentarians from around the world. Ms. Tulia takes over from Mr. Duarte Pacheco, a Parliamentarian from Portugal, who concluded his three-year mandate at the end of the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Luanda, Angola.
35. Ms. Ackson became a Parliamentarian in 2015 and is currently the Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, a position to which she was appointed in 2022 after a period as Deputy Speaker. She also served as Deputy Attorney General in 2015.

36. Ms. Ackson has a Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Law from the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and a Doctorate from the University of Cape Town, South Africa. She is an advocate of the High Court of Tanzania and a member of the Tanganyika Law Society. Ms. Ackson also taught at the Faculty of Law at the University of Dar es Salaam.
37. Following her election, Ms. Ackson said: *"Thank you for the confidence you have bestowed on me by electing me. I accept this position with humility while recognizing all the responsibilities that it brings. I reaffirm my commitment to work hand in hand with you all to make the IPU the most effective, accountable and transparent organization."*
38. The Parliamentarians voted in a secret ballot. With four candidates on the ballot, the new IPU President was elected with 57% of the vote after a single round of voting.
39. Hundreds of Parliamentarians from the 130 IPU Member Parliaments voted in the election. To encourage gender equality, each IPU Member Parliament was entitled to three votes on condition that they had a gender-balanced delegation. Single-sex delegations were entitled to just one vote.
40. In a historic first, the three other candidates on the ballot – Ms. Adji Diarra Mergane Kanouté of Senegal, Ms. Catherine Gotan Hara of Malawi and Ms. Marwa Abdibashir Hagi of Somalia – were all women MPs from Africa.
41. Ms. Ackson is only the third woman President of the IPU after Najma Heptulla from India (1999–2002) and Gabriela Cuevas from Mexico (2017–2020). She is also the first African woman to hold the position.
42. The IPU Governing Council elects the IPU President for a term of three years. The IPU President must be a sitting Member of Parliament for the duration of his or her term in office. The President is the political head of the IPU, who chairs its statutory meetings and represents the Organization at global events.

43. The principle of regional rotation is generally observed. Over the past 25 years, the IPU presidency has been held by prominent parliamentarians from Spain, India, Chile, Italy, Namibia, Morocco, Bangladesh, Mexico, Portugal and now the United Republic of Tanzania.

**ii. Report of the IPU President**

44. The Governing Council took note of the report of the IPU President on his activities since the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The Governing Council took the opportunity to express its gratitude to the President, who had demonstrated a genuine commitment to the service of the IPU over the three years of his mandate.

**iii. Report of the Secretary General**

45. The Governing Council took note of the IPU Secretary General's report on the activities carried out by the IPU over the past nine months to implement its Strategy. The meeting was informed that since January 2023, the IPU had organized:

- i. 32 National support activities in 12 countries to build the capacity of parliaments institutionally and on key thematic issues,
- ii. 47 Regional and global events to mobilize and leverage parliamentary action and facilitate learning: 16 in person, 26 online and 5 in hybrid format.

46. The IPU had also launched eight publications during the same period. Members expressed their appreciation to the Secretary General and his team for the outstanding work accomplished in such a short time and especially for adhering to the objectives of the IPU Strategy. The report confirmed the trust they had always placed in the Secretary General and his team, whom they encouraged to keep up the promising momentum for the successful achievement of all strategic objectives.

47. In this vein, they also highlighted the necessity that the recommendations and resolutions emerging from the various activities carried out by the IPU be transformed into actions for the benefit of the people. A more comprehensive report on the impact of the IPU's

work in 2023 will be presented to Members at the next Assembly, as per usual practice.

**iv. Financial results for 2022**

48. The Governing Council considered the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2022. As the first Assembly of 2023 had taken place unusually early in March and there had not been sufficient time to complete the external audit, the Governing Council had decided to approve the 2022 accounts at its second session of 2023 in Luanda.
49. Ms. Alm Ericson took note that the situation of arrears of Member contributions had been increasing over recent years. The arrears of the Parliament of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela rose every year by around CHF 100,000 and now stood at CHF 626,000, and there were other Members in arrears across all regions with which the Secretariat was in regular contact. Ms. Alm Ericson encouraged all Members to work through their geopolitical groups to reduce the list of arrears. Nevertheless, she confirmed that the IPU had made a provision for all its long outstanding debts, should the Governing Council decide to suspend the IPU membership rights of any Member Parliaments and write off their contribution arrears.
50. The Internal Auditor, Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), presented his report, in which he conveyed his opinion that the accounts gave a true and fair reflection of the financial situation of the IPU at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 and complied with all current standards and rules. The External Auditor had expressed a positive opinion with no reservations on the Financial Statements, confirming that all previous recommendations had now been completed or were under implementation. Only one minor recommendation was made, which the IPU management had accepted and was already implementing.
51. The overall result for the year 2022 had been impacted by global investment market performance. Mr. Gryffroy noted that, since the start of his mandate as Internal Auditor, for the 2020 financial year, the total amount of arrears had increased by CHF 0.4 million although most of the increase arose from a few individual cases during a very

challenging economic period. He also recommended that the IPU financial statements should always be circulated to the IPU Members as soon as they had been audited and finalized, and in any case no later than 30<sup>th</sup> June each year.

52. Mr. Gryffroy concluded that the financial management of the IPU had a strong foundation based on internal controls and its financial position was healthy. He recommended the 2022 financial statements and the Secretary General's administration for approval by the Governing Council. There were interventions from the floor congratulating the Sub-Committee on Finance and the Secretariat team for its financial transparency, seeking clarifications about the process of review of the financial statements and requesting information on how the independence of the Internal and External Auditors was assured. The Governing Council approved the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2022.

**v. Financial situation of the IPU**

53. The Governing Council received a report on the financial situation of the IPU as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 and an updated list of unpaid assessed contributions. Reporting on behalf of the Executive Committee, Ms. Alm Ericson noted that the IPU's budget performance was on track for the year to date and the Organization's finances were currently healthy and stable. Investment returns had already begun to recover during the first half of 2023 and the situation of voluntary funding was also healthy for the remainder of 2023. She was pleased to report that arrears of contributions continued to be paid during the Assembly, as all Members were keen to exercise their full voting and participation rights during an important week for the IPU.

**vi. IPU Cremer-Passy Prize**

54. In a special segment during the Assembly, the IPU President, Mr. D. Pacheco, presented the second annual Cremer-Passy Prize to Mr. Samuelu Penitala Teo, Speaker of the Parliament of Tuvalu. This year, in view of the IPU's climate campaign, Parliaments for the Planet, nominees had to demonstrate a first-class track record of parliamentary action on climate change.

55. Nominations for the Prize were made by the IPU's six geopolitical groups, who were asked to submit one candidate from their region with a second nomination as an alternate. The winner was selected, according to the Prize Rules, following the evaluation and the deliberations of the Prize Selection Board, made up of Honorary IPU Presidents or prominent MPs selected by the geopolitical groups.
56. Mr. Teo was nominated by the IPU's Asia-Pacific Group, currently chaired by Australia. The current Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group, the Speaker of the Australian Parliament, Mr. M. Dick, commended Mr. Teo on his outstanding record on climate action. Mr. Teo has been a tireless advocate of climate action since 1998 when he first became an MP in the Parliament of Tuvalu and has raised awareness of the climate vulnerability of his country throughout his political career.
57. He became Minister for Natural Resources in 2015, followed by his nomination as Special Envoy on Climate Change and then Special Envoy for Disaster Risk Reduction. In 2019, he became Speaker of the Parliament.

## **H. 291<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The highlights of the meetings were as follows-

### **i. Activities report by the President**

58. The President shared with the Executive Committee an overview of his activities since the 211<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council, which fell under three categories, namely his efforts to reinforce the IPU's visibility, support the implementation of the IPU Strategy and consolidate the IPU's good governance. He had attended around 90 international and regional meetings and undertaken some 20 country visits. The President highlighted his joint efforts together with the Secretary General to achieve universal membership of the IPU, which had paid off with the accession of the Parliament of the Bahamas. The members of the Executive Committee paid tribute to the President,

who had demonstrated an unconditional commitment to his role and set the bar extremely high for his successor.

**ii. Interim report of the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU since the 211<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council**

59. The Executive Committee was apprised of the interim report of the Secretary General. It congratulated the Secretary General and his team for the impressive level of activity (47 global and regional events, and national events in 12 countries) over the past nine months. They commended the collaborative relationship between the Secretary General and the President which had facilitated these achievements.
60. The Executive Committee appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat to provide capacity building through the organization of various events, be it in-person or remotely. With a view to providing more visibility to these events, the Executive Committee recommended strengthening communications efforts so as to secure the strong participation of MPs. The Executive Committee seized the opportunity to remind the IPU membership that such capacity-building activities were part of the tools for the implementation of the IPU's Strategy, which they had all committed to support. The Executive Committee therefore encouraged all Members to participate in these IPU activities both in-person and online.
61. The Executive Committee noted with satisfaction the encouraging achievements related to the IPU's ongoing digital transformation, including studies of possible tools to facilitate communication between the IPU Secretariat and Member Parliaments; the upgrade of the IPU Praline database, which provided useful information on parliaments, as well as statistics on women and young parliamentarians; and the continued organization of online and hybrid meetings.
62. The Executive Committee welcomed the IPU Secretariat's efforts to adapt to the digital era and encouraged it to maintain that momentum, which would facilitate the smooth flow of the Organization's communications. The Executive Committee also

thanked Members for their invaluable contribution to those achievements.

63. The Executive Committee took note of ongoing efforts to promote interfaith dialogue and support Parliamentary engagement in the subject, including the two-part report on religion and belief and the mainstreaming of related activities throughout the work of the Organization. The Executive Committee also supported the initiative to carry forward the recommendations of the successful Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue held in Marrakesh earlier in the year, notably by gradually developing a permanent mechanism within the IPU to coordinate parliamentary action on this issue.

### **iii. Members and permanent observers**

64. The Executive Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the request for affiliation of the Parliament of the Bahamas to the IPU. The new affiliation would increase the number of IPU Members to 180. The Executive Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the request for Associate Membership status from the MERCOSUR Parliament (PARLASUR), which was currently a permanent observer. Following on from a review of all IPU observers, the Executive Committee decided to restore permanent observer status to the Organization of American States (OAS), which had been removed from the list due to an absence of any communication with the IPU over several years, but had since expressed an interest in resuming and deepening its cooperation with the IPU.
65. The Executive Committee also decided to maintain permanent observer status for several parliamentary assemblies or associations which had similarly been considered inactive, but which had since expressed an interest in strengthening their ties with the IPU, namely:
- *the Nordic Council;*
  - *the Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (AP-CPLP);*
  - *the Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization (PAECO);*

- *the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA).*

66. As for the African Union (AU), which had also been assessed as inactive in the review of observers, the Executive Committee decided to defer its decision pending the outcome of the forthcoming mission of the Secretary General to the headquarters of the AU in Addis Ababa. The Executive Committee considered a request for observer status from the International Parliamentarians Congress (IPC). The Executive Committee agreed that the IPC did not meet the criteria for observer status at the present time and invited the Secretariat to pursue other avenues of cooperation, including the conclusion of memoranda of understanding where relevant.
67. The Executive Committee also considered a request for observer status from the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPPAL) and agreed to defer further consideration of the request until such time as COPPPAL provided additional information on the global scale of its activities. Further to a vote by secret ballot, the Executive Committee decided to recommend to the Governing Council that the Association of Secretaries General of Arab Parliaments be admitted as a permanent observer.

#### **iv. Reporting by Members on IPU-related activities**

68. The Executive Committee took note with satisfaction of the reporting by Members on IPU-related activities, which showed an encouraging increase in Members' successful implementation of the outcomes of IPU meetings. The Executive Committee took the opportunity to extend its thanks to the Members, whose increased involvement was a vivid illustration of their commitment to support the implementation of the IPU Strategy.

#### **v. Financial questions**

69. The Chair of the Sub-Committee, Ms. J. Alm Ericson, informed the Executive Committee of the work of the Sub-Committee on Finance, which had met to discuss financial questions ahead of the session of the Executive Committee.

70. The Sub-Committee had examined the financial statements for 2022 and the External Auditor's report. The External Auditor had issued a positive audit opinion and confirmed the accuracy of the financial statements. The IPU's Internal Auditor for 2022 (Mr. A. Gryffroy, Belgium), the IPU Secretary General and the Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance had held a meeting with the External Auditor to formally discuss the report. Only one minor recommendation had been issued.
71. The Sub-Committee on Finance had taken note of two particular aspects of the 2022 accounts that were also reported to the Executive Committee. Investment performance had suffered in 2022 due to the global market environment but fortunately the market situation had stabilized in 2023 and the IPU's long-term investment returns had remained positive and on target. It had also taken note that the amount of arrears due from Member contributions had been increasing steadily in recent years. The Sub-Committee on Finance encouraged the governing bodies to decide how to address this exceptional situation.
72. Nevertheless, the Chair of the Sub-Committee confirmed that the IPU had made a financial provision for all long-outstanding debts in case of write-off. The Sub-Committee had also reviewed the financial situation of the IPU at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023. The Organization's budget performance was on track for the year so far and its finances were healthy and stable. The situation of voluntary funding was also healthy for the remainder of 2023.
73. The Sub-Committee had discussed the IPU's draft budget for 2024 and reviewed the budget document, which it presented to the Executive Committee in full. The core budget included the increase of 3% in total assessed contributions agreed previously by the Governing Council, aimed at rebalancing total contributions back to their level of 2010 by the end of the current Strategy period. At the same time, voluntary income was projected to decrease slightly due to the expiry of some large multiyear grants, so a prudent approach had been taken to reflecting that income in the budget.

74. The Executive Committee received and reviewed the Secretary General's usual update on the mobilization of voluntary funding. The Executive Committee noted that the Comptroller and Auditor General of India had now completed his audit mandate. Due to other new commitments in Geneva, he would not be seeking a further extension of the mandate. The Secretary General had therefore approached the Indonesian supreme audit institution and was awaiting confirmation of their interest.

75. The Executive Committee agreed that their appointment could be confirmed by silence procedure in due course. At the conclusion of her mandate, the Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance thanked the IPU Secretariat team for its outstanding work.

**vi. Regional offices**

76. The Executive Committee was apprised of encouraging news relating to the establishment of an IPU regional office in Uruguay following the signing of an agreement between the Secretariat and the Government of Uruguay. Regarding the proposed office in Egypt, negotiations were underway to conclude a similar agreement. The Executive Committee congratulated Uruguay and expressed the hope that the Egyptian parliamentary authorities would conclude a similar agreement in the near future.

**vii. Anti-harassment policy**

77. The members of the Executive Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the proposed Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events, along with its implementation and oversight mechanism. Taking into consideration the long-term impact of the policy, the members of the Executive Committee agreed that it would promote a culture of protection, respect and dignity for women and men at IPU events as well as setting a good example for local communities.

**viii. Amendments to the Statutes and Rules**

78. The Executive Committee was apprised of the arrangements for amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules. As per established practice, the process is being guided by the Executive Committee, which will therefore set up a working group – including a representative from each geopolitical group – to examine the amendments that have been proposed and report back to the membership. Pending the confirmation of the membership of that working group, the Executive Committee agreed that a realistic timeframe to adopt the amendments would be the Assembly in October 2024. The Executive Committee also agreed that the deadline for the submission of proposed amendments should be extended to the end of November 2023.

**ix. Election of a new IPU President**

79. The Executive Committee was briefed on the arrangements relating to the election of the President of the IPU. The Executive Committee requested that the organizing team ensure equal treatment of candidates so as to make the election as fair, open and transparent as possible.

**x. Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine**

80. The Executive Committee received an update on the activities of the Task Force. The Executive Committee encouraged the Task Force in its efforts to find peaceful solutions, especially in light of the ongoing challenging situation in the region.

**xi. Questions relating to the Secretariat**

81. The Executive Committee was briefed on staff movements in the IPU Secretariat. The Executive Committee agreed to renew the mandate of the Chair of the Consultative Commission, Mr. A. Kohler, for a period of four years starting 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023.

**xii. Future inter-parliamentary meetings**

82. The Executive Committee reviewed and endorsed the list of future meetings. Furthermore, taking into account the prevailing geopolitical context, which would make visa guarantee uncertain for delegates to travel to New York, the Executive Committee recommended holding

the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament at the United Nations Office at Geneva in 2025. It further recommended that the Preparatory Committee, traditionally composed of 20 Speakers of Parliaments representing all the geopolitical groups, be constituted and move ahead with the preliminary arrangements for this important global meeting.

**xiii. Working Group on Transparency, Accountability and Openness**

83. The Executive Committee welcomed the efforts of the Working Group on Transparency, Accountability and Openness towards greater transparency, as illustrated by the development of a Code of Conduct for IPU Governance Officials, and the Terms of Reference for an Oversight and Ethics Committee. The Executive Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve both documents.

**xix. Cooperation between the IPU and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP)**

84. The Executive Committee took note of the report on cooperation between the IPU and the ASGP. The members of the Executive Committee called for further strengthening of that win-win cooperation.

**xx. Election of IPU Vice-Presidents and of the Vice-President of the Executive Committee**

85. Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi was unanimously elected as Vice-President of the Executive Committee. In light of the numerous vacancies on the Executive Committee arising at the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the Executive Committee decided to defer the election of the IPU Vice-Presidents to a later date.

**xxi. Other business**

86. The Executive Committee paid a well-deserved tribute to its outgoing members and awarded them each a membership certificate for their insightful contributions to the work of the Executive Committee.

## **I. MEETINGS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **i. Standing Committee on Peace and International Security**

87. At its first sitting, on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Committee held two panels back-to-back. The first panel – an expert hearing on the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapons systems and artificial intelligence, was opened by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs who, in her video message, called for urgent action to prohibit and regulate such systems, and urged Parliamentarians to undertake prompt concrete action in that field.
88. The presentations by three experts and the co-Rapporteur of the forthcoming draft resolution were followed by a debate. The 16 delegates who took the floor addressed the need for an international instrument on the prohibition and regulation of autonomous weapons systems that would bring back meaningful human control over such systems and counter the unpredictable aspects of new technologies of warfare.
89. The second panel on the theme Inventory of tools for MPs to engage in dialogue, legislation, oversight and prevention in the pursuit of peace was in follow-up to the 2022 IPU resolution on peace processes. Approaches to common security and human security were presented, as were the principles of peace, which all form the basis of a necessary paradigm shift in the understanding of security. Six delegates took the floor to share examples of good practices which can guide parliamentarians in their engagement in conflict prevention. The development of an inventory of tools was welcomed.
90. At its last sitting, on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Committee debated the theme and the role of Parliaments in promoting a culture of transparency, anti-corruption and citizen engagement to restore trust in National and international institutions and strengthen peace. The presentations by the three experts and the debate that followed, featuring 11 speakers, showed the extent to which fraud undermined peace by depriving it of vital funds that could be used to support

actions to improve people's well-being. They also pointed out that cooperation between parliaments and supreme audit institutions was essential in that fight. The Committee adopted its work plan as discussed by the Bureau during its meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

## **ii. Standing Committee on Sustainable Development**

91. The Committee met on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and held three panel discussions featuring experts from the United Nations system and academia. About 50 delegations were in attendance. Mr. W. William (Seychelles), Vice-President of the Standing Committee, chaired the sessions. The first panel featured a debate under the title Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity, which corresponds to the title of the resolution that will be presented to the Committee at its next session in March 2024.
92. The second panel presented the draft Outcome Document of the Parliamentary Meeting that will take place in the United Arab Emirates at the 28<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), which is entrusted with the follow up to the Paris Agreement on climate change.
93. The third panel focused on the topic Ensuring global food security. It discussed various ways to transform Agri-food systems to make them more sustainable and more resilient, as well as ways to deliver lower cost nutritious foods and affordable diets for all. The Committee also approved its work plan for the next Assembly. It will dedicate all its sittings to the drafting of the abovementioned resolution.

## **iii. Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights**

94. The Standing Committee held two sittings, on 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023, with the President of the Standing Committee, Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname), in the Chair. The Committee considered the draft resolution on Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm. The resolution was introduced by the co-Rapporteur Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia). The second co-Rapporteur, Mr. E. Bustamante (Peru) was not able to attend the Assembly.

95. When examining the draft resolution, the Committee considered 194 amendments submitted by 26 parliaments (Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Benin, Canada, China, Cuba, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Lithuania, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, South Africa, South Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Türkiye, Ukraine, and the United Arab Emirates). Two amendments were proposed by the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.
96. The Co-Rapporteur presented the revised draft resolution to the Committee at its final sitting on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The draft resolution was adopted by acclamation. After the adoption of the resolution, the delegation of India expressed a reservation on operative paragraph 4. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran subsequently expressed a reservation on the reference to SDGs 4.1 and 4.2 in preamble paragraph 22.
97. The Bureau met on the morning of 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023. It considered proposals for the future work programme of the Committee. Two proposals for the subject item of the Committee's next resolution had been submitted before the deadline, one from Morocco and a joint proposal from Canada and the United Republic of Tanzania.
98. Following a recommendation by the Bureau, the Committee approved the proposal put forward by Canada and the United Republic of Tanzania entitled the impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It also approved the nomination of Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) and Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania) as co-Rapporteurs. A preparatory debate would take place at the 148<sup>th</sup> Assembly in March 2024 and a resolution on the theme would be finalized at the 149<sup>th</sup> Assembly in October 2024.
99. The Committee approved the Bureau's recommendation to hold a panel discussion at the 148<sup>th</sup> Assembly on the theme Sustainable actions to improve the life conditions of people with disabilities, including their chances for education and work opportunities, which

would not lead to a resolution. The Chair noted that the theme of the next resolution and the panel discussion were well aligned with the focus areas the Committee had adopted for its work in the coming years, namely improvements to the functioning of parliaments; democracy and human rights in the digital era; and a more inclusive, fairer world. These focus areas should allow the Committee to deepen its expertise, increase its impact and strengthen its contribution to the IPU Strategy.

100. The resolution on Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm was presented by the co-Rapporteur Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia) to the Assembly at its plenary sitting in the afternoon of 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The resolution was adopted by consensus. The reservations that had been formulated by the delegations of India and the Islamic Republic of Iran were noted for the record.

#### **iv. Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs**

101. The Committee met in two sessions with about 40 delegations attending and Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) presiding. The first session featured Ms. Z. Virani, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Angola, who explained that the UN work with Angola was focused on advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The discussion dealt with the role of parliamentarians in providing oversight of their Governments and passing legislation to implement the SDGs agenda.

102. The second session focused on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reform and featured Mr. T. Albanai, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations and co-Chair of the UN Intergovernmental Negotiations (ING) on the question of UNSC reform, and Ms. A. Novosseloff, Research Associate at the University of Paris-Panthéon-Assas and expert on the UNSC.

103. The Committee passed its first motion entitled Bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly. The Motion calls on parliamentarians to take specific actions domestically to ensure more women are appointed as Permanent Observers to the United Nations

and the ratio of 1:4 women to men in the UN General Assembly is improved (see motion on page 91).

104. The Committee chose to remove three Bureau members (Ms. H. Tigranyan of Armenia, Mr. A. Lins of Brazil and Ms. E. Qatrawi of the Republic of Moldova) from their positions for lack of participation. The Committee elected Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada) as its new President, and Ms. C.L. Crexell (Argentina) as Vice-President.

## **J. FORUM AND BUREAU OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS**

105. The 36<sup>th</sup> session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023. It brought together 196 participants, including 131 parliamentarians (102 women and 29 men) from 61 countries and representatives from various international organizations. The President of the Bureau, Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico) opened the session. The forum elected Ms. F. Malaquias, member of the National Assembly of Angola to the Presidency of its 36<sup>th</sup> session. The Speaker of the National Assembly of Angola and the President of the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, Ms. C. Cerqueira, and the IPU President, Mr. D. Pacheco, welcomed the participants to the Forum and to the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.
106. As a contribution to the Assembly, the participants examined, from a gender perspective, the draft resolution before the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights entitled Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm. The discussions highlighted the need for strong laws to combat child trafficking in orphanages, as well as for police, justice and immigration services that were well trained and equipped to intervene. They also focused on the need to tackle the root causes of trafficking and its gender-related aspects. The further highlighted that poverty and the discontinuation of schooling, as well as gender-based discrimination and violence against women are often the root causes of early or unwanted pregnancies, which in turn increase the risk of orphanage trafficking.

107. The forum also held a panel discussion entitled Women in Politics: to stay or not to stay. The participants examined the challenges faced by women when taking up a political decision-making position and when pursuing a long political career. They emphasized that when women entered politics, which was still largely dominated by men, they still faced obstacles and negative stereotypes. The participants called on women and their resilience to occupy the political space, to persevere and not to remain silent and isolated in the face of intimidation and the other obstacles they encountered.

108. The forum elected Ms. M. Saleh (Syrian Arab Republic) to fill the vacant seat of the Arab Group; Ms. T. Vardanyan (Armenia) and Ms. S.S. Khasayeva (Azerbaijan) to fill the two vacant seats of the Eurasia Group; and Ms. M.L. Carneiro (Brazil) to fill the vacant seat of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean.

#### **K. FORUM AND BOARD OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE IPU**

109. The Forum of Young Parliamentarians was held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023. It brought together almost 100 participants, including 86 parliamentarians (35 young women and 51 young men) from 57 countries, as well as representatives from organizations. Pursuant to its rules, the meeting was presided over by the youngest Board Member, Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia) in the absence of the President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom).



*Hon. John Kiarie, MP and a member of Parliament*

110. The IPU President, Mr. D. Pacheco was also in attendance and reiterated his strong support for the work of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and encouraged young MPs to remain steadfast in leading their own destinies. The young MPs updated the Forum on recent developments in their countries and proposed to remove some of the barriers faced by young people by limiting electoral campaign funding.
111. Contributing a youth perspective to the work of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the participants examined the theme of the General Debate of the Assembly, Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16), from a youth perspective. They highlighted the key leadership roles that young MPs should play in fostering parliamentary diplomacy for peace and mutual learning. They also stressed the importance of eliminating harassment of women and presented a youth overview report on the draft resolution considered at the Assembly on Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm.
112. The Board held a meeting and approved the nomination of Mr. S. Ismayilov (Azerbaijan) to the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. The Forum appointed Mr. W. Soto Palacios (Peru), a member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, to

prepare a youth overview report on the proposed resolution addressed the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon system and artificial intelligence and appointed Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates) to prepare a youth overview report on the proposed resolution on Partnerships for climate action: *Promoting access to affordable green energy and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity.*

113. Taking stock of youth participation at the Assembly, the Board reiterated its call to amend the Statutes and Rules of the IPU to lower the age limit to be considered a young MP to 40 years old. The Board agreed to establish a youth hub within the framework of the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament (CIP).



*Sen. Karungo Thang'wa, MP and Sen. Raphael Chimera, MP at the meeting of the Forum for Young Parliamentarians.*

## **L. OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

### **i. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**

114. The Committee held its 172<sup>nd</sup> session from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Mr. S. Cogolati (Belgium), President, Ms. M. Odhiambo (Kenya), Vice-President, Mr. E. Blanc (France), Mr. M. Hussain Sayed (Pakistan) and Mr. H. Kamboni (Zambia) participated in the session. Ms. L. Quartapelle (Italy) and Ms. C. Asiaín Pereira (Uruguay) also participated in the session remotely. Mr. B. Mbuku Laka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Ms. A. Reynoso (Mexico) were unable to take part in the session.
115. During the session, the Committee examined the situation of 131 Parliamentarians (23% of whom were women) in 14 countries. New cases concerning 39 parliamentarians were declared admissible in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (four MPs), Myanmar (seven MPs), Pakistan (four MPs), South Sudan (one MP) and Zimbabwe (23 MPs). Two cases, concerning a former parliamentarian from Egypt and a parliamentarian from Peru respectively were declared inadmissible, and one case concerning three MPs in Myanmar and another concerning two MPs from the Philippines were closed.
116. The Committee also held eight hearings (one of which took place online) with National delegations and complainants. The Committee submitted decisions to the Governing Council for adoption on the situation of 121 parliamentarians in the following countries: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Iraq, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe.

### **ii. Committee on Middle East Questions**

108. Since the last Assembly held in March 2023, the Committee on Middle East Questions met four times (21<sup>st</sup> July, 17<sup>th</sup> October, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023) with at least six members in attendance at each sitting. The Committee agreed that the importance of its role lay in identifying concrete actions to establish constructive dialogue

between Israel and Palestine and proposing solutions to achieve peaceful coexistence.

109. The Committee discussed the Israeli military operation in the Jenin refugee camp carried out on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Violence was escalating to dangerous levels and what had happened in Jenin would repeat itself in other areas if no peace negotiations were on the horizon. Members of the Committee noted that the political hopelessness felt by young Palestinians could lead to a deterioration of the situation and that that knowledge should guide the Committee's approach to the conflict.

110. Members agreed on a set of recommendations with respect to the crisis in the Palestinian territories and Israel that erupted on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The recommendations included: the cessation of all acts of violence by all parties by way of a complete ceasefire; the immediate, permanent and unimpeded lifting of the humanitarian aid blockade of the Gaza Strip; the immediate release of all hostages; and finally, the resumption of negotiations between both parties with the aim of establishing a two-State solution. The Committee agreed that the recent events reaffirmed the need to organize a visit to the region for members to see for themselves how they could contribute to the peace process of sitting of the Committee on Middle East Questions was held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023, with 12 members in attendance. Members emphasized their commitment to working together based on mutual comprehension and constructive dialogue.

111. The Committee heard a briefing on the first IPU Science for Peace schools session, held at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland, from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022, on the theme dealing with water scarcity: *An opportunity to rebuild peace with Science*.

**iii. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law**

112. The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) met on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The Committee heard an update

on recent developments with regard to specific IHL and refugee crisis situations. These included: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nagorno Karabakh, Sudan and Ukraine. The Committee also focused on the question of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and heard a brief on the humanitarian situation in Gaza and Israel.

113. Committee members noted with concern the multiplication of conflict situations and the increasing number of men and women, boys and girls having to flee to escape from violence and persecution (more than 110 million forcibly displaced people by May 2023. In view of the fact that the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone accounts for more than 5.5 million internally displaced persons on its territory, the Committee decided to monitor the situation in the country at its next sessions.
114. The Committee made a special plea with regard to the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, especially after the recent decision by the Taliban to exclude women from working in national, international non-governmental and United Nations organizations, which significantly affected meaningful access to work for women and girls in need.
115. With regard to conflict-related situations, including the current situation in Gaza and Israel, Committee members reiterated the obligation of States and other parties to respect and ensure respect for IHL in all circumstances, as follows:
  - All civilians must be protected from the effects of military operations, without any adverse distinction and in all situations, and not be objects of an attack, used as human shields or held hostage.
  - Agreements must be passed to allow humanitarian corridors or safe passage of civilians out of areas of armed conflict or violence.
  - Parties must allow humanitarian aid to reach civilians in need, and must facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief.
  - Civilian objects must not be the objects of attacks; this includes objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population,

such as hospitals, schools, water facilities and electricity infrastructure.

- Medical personnel and units exclusively assigned to medical duties must be respected and protected in all circumstances.

116. The Committee expressed a strong and urgent call for wars to stop, for IHL to be respected and for humanitarian assistance to be provided to affected civilians, including refugees and internally displaced populations. It recalled the importance of bearing in mind all decisions and discussions, the fact that, first and foremost, we are dealing with human beings, and that all lives are equally important.

117. The Committee discussed preparations for the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) that will be held in December 2023. Committee members agreed to reach out to all IPU Members to invite them to report back to the IPU on their involvement in the GRF and on their progress in the implementation of pledges. The Committee furthermore updated the IPU's pledges submitted to the GRF in 2019. The text approved by the Committee and subsequently endorsed by the Governing Council, can be found on page 74.

118. The Committee discussed work towards the universalization and domestic implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It called on MPs to begin by championing discussions on these two Conventions in their Parliaments, to assess the reasons why some States are not yet party to the Conventions and the degree of implementation of the Conventions in States that are signatories.

119. The Committee adopted a work plan for the coming year. Committee members also agreed to resume its missions to countries in crisis possibly including Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Poland.

120. The Committee re-elected as its Chair, for a one-year term, Mr. J.K. Waweru (Kenya).



*Hon. John Kiaria, MP with Members of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law*

#### **iv. Gender Partnership Group**

121. The Gender Partnership Group held its 48<sup>th</sup> session on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023. In attendance were the Chair, Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), and members Ms. J. Alm Ericson (Sweden), Mr. A. Saidov (Uzbekistan) and Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. As per its mandate, the Group reviewed the state of women's participation in national parliaments, as well as in IPU bodies and Assemblies. It examined in particular the composition of delegations at the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly. As at 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 36.4% of the delegates at the Assembly were women which was above the average of the past two Assemblies (Kigali, October 2022, and Manama, March 2023), but lower than in Madrid (November 2021) and Nusa Dua (March 2022), where a record 38.9% women delegates had been achieved. Gender-balanced delegations attending the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly were commended. In Luanda, 42 delegations out of 128 (or 32.8%) were gender-balanced, namely composed of 40 to 60% women or men. This is a clear improvement from the last Assembly, in Manama, when 27.2% of delegations were gender-balanced (37 out of 136 delegations).

122. The aforementioned 42 gender-balanced delegations attending the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly are listed. Of the 128 delegations present, 120 were composed of at least two delegates, of which 10 were all-male (8.3%). In addition, 3 delegations of two or more delegates were composed entirely of women. These 13 single-sex delegations are listed. All in all, 7 delegations are subject to sanctions at this Assembly, down from 11 at the last Assembly.
123. The Group also presented to the Executive Committee and Governing Council the new Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events and began discussing an implementation action plan. As per its mandate, the Group pursued discussions on how to support parliaments with few women members. It expressed concern at the fact that over 11% of the world's single or lower chambers still had less than 10% women members (21 out of 185 chambers for which data is available).
124. In follow-up to the prior dialogues held at the 144<sup>th</sup> and 145<sup>th</sup> Assemblies, the Group met with the Nigerian delegation further to the elections held in February 2023 which saw a further decrease in the representation of women in Parliament. The Nigerian delegation assessed that gender stereotypes, combined with women's socioeconomic exclusion, were the main barriers to having a level playing field for women. Political party leaders continued to put forward all-male candidate lists at elections.
125. In addition, despite efforts to adopt constitutional amendment bills to enable electoral gender quotas, the bills had been rejected by the outgoing Parliament. Renewed efforts were being envisaged, including reintroducing constitutional amendment bills. Awareness raising and advocacy were crucial. Political parties must also become more gender sensitive and inclusive. In addition, capacity building for women would be very useful, as well as the provision of resources in campaigning and outreach. The Group expressed its eagerness to support the Nigerian National Assembly's efforts. The Nigerian delegation agreed to develop a programme of work for implementation

with IPU support. The Group will continue to monitor the situation of Nigeria at its next session.

#### **v. Advisory Group on Health**

126. The IPU Advisory Group on Health met on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 with six out of 10 members in attendance, as well as technical partners from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The official cooperation agreements the IPU has with the WHO and PMNCH respectively, were presented to the Group.
127. The Group elected Ms. L. Clifford-Lee (Ireland) as its new Chair and Mr. F.E. Ndugulile (United Republic of Tanzania) as its new Vice-Chair, for a mandate of one year. The Group discussed its rules and practices in the context of amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules and expressed its wish to be consulted during the amendment drafting process. The Group also discussed peace and security – the priority theme for 2024 – focusing on linkages between conflict, climate change, displacement and health. It highlighted the long-term consequences of conflict on health, including the disruption of health systems and mental health impact. It acknowledged that health can be a bridge for peace by way of collective and apolitical efforts in finding solutions to save lives and reduce suffering.
128. The Group reflected on the field visit it had conducted on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 at Hospital Materno Infantil Dr. Manuel Pedro Azancot de Menezes in Luanda, where it was apprised of the main indicators on maternal and child health. Despite progress, coverage of family planning remains low, with high rates of early pregnancies. The Group appreciated the Hospital's high standard but expressed concern regarding its accessibility to the population, including the most vulnerable and marginalized. It therefore recommended looking more closely at the primary health care level, and expressed its readiness to continue its exchanges with the National Assembly of Angola and to share good practices in the area of sexual and

reproductive health and rights IPU Advisory Group on Health met on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023, with 5 out of 12 members in attendance.

129. The Group welcomed three new members, from Ireland, Pakistan and the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as technical partners from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), UNAIDS, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Advisory Group discussed ways to strengthen the IPU's relevance in the global health arena and to implement the health component of the IPU Strategy. The Group also agreed that the challenge of health was very broad and that it would not expand its priorities further, but instead retain and address certain key priorities.

**vi. High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)**

130. The High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) held its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting (hybrid format) on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Members were briefed on the second phase of HLAG's enhanced mobile application which was available to download. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> thematic meetings of the Call of the Sahel that focused on development and education were held virtually on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The meetings were attended by some 70 participants representing 25 parliaments and 20 panelists representing various specialized United Nations agencies, the World Bank, academia, the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), civil society, youth and women's organizations from the Sahel region, as well as regional parliamentary assemblies and the Secretariat of the Interparliamentary Committee of the G5-Sahel.
131. There was profound concern about the deteriorating situation in the Sahel region which posed a threat to the population and constituted a menace to global peace and security. The increased level of instability and insecurity jeopardized the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was concluded that the solution to the Sahel's problems lay in investing in development and

education, which were interrelated. Security and governance issues also had to be addressed.

132. It was recommended that the roadmap for the second phase of the Call of the Sahel include a comprehensive analysis of the situation in each country, along with strategies for development projects, security policies and improvements in governance. Also, the international community needed to address the situation in the Sahel with the same urgency as it did with the other conflict situations in the world.
133. On 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the fifteenth HLAG meeting discussed the Sahel situation and the outcomes of the five thematic meetings under the Call of the Sahel initiative focused on: environment, communities, security, education and development. The aim of the meetings was to consider and comprehend the needs and aspirations of the Sahel's population. It was concluded that addressing development was the key solution to the challenges faced by the Sahel region. Also, development efforts must be coupled with solid security strategies, including improvements in good governance. Participants called for dialogue and international cooperation, increased global attention, investment and practical actions to support the region.
134. To ensure a comprehensive and sustainable response, it was proposed to establish an ad-hoc committee within the HLAG to monitor and follow up on the progress made. It was recommended that financial support be provided for education, particularly for the youth in the Sahel. A clear and well-defined roadmap with prioritized goals, deadlines and budget allocations was proposed to guide the efforts effectively. The international community was encouraged to adopt a more coordinated and concrete approach in addressing the challenges faced by the Sahel region.
135. Mr. D. Naughten, Chairperson of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, presented three key recommendations from the Science for Peace Parliamentary Meeting, held in September 2023 in Quy Nhon, Viet Nam. The recommendations, which could be a basis for development of projects in the Sahel countries, are the following:

take evidence-based decisions on water and sanitation with open-source data to enhance collaboration between scientists and parliamentarians; encourage community engagement through scientific initiatives; share technologies and expertise and support the UN Water Convention while focusing on active implementation and integration into overseas development aid.

**vii. Working Group on Science and Technology**

136. The Working Group on Science and Technology held three sittings: one online sitting on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023, and two in-person sittings in Luanda on 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023. At least ten members attended each of the sittings. The Working Group members gave briefings on their respective pilot projects and contributions on the engagement of parliaments with the scientific community. Based on the outputs of the pilot projects that are to be completed before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, the members agreed to publish a parliamentary toolkit on the engagement of parliaments with the scientific community at the upcoming 148<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.
137. The Working Group emphasized the importance of strengthening ties with IPU partner organizations including the United Nations, and agreed to participate in the upcoming Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 28<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in the United Arab Emirates, as well as the upcoming 9<sup>th</sup> United Nations Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in New York.
138. The Working Group applauded the success of the Science for Peace Parliamentary Meeting on Water security and insecurity: Rebuilding peaceful coexistence with science, held in cooperation with the International Centre for Interdisciplinary Science and Education (ICISE) from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in Quy Nhon, Viet Nam. The Meeting participants had exchanged legislative good practices and model legislation on harnessing technologies for monitoring and exploring new water resources. The outcome recommendations

included urging countries to accede to the United Nations Water Convention and the proposal to hold a future Global Parliamentary Summit on Water and Food Security.

139. The Working Group members discussed the ethics of artificial intelligence (AI) as the theme of the next Science for Peace School, to be held at the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME), in Allan, Jordan. Discussions included critical aspects of AI, as well as the interplay between technological advancement, and the preservation of democratic values and human rights in an increasingly AI-driven world.
140. The Working Group was briefed by the Chairperson on progress in the drafting of the International Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology, and set an action plan for finalizing the Charter and gathering expert feedback to be able to formally adopt it at the upcoming 148<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Geneva.

## **M. OTHER ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

### **i. Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Geopolitical Groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees**

141. On 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023, the IPU President and Secretary General met with the Chairs of the geopolitical groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees. The meeting was attended by: Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), Chair of the African Group; Mr. A. Al-Salihi (Iraq), on behalf of the Arab Group; Mr. M. Dick (Australia), Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group; Mr. S. Rachkov (Belarus), Chair of the Eurasia Group; Ms. S. Carvajal (Mexico), Chair of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC); and Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), Chair of the Twelve Plus Group and Acting President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs; as well as by Mr. M.B.M. Al-Ahbab (Qatar), President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security; Mr. W. William (Seychelles), Acting President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development;

and Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname), President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights.

142. The IPU President gave a summary of his main projects and activities since the last Assembly, including efforts to increase the Organization's visibility and move closer to the IPU's long-standing goal of universal membership. He was pleased that the IPU had added two new Members in 2023: Liberia, which joined the IPU during the 146<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, and the Bahamas, which would become an IPU Member during the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly. As a result, only 12 Parliaments of sovereign States were yet to become Members, mainly small Caribbean and Pacific islands. The President also visited the United States Congress but concluded that any decision to rejoin the IPU would be unlikely before the country's 2024 presidential elections. Furthermore, the President noted that the IPU Executive Committee had extended the deadline for submitting amendment proposals to the IPU Statutes and Rules until the end of November 2023.
143. The Executive Committee would then nominate a working group from among its members, with representatives from all geopolitical groups, to review all submissions and generate as much consensus as possible. Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) suggested that the preliminary results of the working group could already be discussed during the 148<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in March 2024, an idea that the IPU President seconded. Lastly, the IPU President and Secretary General communicated that, in 2024, the IPU would focus on peace and security as its priority theme. The Organization would maintain its work on climate change (the 2023 priority theme) and, in parallel, mainstream the theme of peace and security throughout its bodies.
144. The Chairs of the geopolitical groups provided an overview of their recent activities. The African Group had decided to nominate Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) for the Cremer-Passy prize. Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) also highlighted that she visited the premises intended for the IPU Regional Office on the occasion of her visit to Uruguay. The Chair of the Arab Group conveyed that the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union had recently managed to reestablish

diplomatic parliamentary relations with the Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic. He emphasized that the Arab Group would present an emergency item during the current 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly to address the crisis in Gaza.

145. The Asia-Pacific Group Chair provided an overview of his work to engage with small Pacific islands and promote regular interaction within the geopolitical group. Efforts included visits to several countries, two regional seminars, and two regional forums. The Asia-Pacific Group had also submitted candidates for IPU positions, including Mr. M. Dick's (Australia) own nomination to the Executive Committee. Similarly, the Chair of the Eurasia Group communicated that the Group had nominated several members of parliament to fill vacant positions in various IPU bodies.
146. The Chair of the Twelve Plus Group stated that multiple meetings had been organized since the Manama Assembly: a first session of the working group for the better implementation of IPU resolutions, a discussion concerning the group's proposals to amend the IPU Statutes and Rules, and joint Twelve Plus-GRULAC hearings with the four candidates for the IPU presidency. The Presidents of the Standing Committees provided an overview of their activities and commented on the IPU priority themes for 2023 (climate change) and 2024 (peace and security).
147. Mr. M.B.M. Al-Ahbabi (Qatar) noted that the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security was the Organization's main institutional body shaping policy on this topic. Over the past 10 years, the Committee had addressed multiple issues, including disarmament, terrorism, conflict prevention, and new global challenges like cyber warfare and lethal autonomous weapons. He underscored that the Committee would continue collaborating with the IPU programmes to raise awareness of decisions taken and enhance their implementation.
148. The President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development communicated that, in 2023, his Committee focused its

efforts on legislation and its impact on vulnerable populations, policy and technological innovations, and multistakeholder cooperation to fight climate change. Within its mandate and thematic focus, the Committee would continue to explore the linkages between sustainable development and peace and security in 2024.

149. The President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights reported that a joint workshop on climate change was convened at the 145<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Kigali together with the President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development. He was also pleased to support, peace and security as the priority theme for 2024. Still, he sought to bring the issue of the economy to the table for consideration by the IPU for future years or inclusion in the next IPU Strategy.

150. Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname) added that the IPU, the primary global organization of parliamentarians, could enhance collaboration with the Bretton Woods Institutions. The Acting President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs noted that the Committee was discussing United Nations Security Council reform, which could turn into a future motion. He stated the Committee was pleased with peace and security being the theme for 2024, as it was in keeping with the United Nations Secretary-General's new Agenda for Peace that would feed into the 2024 United Nations Summit of the Future.

#### **ii. IPU-ASGP Joint Workshop on the digital transformation of Parliaments**

151. The workshop objective was to launch the new IPU-ASGP Guide to digital transformation in parliaments and to bring together parliamentarians and Secretaries General to exchange perspectives on the objectives, opportunities and challenges of digital transformation. ASGP President Mr. N. El Khadi introduced the Guide alongside Mr. A. Richardson (IPU Programme Manager, Parliamentary Standards Setting and Knowledge Generation) on behalf of the IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliaments (CIP). Mr. El Khadi stressed how essential digital tools had become in all areas of parliamentary life, though their adoption was not without difficulties

and risks. The role of Secretaries General was pivotal in driving the process and ensuring a smooth transformation.

152. Mr. Richardson pointed to the Guide as a practical reference that parliamentarians, Secretaries General and staff could draw inspiration from. The Guide defines digital transformation as “the action of applying new digital-based tools and technologies to parliamentary processes and culture. It happens as part of the wider drive to modernize and improve parliaments, making them more efficient and effective. Digital transformation delivers optimized, more user-centric services to members, staff and the wider public”. While technology is important, it is only part of the equation. Digital transformation has an impact on culture, people and processes, as well as technology. “*Transformation*” is the operative term.
153. Ms. B. Sekgoma, Secretary General of the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) moderated the workshop, which started with a discussion with Mr. M. Schäfer (Germany) and Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates). Mr. Schäfer observed that digital transformation was a challenge in a secretariat the size of the Bundestag, which had over 700 members and more than 3,000 employees. There were an estimated 100 and 100 more planned ongoing projects within the Bundestag. Aligning stakeholders around common priorities and avoiding rivalry or competition created some difficulty.
154. To address those challenges, he was working towards a draft strategy for digital transformation by the start of 2024. The aim was to establish consultative mechanisms with all stakeholders that could facilitate alignment around a shared strategy. Parliamentary processes could be extremely complex, having evolved over a long period in an organic way. It would not make sense to simply digitize existing processes. Digital transformation was an opportunity to rethink processes and make them simpler and more efficient.
155. Ms. Falaknaz described the dramatic change since she had joined the Federal National Council. Today, MPs accessed all parliamentary

documents through a tablet instead of working on hard copies. That new approach to document management meant that information about parliamentary work was now more widely available to the public as well, so they could better know about the activities of their representatives. This one-stop-shop approach helped Ms. Falaknaz stay in constant communication with constituents via social media.

156. Ms. Sekgoma then invited workshop participants to discuss in small groups the four areas of impact – culture, people, process, and technology – and to answer the question: If you could do one thing, in one of these four areas, what would it be? A group including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and the United Arab Emirates identified “culture” as the area most resistant to change. Steps towards culture change would include convincing all relevant actors of the need for digital transformation; training people in new digital tools; and ensuring that data confidentiality and security were built into digital systems.
157. A group led by Botswana added the idea of “timeliness”. New products need to be developed and rolled out in a timely manner, or they risk being obsolete by the time they are launched. The group underlined the importance of change management and addressing people’s fears about change. Cambodia, Canada and France noted that after priorities had been set and requirements had been gathered, the next challenge was securing the resources required to deliver the projects. They observed the need to manage expectations and to ensure ongoing consultation with stakeholders. As part of planning for digital transformation, it was important to know exactly who the decision-makers were.
158. In the opinion of South Africa, “process” was key. By taking a structured approach to culture change, better results could be achieved. As an institution, Parliament should foster a culture of innovation.

**iii. IPU-UNICEF joint event on the role of parliaments in securing effective public spending for children's rights**

159. The IPU and the UNICEF Angola Country Office organized a side event on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The event was a continuation of the discussion which had begun 18 months earlier in the context of the 144<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Nusa Dua, Indonesia. The present event aimed to continue raising the alarm on children's rights so as to secure more support, and also to identify and share good practices, alongside challenges and potential targeted solutions.
160. Ms. S. Kiladze, Vice-Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, opened the debate in her capacity as the moderator of the event. She briefly presented the background to the meeting and, speaking as a former parliamentarian, highlighted the catalyzer role that MPs could play, for instance in terms of influencing the national budget in favour of the rights of the child.
161. Ms. L. Moreira-Daniels, Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF Angola, presented the advantage of securing specific budgetary allocations for children's rights and shared several ways in which members of parliament could influence budgets, for instance by being guided by the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
162. Ms. A.-E. Gomes Santos, Chair of Committee 5 on Finance, National Assembly of Angola, shared details of Angolan parliamentary practice. Prior to the budget session, the National Assembly organized a public platform discussion with civil society organizations to gather information about the people's needs as background that could be used in parliamentary interactions with the executive.
163. Ms. E.T. Muteka, Vice-Chair, Standing Committee on Health, Social Welfare and Labour Affairs, Parliament of Namibia, noted that 53% of her country's budget was allocated to social protection. This offered a great opportunity for work on children's rights to get a fair share. Parliamentarians from Benin, India, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, United Kingdom and Zambia contributed to the debate. They emphasized the necessity of ongoing training for

parliamentarians on the issue and the importance of organizing hearings with children themselves, and encouraged the creation of global networks for experience sharing.

**iv. IPU-WHO Joint Workshop on Unpacking the development of the Pandemic Accord**

164. The workshop was organized jointly by the IPU and the World Health Organization (WHO) as part of their longstanding partnership. It was held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and its aim was to provide a deeper understanding of the key elements, scope, potential implications and benefits of the Pandemic Accord; explain the role of parliamentarians; and foster dialogue among parliamentarians to share perspectives, concerns and ideas.
165. The event was moderated by Mr. G. Silberschmidt (Director, Health and Multilateral Partnerships, WHO). It was opened by Mr. M. Chungong, the IPU Secretary General, and Dr. T.A. Ghebreyesus, the WHO Director-General (speaking via video message). The speakers highlighted the role of parliamentarians in ensuring the negotiations of the Pandemic Accord were informed by the real-life experiences of people and in its ratification. They hoped the Accord would help build trust and solidarity.
166. In the first session, Ms. P. Matsoso (Co-chair, Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB), WHO) and Mr.S. Solom on (Principal Legal Officer, WHO) provided an overview of the negotiating process and what the Pandemic Accord aimed to achieve. The Pandemic Accord was established because there was a need for a comprehensive and coherent approach to address the gaps observed during the COVID-19 pandemic in preventing, preparing for and responding to health emergencies.
167. The process was inclusive and transparent; it included public hearings and informal consultations with different stakeholders to ensure alignment with the needs of diverse communities and countries and to address specific health disparities, cultural sensitivities and regional variations.

168. Dr. F. Bustreo (Chair, Governance and Ethics Committee, Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)) also emphasized the question of equity, adding that other epidemics and emergencies, before the COVID-19 pandemic, had also disproportionately impacted vulnerable populations. She highlighted the “shadow pandemic” of gender-based violence and called for gender equity, including in negotiating bodies at the international level.

169. The second session featured a panel discussion moderated by Dr. L.G. Sambo (former WHO Regional Director for Africa). The panelists Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia), and the IPU Advisory Group on Health members Dr. F.E. Ndugulile (United Republic of Tanzania) and Ms. H. Al-Helaissi (Saudi Arabia) reiterated the centrality of equity in access to treatment and vaccines, as well as the importance of building preparedness and response capacities in developing countries. They encouraged parliamentarians to advocate for their governments to sign the Pandemic Accord and to engage with communities to address misinformation.

**v. Panel discussion on Parliamentary action on biodiversity:  
*Translating global commitments into national action***

170. This panel discussion on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 aimed to provide a platform for parliamentarians to share experiences and knowledge on biodiversity, including its linkages with climate change and sustainable development. It also served to familiarize parliamentarians with the outcomes of the latest United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15), held in Montreal, Canada. The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. A. Blagojevic, IPU Programme Manager for International Development, who introduced the topic and provided a brief overview of Parliaments for the Planet, the recently launched IPU campaign which will mobilize parliaments and parliamentarians to act on the climate emergency.

171. The first panelist, presenting remotely, was Mr. B. Pisupati, Head, Environment Policy, and Law Division of the United Nations

Environment Programme (UNEP). He introduced the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at COP15, outlining the framework's four goals, which encompass efforts to increase the area of natural ecosystems, reduce extinction rates, value nature's contribution to people, share the benefits from the utilization of genetic resources, and ensure all Parties have adequate means for implementation. Mr. Pisupati highlighted the important role parliamentarians can play in mobilizing women and youth to participate in biodiversity action, ensuring the integration of climate and biodiversity goals into policymaking at the national level, promoting whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches, and supporting innovative financing for biodiversity.

172. The second panelist, Mr. Wang Yi (China), shared his remarks by video message, describing how biodiversity loss is threatening people's well-being, including in matters related to food, energy and safety, and undermining progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. He expressed how the presidency of China of COP15 had been backed by political will at the highest level and also highlighted efforts that China had made to promote biodiversity conservation, including the promulgation and revision of laws and regulations to provide solid legal safeguards for biodiversity conservation.

173. The third panelist, Mr. P. Julian (Canada), provided information on Canada's hosting of COP15 and emphasized the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution that the world is now facing. He described the challenges biodiversity loss creates, including for Indigenous people, and highlighted legislative efforts made in his country, including on addressing the risk of extinction of species. Mr. Julian stressed the need for the Parliament of Canada, as the federal institution, to work with provinces and territories on biodiversity conservation. Interventions from the floor came from Canada, Ghana, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Liechtenstein, Mauritius and Seychelles.

174. Participants highlighted various actions to protect biodiversity, including conserving biodiversity hotspots, promoting environmental education in schools, increasing the size of protected areas, passing legislation on single-use plastics, and allocating resources for disaster risk reduction. There were also calls to enhance community engagement and strengthen the role of women in biodiversity conservation, as well as to ensure that parliamentarians have access to data, knowledge and resources so they can effectively address biodiversity through their legislative, budgetary, oversight and representation functions.

**vi. The Call of the Sahel: A global response - Meeting series on counter-terrorism Mitigating the impact of security threats by building resilience in the Sahel**

175. The Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism was held on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The event witnessed significant participation, with over 80 attendees hailing from diverse regions, including parliaments of the Sahel countries and the IPU geopolitical groups. Distinguished panelists from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), youth-focused non-governmental organizations, regional parliamentary assemblies, the Inter-parliamentary Committee of the G5-Sahel (CIP G5-Sahel), the President of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, and a member of the IPU Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians also attended the Summit.

176. Participants and experts fully acknowledged the engaged efforts of the HLAG, the IPU Secretariat, and the partners of the Sahel initiative. They agreed with the outcomes of the five thematic meetings, which emphasized that investing in development was essential to solve the problems of the Sahel. It was however necessary to address the issues of security and governance to achieve sustainable development. The Summit attendees also agreed on the significance of enhancing good governance to foster strong, democratically organized civil societies, independent judiciaries, citizen-centric administrations and the effective management of shared resources. They stressed the need for

actions that respected human rights, combatted abuse and corruption, and upheld the rule of law.

177. Furthermore, the participants agreed there was a need for better coordination of cooperation in the region. International cooperation must be based on the needs and priorities identified by the relevant countries whose opinions must be considered. They also highlighted the need for equality of the Sahel people in a new world order. It was important to uphold human rights and address basic needs such as access to water, education, food, security and primary healthcare, with special attention to young people, especially girls and women.

178. The global community should coordinate with the Call of the Sahel to implement projects on the ground to benefit the populations. It was also agreed that a road map – The Global Response of the Call of the Sahel – would be designed, with concrete projects and monitored by the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism. Furthermore, the participants unanimously agreed on eleven main points:

- i. The parliamentary community and international organizations, governments and civil society need to renew their global commitment to strengthen their support in preventing violent extremism in the Sahel.
- ii. International organizations must improve their coordination when implementing activities in line with the Call of the Sahel initiative.
- iii. The Sahel people must achieve equality in a new world order that will prioritize the well-being and future of the citizens in the Sahel countries.
- iv. The human rights of the Sahel population must be respected by ensuring access to basic needs, food, water, health and education, with special attention to the needs of young people, girls and the empowerment of women.
- v. A focus on sustainable development is the solution to the challenges of the Sahel.

- vi. Good governance can be enhanced by building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions that provide access to justice for all.
- vii. The G5 Sahel Joint Force must be supported and recognized pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.
- viii. To raise awareness of parliaments globally on the political situation and challenges the Sahel faces, a Motion of the Sahel should be drafted.
- ix. HLAG must develop The Global Response of the Call of the Sahel based on the outcomes of the five thematic meetings.
- x. An ad hoc mechanism within the HLAG must be set up to coordinate, monitor and follow up on the second phase of the Call of the Sahel, including projects and development initiatives.

The global community must be urged to move forward with tangible actions and to implement projects on the ground that safeguard the human rights and well-being of the Sahel population.

## **N. DECLARATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE 147<sup>TH</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS**

179. At the conclusion of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings, delegates adopted the following Declarations and Resolutions-election;

### ***i. Luanda Declaration: Parliamentary Action for Peace Justice and strong institutions***

*(Endorsed by the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Luanda on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023)*

180. “The buck stops with us. This is the overarching message that we, parliamentarians participating in the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Luanda, retain from our General Debate on Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions, corresponding to Goal 16 of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 16), also known as the “governance goal”.

181. Our discussion highlighted the critical role of good governance as a societal good in its own right and as a means to the attainment of

all the Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted in 2015. Good governance is the glue that binds people to each other and to their institutions, nurturing solidarity, civic engagement and political citizenship. At the same time, as defined under SDG 16, good governance enables sound policymaking and direct accountability to the people, without which we will not succeed in our shared struggles against poverty, inequality, conflict and environmental degradation, including the climate emergency, that are being experienced in every corner of the world.

182. We have taken stock of the many governance issues highlighted in SDG 16 that need immediate attention according to United Nations reports but also, and more importantly, of our experience in our own countries, where popular disaffection with the institutions of government – and with politics in general – is becoming ever more palpable.
183. As representatives of the people, we are keenly aware of our responsibility to address this state of affairs. We end this Assembly fully aware that SDG 16, more than any other SDG, relates to parliament as the key institution of governance in every country. Having the power to enact laws, adopt budgets and oversee the executive, we are uniquely positioned to make government work better at all levels –
- National, sub-national and local – and to restore the conditions for peaceful coexistence that support
  - Sustainable development and democracy in all their dimensions.
184. Topping the list of governance issues that we must tackle most urgently is the need to strengthen trust and ensure the more active participation of citizens in institutions at all levels, beginning with our own parliaments, where women and youth, as well as the poor and other disadvantaged groups, must be more equitably represented.

185. We believe that inclusion and representation are essential to building legitimacy and transparency, as the keys to more effective accountability. By opening up institutions to people from all walks of life and without discrimination, we can strengthen the people's trust in their institutions, provide public services that deliver and develop policies that leave no one behind. With regard specifically to the key issue of fair representation of the various groups and political forces in parliaments, we will strive to review and reform as needed our electoral systems in the light of the IPU Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections, as well as other international standards.
186. The new Indicators for Democratic Parliaments, developed by the IPU in collaboration with the United Nations and other partner organizations, provide an important tool to help us assess and strengthen our parliaments according to the principles set out in the SDGs, such as effectiveness, accountability, transparency and participation. We welcome the publication of these Indicators, which will help to guide the development of our institutions. We will do our utmost to turn these principles into action and to report back on progress made.
187. Among the various possible solutions to make Parliaments more inclusive, we will consider measures to promote ambitious and well-designed quotas aiming at gender parity and equitable representation of all groups, as well as aligning the minimum age of eligibility for public office with the voting age. We will endeavor to review our own policies and processes, with the aim of ensuring that leadership positions are equally shared between men and women within our institutions and build a culture of inclusiveness and non-discrimination in line with the IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments.
188. The rule of law, the idea that no one is above the law, that all people are equal under the law, and that everyone has the right to be protected by the law, must lie at the core of our action to strengthen governance. With this fundamental principle in mind, we will aim to

curb corruption so that public resources are not diverted for personal gain and policies are not tailored to particular interests at the expense of the common good. Along these same lines, we will endeavor to free government and relevant regulatory bodies from the “corporate capture” that is a frequent cause of distortion in policy outcomes.

189. Inspired by recent global initiatives to combat illicit financial and arms flows, we will strive to tighten the rules and close the loopholes that enable these most nefarious forms of corruption. We support national audit institutions for their valuable role in ensuring transparency and accountability through independent verification of public spending and related Government processes.
190. With regard to the justice system, we will aim to strengthen the impartiality of the courts, speed up trial times, extend legal aid and other facilities to improve access for the most vulnerable, expand the availability of less onerous processes such as arbitration and mediation, and ensure fairness in sentencing.
191. By extension, we will aspire to establish or strengthen independent national human rights institutions as essential tools for the promotion and protection of all human rights. We will seek to work closely with these institutions to implement their recommendations and to harmonize National legislation with international norms. In the context of this year’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we pledge to revitalize our actions to promote and protect human rights. We will strive to uphold the right of all legitimately constituted civil society organizations to make their voices heard on behalf of the groups they represent. We will also examine measures to strengthen the regulatory frameworks that govern the right to information so that, except for the most sensitive national security reasons, government-held information can be made available to the public on request and in a timely fashion. There can be no peace without justice. As conflicts within and between countries continue to become alarmingly more frequent and severe, undermining development gains, we will seek

to address the root causes of conflict that can often be found in economic inequality and discrimination against entire groups, due to gender, racial, ethnic, religious or cultural differences. We will also aim to invest more in human security – defined as the provision of food, health care, environmental security and other such contributors to human well-being – as the main path towards peace and development.

192. We reaffirm most strongly our belief in the rule of law, at both the national and international level, as the foundation of conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in dialogue and diplomacy as the only way towards lasting peace. We call on parties in all armed conflicts to abide by the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols with no exceptions. We encourage more frequent use of the International Court of Justice and other international judicial institutions as key tools to resolve disputes between countries peacefully.
193. We cannot ignore the fact that our Assembly here in Angola has taken place against the backdrop of a rapidly escalating crisis in the Middle East. We express grave concern about the humanitarian consequences of the crisis and we implore the international community to take definitive action to ensure the unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief into Gaza without delay. Above all, the hostilities in this region must cease and negotiations must resume towards a sustainable two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.
194. Recognizing that most armed conflicts and related mediation efforts tend to be male-dominated, we will support more robust involvement of women and youth in peace processes. We will strive to take all necessary measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women, especially women in politics, as well as against minority and marginalized groups, and provide assistance to survivors.

195. A key measure of good governance is the quality of the civil service and of the public sector in general, which provide the most immediate interface between government and the people. We recognize the need for deep reforms of public administrations so that they are adequately staffed through fair and transparent recruitment processes as well as equipped with the most modern tools to provide quality service to the public. Most importantly, we will seek to ensure more direct citizens' input into public sector reforms and into the administration of public services, including health care, education and environmental preservation, so as to more effectively meet the needs of the people.
196. The success of all our reforms will depend most critically on the mobilization of financial and human resources. We are committed to reversing the tide of underinvestment in the institutions and processes that lie at the core of SDG 16. In particular, a more coordinated effort must be made to collect data on gender, age, income and other criteria that are key to identifying those most at risk of being left behind. Relatively modest as a share of national budgets, the implementation cost of SDG 16 will pay high dividends in terms of producing positive social cohesion, peace, and development outcomes across the board. In this connection, we call on countries to review their development cooperation policies so that due emphasis is given to investments and capacity building in recipient countries' governance sectors.
197. In view of the major global assessment of SDG 16 expected at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2024, we will aim to conduct a thorough review of our national plans for SDG 16 and of the public sector in general, including through parliamentary hearings, special parliamentary commissions and other such initiatives. We encourage the IPU to collect and disseminate the findings from this exercise, and to highlight the good practices that may help mobilize further Parliamentary action.

198. We are deeply grateful to our host, the National Assembly of Angola, as well as the Angolan authorities and the Angolan people in general, for providing us with this valuable opportunity to come together as a global parliamentary community. We look forward to taking this Declaration back to our parliaments and to playing our part in ensuring its effective implementation.”

**ii. Orphanage trafficking: *The role of parliaments in reducing harm***

*(Resolution adopted by consensus by the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, Luanda, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023)*

199. Recalling the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000), the Guidelines regarding the implementation of that Optional Protocol (2018), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006),
200. Welcoming United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/133 of 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 on the rights of the child, in particular its focus on children without parental care, its call for States to progressively replace institutionalization with quality alternative care, including, inter alia, family and community-based care, and to take appropriate measures and approaches, and its paragraph 35(t), which calls on United Nations Member States to take “appropriate measures to protect children who are victims of trafficking and are deprived of parental care, enact and enforce legislation to prevent and combat the trafficking and exploitation of children in care facilities, support children who are victims of human trafficking in returning to their families and in receiving appropriate mental health and psychological assistance that is victim-centered and trauma-informed”, and to take “appropriate measures to prevent and address the harms related to volunteering programmes in orphanages, including in the context of tourism, which can lead to trafficking and exploitation” (a phenomenon known colloquially as “voluntourism”, a form of tourism in which travelers participate in voluntary work overseas),

201. Acknowledging recommendation D.1 of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child 2021 Day of General Discussion Outcome Report, which, inter alia, calls on United Nations Member States to “adopt legislation and regulations to eliminate orphanage tourism and volunteering in orphanages, prevent incentives driving institutionalization and family separation and ensure adequate offences and penalties to prevent and enable the prosecution of violations of children’s rights in alternative care, including orphanage trafficking”,
202. Highlighting paragraph 93 of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, welcomed in resolution 64/142 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2009, and included in its annex, which provides that “all alternative care settings should provide adequate protection to children from abduction, trafficking, sale and all other forms of exploitation”,
203. Recalling Articles 35 and 36 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which respectively require States Parties to “take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form”, and to “protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child’s welfare”,
204. Acknowledging the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), in particular Article 3(c), which confirms that child trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation, and Article 9.5, which requires States Parties to “adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures, such as educational, social or cultural measures, including through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking”,

205. Underlining the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), i.e. the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, participation, protection, inclusion, and survival and development that provide the framework for all actions concerning children,
206. Recognizing the urgent need to address orphanage trafficking, which is a multi-dimensional and complex phenomenon as it interacts with a wide range of factors that involve the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child into residential care for the purposes of exploitation and/or profit, and particularly the absence of legal safeguards and regulations and child protection systems, including those which are inadequate or contain loopholes, and which result in severe harm to children's physical, emotional and psychological well-being, recognizing also the urgent need for legislators and governments to take more proactive national steps to combat and reduce the risk of trafficking in human beings,
207. Noting that orphanage trafficking as a form of trafficking and modern slavery is a growing international concern that must be addressed through cross-border collaboration and cooperation between the countries of origin, transit and destination, including through measures to prevent such trafficking, to punish the traffickers and to protect the victims of such trafficking, which requires extensive and wide-ranging intervention at local, national, regional and international levels by all actors and stakeholders working together,
208. Acknowledging "A study on the exploitation and sexual abuse of children in the context of travel and tourism; a closer look at the phenomena of volunteerism", presented by the United Nations Special Rapporteur to the United Nations General Assembly in October 2023, on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children,

209. Acknowledging also the efforts to eradicate the phenomenon of orphanage trafficking that is still widespread due to the scourges of war and internal conflicts, and which leads to the breakdown of child protection systems,
210. Recognizing the necessity of a multifaceted approach to prevent and combat orphanage trafficking, including the collection of reliable data on children in orphanages, in order to protect children from such exploitation in the first place, including within the travel and tourism sector, domestically and in destination countries,
211. Recognizing also the urgent need for States to strengthen child protection systems worldwide to safeguard the inherent rights and holistic well-being of all children, especially those in vulnerable situations, such as children with disabilities, refugees, internally displaced children, and children affected by armed conflicts,
212. Recognizing further that many orphan children worldwide who have been placed in care homes for a variety of reasons are the most affected during times of war and conflict because they are forced to contend with the ills of orphan hood, isolation and the repercussions of war, which expose them to an uncertain fate,
213. Recognizing that a family caregiving setting is the most conducive environment for the growth, well-being and safety of children, and that removing a child from the family should, wherever possible, only be considered as a temporary last resort,
214. Concerned that not all States currently have the necessary legal framework to combat orphanage trafficking, in particular legal provisions to criminalize it, or the budget, technical expertise or human resources to address the problem,
215. Concerned also by the lack of regular monitoring of orphans' residential care facilities and the lack of regulation of volunteerism, in particular volunteerism activities involving children, which place children at risk of commodification, exploitation and sexual abuse

in the context of for-profit activities, and which increase vulnerabilities to human rights violations,

216. Recognizing the importance of creating awareness of the risks and indicators of orphanage trafficking and the harms associated with it, notably the adverse impacts on child rights, among the public, particularly parents, teachers, children, community leaders, social workers, legislators and other relevant policymakers and stakeholders,
217. Highlighting the precarious situation of the children involved in cases of orphanage trafficking where victims and survivors often lack appropriate legal remedy, support and access to justice, and the importance of a victim-centered and trauma-informed approach when combating the problem, as well as of child-centered rehabilitation processes,
218. Noting that orphanage trafficking is a commercial and exploitative act that may be driven by economic motivations, and may subject victims to various forms of exploitation including sexual exploitation, forced begging and forced labor, and may be exacerbated in conflict and post disaster contexts,
219. Recognizing that addressing orphanage trafficking will contribute towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets by 2030, including:
  - i. SDG 1.3 on social protection systems and measures
  - ii. SDG 1.a on ending poverty
  - iii. SDG 4.1 on free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education
  - iv. SDG 4.2 on quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education
  - v. all targets of SDG 5 on gender equality
  - vi. SDG 8.7 on the eradication of forced labor, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labor
  - vii. SDG 16.2 on ending the abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children,

220. Recognizing also United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/159 of 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 on enhancing the role of parliaments in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs,
221. Highlighting the importance of paragraph 31 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/133 of 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 on the rights of the child, which urges States to “strengthen child welfare and child protection systems and improve care reform efforts”,
222. Taking note of the guiding principles stipulated in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization in 1999, which advises States, the private sector and other stakeholders on responsible and sustainable development of tourism, including measures to prevent and protect children from sale and exploitation, particularly sexual exploitation, in the travel and tourism industry, as well as of the 2020 Tips for a responsible traveler developed by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, which calls on tourists to observe human rights and protect children from exploitation and abuse,
223. Concerned that well-meaning support for institutions through donations, child sponsorship programmes, orphanage volunteering or tourism, and faith-based missions, can lead to unnecessary family-child separation, perpetuate institutional models of care, undermine the development of more appropriate family-based care services, and create an economic incentive for orphanage trafficking,
224. Welcoming the efforts of Governments who have issued travel advisories and information materials to travelers, particularly tourists, in tourism source and destination countries, discouraging orphanage tourism and volunteering due to the risk of exploitation and profiteering,
225. Highlighting that poverty and inequality, as key drivers of orphanage trafficking, are exacerbated by humanitarian disasters,

climate change, armed conflict, political instability, lack of education, inequitable social-economic structures, family violence and gender discrimination,

226. Recognizing the unique needs of children belonging to minority groups or who are of indigenous origins,
227. Emphasizing that cooperation and coordination between parliaments and their governments aimed at combating and eradicating the drivers of orphanage trafficking at the early stages are of utmost importance,
228. Highlighting that gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls, as well as a lack of sexual and reproductive health services and education, often result in teenage or unwanted pregnancies which in turn increase the risk of orphanage trafficking,
229. Recalling Article 8.2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20<sup>th</sup> November 1989, adopted by United Nations General Assembly resolution 44/25, which provides that: “Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to re-establishing speedily his or her identity”,
230. Recalling also the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption of 29<sup>th</sup> May 1993, which establishes four main principles: the best interests of the child as the primary consideration; the prohibition of any profit to prevent trafficking; the double subsidiarity of international adoption (the latter is considered only if no solution can be found in the child’s country of origin); and the requirement to go through accredited bodies before being able to adopt,
231. Recalling further the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from enforced disappearance of 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2010,

232. Deeply concerned about illegal international adoptions, whereby thousands of children around the world have been taken away from their families and placed illegally on the international adoption market, whether through orphanages or not,
233. Highlighting the fact that, for the people concerned by these illegal adoptions, the consequences are dramatic in both human and administrative terms,
234. Bearing in mind that many States have undertaken or are undertaking investigations on illegal adoptions and are taking concrete measures to prevent them and help the victims,
235. Bearing in mind also the Joint statement on illegal intercountry adoptions issued by the United Nations Human Rights Office on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022, which indicates that illegal intercountry adoptions can constitute crimes against humanity, and which establishes three obligations for States, as follows: to prevent, investigate and remedy such crimes,
- a) Condemns all forms of orphanage trafficking and orphanage tourism, including orphanage volunteering;
  - b) Emphasizes the importance of cohesive international efforts to combat orphanage trafficking amidst armed conflicts or other humanitarian disasters;
  - c) Calls upon parliaments to cooperate and coordinate with their governments to introduce legal measures aimed at combating orphanage trafficking at the national level;
  - d) Calls upon the IPU to draft a model law for sending and receiving States, formalizing, in the best interests of the child, a clear legislative framework to combat orphanage trafficking and prevent orphanage tourism, address remaining gaps and ongoing challenges, in law and practice, whereby in all actions concerning children, their rights, education, voices, needs and security are at the Centre of any proceedings that affect their well-being, and to share knowledge of existing legislation and implementation;

- e) Also calls upon the IPU to prepare a parliamentary guide that sets out the working mechanisms for parliaments to discuss legislation on combating orphanage trafficking and prohibiting orphanage tourism, as well as to develop international principles and standards governing volunteerism activities that are in accordance with human rights norms and standards and particularly with the rights of the child, providing tools to monitor public policies on the protection of children from orphanage trafficking, and specific mechanisms of action that are applicable to parliaments in different regions of the world;
- f) Invites those States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying and fully implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000), and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), as key international instruments in the fight against orphanage trafficking and related crimes;
- g) Stresses the importance of multidisciplinary, multisectoral and international cooperation, including cross-border cooperation, in strategies to combat orphanage trafficking and tourism, and in ensuring the safe repatriation and rehabilitation of trafficked children;
- h) Calls upon parliaments and parliamentarians to actively engage in promoting a shared, up-to-date national understanding of the nature of orphanage trafficking;
- i) Acknowledges that migrant populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as children from war zones and temporarily occupied territories, are particularly vulnerable to orphanage trafficking and exploitation;
- j) Calls for the protection of the rights of refugee and migrant children, especially those separated from their families and susceptible to orphanage trafficking, in accordance with international law and child protection standards;
- k) Encourages parliaments to build synergies with their respective governments to implement appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures that take account of the

differentiated needs and experiences of children according to their age, sex, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, culture, language, disability, migration status or other socio-economic factors, while also taking account of parental responsibilities and ensuring children's participation in the development of measures pertaining to them, and by gathering and analyzing data on gender in this domain;

- l) Also encourages parliaments to ensure, through relevant legislation, that victims of trafficking are provided with long-term tailored assistance, irrespective of their readiness to cooperate with law enforcement;
- m) Urges parliaments to adopt legislative and regulatory measures that promote the reintegration of children from institutions, such as orphanages, children's homes and rescue centers, back into their families, or their placement in suitable family-based care, such as foster care and kinship care,
- n) Calls upon parliaments to provide adequate budgetary allocations and resources for the effective implementation of the laws and measures in place to deliver quality care to children in institutional and alternative care settings and to ensure the effective protection of children from exploitation and abuse in the context of orphanage trafficking and volunteerism;
- o) Urges parliaments to ensure the development and implementation of robust screening processes for organizations and individuals involved in the establishment or funding of orphanages, to secure transparent, accountable and temporary practices;
- p) Strongly urges parliaments to prioritize the allocation of resources for robust legislative frameworks and effective enforcement mechanisms to prevent and combat orphanage trafficking, including rigorous inspections of and licensing procedures for childcare facilities, and for comprehensive victim support systems;
- q) Emphasizes the importance of a commitment by the private sector, including the travel industry, civil society, academia, charities and communities to work together and collaboratively with governments to combat orphanage trafficking and to stop

the flow of funds and volunteers to institutions which commodify children;

- r) Urges parliaments and parliamentarians to promote awareness, in both sending and receiving countries, among governments, civil society, charities, community groups, faith-based organizations, educational institutions and families of orphanage trafficking, of the harms of orphanage tourism, donations to orphanages, and the importance of family-based care, and thus provide protection to children to grow in a family-based environment under their own cultural conditions;
- s) Also urges parliaments to enable the rapid exchange of information amongst anti-trafficking actors to adjust responses according to the constantly changing tactics of traffickers, as well as to promote awareness and monitoring among related agencies operating in the same space, with an emphasis on cooperation, technology and information sharing;
- t) Invites the IPU to schedule periodic meetings and workshops with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, and with other stakeholders, experts and activists, emphasizing local and regional initiatives for preventing and tackling the problem of orphanage trafficking and orphanage tourism, and other activities to allow parliaments to exchange information regarding good practices and successful experiences in combating orphanage trafficking and prohibiting orphanage tourism in line with international human rights standards;
- u) Calls upon national parliaments to accelerate their efforts in poverty eradication and reaffirm that investment in children and the realization of their rights through an integrated and multifaceted approach based on the well-being of children under the Sustainable Development Goals is one of the best ways to protect children from unnecessary institutionalization and the risk of trafficking and exploitation;
- v) Urges parliaments to take effective action to implement international commitments and bring their domestic legal and regulatory framework into full conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Guidelines for the Alternative Care of

Children and United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/133 of 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 on the rights of the child, including by:

- i. Ensuring criminal laws enable the prosecution of orphanage trafficking and exploitation offences, including the unlawful removal of a child from parents or guardians and placement in a care facility for the purpose of exploitation and/or profit and/or to ensure that countries are not used as safe havens or channels for exploitation and abuse of children;
- ii. Criminalizing the grooming of children and of trusted persons (parents, guardians, caregivers) to facilitate both online and offline sexual exploitation especially by persons in positions of power, authority or trust, and by undertaking efforts to adopt legislation that enhances online safety and establishes mandatory efforts and liability for technology companies, creates standards for monitoring and reporting of harmful online acts to protect potential victims and prevent future instances of exploitation;
- iii. Establishing by law extraterritorial jurisdiction for all offences of child trafficking, exploitation and grooming;
- iv. Establishing enforceable child protection regulations for the travel, volunteering and tourism industry that include a prohibition on orphanage volunteering and non-family visits to orphanages, and regulation of other forms of volunteerism activities involving children;
- v. Incorporating regulations on the participation of voluntarists, volunteers and visitors into existing child protection, child welfare and alternative care regulations, and specifically restricting non-family visits to and volunteering within residential childcare facilities;
- vi. Ensuring that a child- and disability-friendly and gender-responsive reporting mechanism, as well as regular monitoring and supervision, is accessible to children in residential care, and to children and young people who have transitioned out of care, while ensuring the confidentiality and safety of the reporter and witnesses;

- vii. Establishing sufficient not-for-profit sector regulations and ensuring charitable activities comply with international child rights norms, safeguard children's best interests, and protect children, especially children with disabilities, from harm, abuse and rights violations;
- viii. Strengthening the implementation of child protection laws and regulations, including the licensing, monitoring and oversight of residential care facilities in cooperation with civil society, and of protective measures to avoid the re-traumatization and re-victimization of child victims as a result of any interactions with State authorities including in investigative and judicial processes;
- ix. Ensuring that laws related to the protection and welfare of children provide that, insofar as possible, children remain in the custody and care of their families except in circumstances in which harm can only be prevented by temporarily placing the child in a home, orphanage or rescue shelter;
- x. Calling for robust measures to hold accountable all individuals or entities involved in orchestrating or facilitating the deportation and abduction of children from temporarily occupied territories, including through the potential use of orphanages for exploitation and profit;
- xi. Establishing by law the right to remedies, including compensation, for children who are subjected to trafficking, including orphanage trafficking;
- xii. Strengthening international adoption regulations to ensure that intercountry adoptions are conducted transparently, ethically and in the best interests of the child, with a focus on preventing trafficking and exploitation in the context of adoption;
- xiii. Preventing international adoption by parties to an armed conflict, particularly prohibiting such adoption of children from conflict-related regions;
- xiv. Developing and enforcing a domestic volunteering framework that includes conducting thorough background checks on volunteers and providing training and support to

- eradicate unskilled volunteering, ensuring that volunteers understand and respect the rights of children;
- xv. Ensuring that children who are transitioning out of care upon reaching the age of majority receive dedicated, comprehensive assistance prior to leaving care that effectively and meaningfully prepares them for independently living out of care, including on how to enter the job market, and an assistance and measures package to meet their needs once they have left care, as well as a point of contact for ongoing and periodic safety and well-being reviews;
  - xvi. Encouraging governments and national tourism authorities to improve their administrative and legal processes in regulating the private sector within the travel and tourism industry to ensure compliance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and child rights' obligations, and the "do no harm" principle by creating incentives for tourism operators to actively prioritize child protection to vulnerable children in touristic destinations and to undertake human rights due diligence, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes;
  - xvii. Developing robust national databases on the scope and prevalence of volunteerism within national contexts by improving and securing a comprehensive approach to data collection through multisectoral partnership which is essential for developing targeted prevention;
  - xviii. Providing national children and youth protection authorities with a sound legal basis, and sufficient financial and human resources to fulfill their tasks and enable continuous oversight of residential care facilities and effective protection of individuals entrusted to such institutions;
  - xix. Strengthening deinstitutionalization programmes and family-focused development targeting poor parents and disadvantaged families through formal education, training on parenting capacities and economic incentives;
  - xx. Advocating for the development and implementation of safe repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation programmes

- for children who have been victims of orphanage trafficking, exploitation or forcible transfers;
- xxi. Prioritizing investment in multi-sectoral collaborative partnerships by working cooperatively with relevant stakeholders to find sustainable solutions to address the root causes of orphanage trafficking and volunteerism, which includes investment in poverty reduction, food security, sexual and reproductive health rights, security and the rule of law;
  - xxii. Strengthening social services for child protection and making systems inclusive to respond to the needs of all children, regardless of their migration status, with a focus on both primary violence prevention for all children and more targeted prevention and child-friendly response services, particularly for children in vulnerable situations; as well as by giving priority to legal services and safeguards for children at risk or who are victims of sale, abuse and exploitation;
  - xxiii. Promoting inclusive and responsive family-oriented policies, including those designed to: strengthen parents' and caregivers' ability to care for children, support social policies that work towards the deinstitutionalization of children, address negative social norms that affect equal access to quality education, and prevent the exploitation of children within childcare institutions or alternative care;
- w) Calls upon IPU Member Parliaments to request their governments to pay particular attention to situations of illegal intercountry adoptions and, if they have not already done so, to conduct investigations into the matter in order to shed full light on these facts and to understand the processes that have made it possible for illegal adoptions of abducted or trafficked children to be validated, legalized and authenticated;
- x) Also calls upon IPU Member Parliaments and their governments to do their utmost, once such investigations have been terminated, to ensure that the conclusions drawn lead to concrete measures aimed at helping victims, on the one hand,

and, on the other, at preventing other persons from becoming victims in the future;

- y) Further calls upon IPU Member Parliaments and their Governments, on the basis of such investigations, to acknowledge that cases of illegal adoption have indeed taken place and to recognize the persons concerned as victims.

**iii. Report of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development  
Noted by the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Luanda, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

236. The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development held its sittings on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October. Both sittings were chaired by the Committee Vice President, Mr. W. William (Seychelles).

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

238. The theme of the next resolution was introduced by two experts: Ms. T. Tollmann, Process Management Officer at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat, and Ms. A. Smagadi, Legal Officer, Officer in Charge of the Montevideo Coordination and Delivery Unit, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The draft resolution co-Rapporteurs Mr. S. Patra (India), Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) and Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates) were also present.

239. Ms. T. Tollmann (UNFCCC), citing the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), emphasized the urgency of climate action and introduced the Global Stock take (GST) as a critical mechanism within the Paris Agreement. The GST, occurring every five years, assesses parties' climate measures and informs their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It focuses on mitigation, loss and damage, and means of implementation and support to enhance international cooperation and ambition. She highlighted the engagement of non-party stakeholders in the GST, emphasizing civil society's role, and outlined the three GST phases:

information collection, technical assessment and outputs leading to COP28. In terms of governance, the process involves the Conference of the Parties (CMA) as the overall authority, supported by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).

240. A high-level committee, comprising CMA Presidencies and SBSTA/SBI Chairs, oversees high-level events in the global stock take process, ensuring a structured and organized approach.
241. Ms. A. Smagadi (UNEP) discussed the alignment of legislation with the Committee's draft resolution and introduced the UNEP Montevideo Environmental Law Programme. The programme served as an intergovernmental platform dedicated to advancing environmental law priorities and had entered its fifth decade of action. A central focus of UNEP's activities within the programme was capacity building, aimed at equipping nations and regions with the knowledge and resources needed to create, implement and enforce environmental laws effectively.
242. Ms. S. Magadi highlighted key thematic priorities, including addressing critical issues such as pollution, climate change and biodiversity crises through legal responses. Parliaments have a pivotal role in addressing these global challenges by developing and enacting environmental laws, both by way of overarching frameworks and specific climate change legislation. Parliaments can take rapid measures, define actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through sectoral laws and ensure the effective implementation of these laws through oversight. Recognizing the interconnectedness of environmental and climate-related legislation is crucial, and parliaments can draft legislation that establishes climate rights and obligations, creating a legal framework for climate action.
243. They should also actively engage in discussions about emerging climate concepts to ensure the legal system remains adaptable. To support these efforts, UNEP offers an online Law and Environmental Assistance Platform (LEAP), providing step-by-step assessments to

identify specific legal needs, and a Law and Climate Change Toolkit to facilitate the implementation of legal measures to address climate-related issues. In conclusion, Ms. Smagadi emphasized that UNEP's Montevideo Environmental Law Programme underscored the vital role of parliaments in shaping and implementing environmental and climate legislation. It offers guidance and practical tools to assist in these efforts, contributing to the strengthening of legal frameworks necessary for addressing pressing global environmental challenges.

244. Following the expert presentations, the co-Rapporteurs addressed the Committee. Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (UAE) highlighted the urgent need for increased partnerships for climate action, emphasizing the visible impact of climate change on basic needs and the growing gap between stakeholders, underscoring the necessity for more effective climate action. Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius was a challenge which is why parliaments must scrutinize governments to achieve that goal.
245. To strengthen the parliamentary role in climate action, it was necessary to raise awareness, foster individual responsibility, initiate interactions between parliamentarians and stakeholders, and support regional and global efforts to align parliaments with international climate agendas. Mr. S. Patra (India) clarified the key components of the draft resolution, defined the crucial notions and elaborated on the nuances between climate action and climate change. He delved into the scope of “access”, affordability of green energy, responsibility, and equity. Partnerships involved both providing and receiving support.
246. Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) focused on implementation, stressing the need to take practical steps for successful resolution implementation. She introduced the idea of including ecocide as an environmental crime. Twenty delegates shared their countries' climate action practices and challenges. Delegates raised critical questions about the pace of global climate action and concerns about exceeding temperature limits. Given the complexity of climate issues, it was important to remove technical and financial barriers. International

collaboration and partnerships were essential. In view of the vulnerability of their nations to climate change, there was a need for coordinated efforts while bearing in mind the common but differentiated responsibilities among nations. The importance of sharing good practices on green energy transition and removing barriers for sustainable transformation was stressed. In terms of parliamentary functions, oversight of the Paris Agreement commitments, budget allocation for the green transition and the enacting of laws for carbon neutrality were emphasized. The pivotal role of parliamentary bodies in addressing pressing global environmental challenges was highlighted.

247. Preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in the United Arab Emirates. The Chair recalled that the IPU had been promoting parliamentary engagement in climate change for more than a decade. To that end, the aim of the Parliamentary Meeting at COP28, which was being co-organized by the IPU and the Federal National Council of the UAE, was to give parliamentarians an opportunity to obtain first-hand information on the main issues to be discussed at COP28. It is the first time that the venue of the Parliamentary Meeting, which is to be held on 6th December in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, will be in the COP Green Zone thereby elevating the visibility of parliaments as key stakeholders in climate action.

248. The Parliamentary Meeting's Rapporteur Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (UAE), Ms. S. Shaw, Senior Advisor at COP28, and Ms. H. Bourke, Green Zone Manager at COP28, shared the main points of the draft Outcome Document to be adopted as well as the practical arrangements for the meeting. The Standing Committee was invited to provide comments and ideas to further refine the text of the Outcome Document before its presentation at the Parliamentary Meeting. The document is being drafted around thematic elements including clean energy transition, parliamentary engagement and international cooperation. A total of four delegates took the floor to share their ideas on the draft document. Comments included the suggestion to include wording on reducing methane emissions as a complementary method to address

climate change. The importance of green development and climate finance was also highlighted.

**iv. Expert hearing on the theme Ensuring global food security**

249. The discussion and key issues for consideration were introduced by Ms. A. Badejo, Deputy Regional Director for Operations, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, World Food Programme (WFP), and Ms. S. Healy-Thow, Global Youth Campaigns Coordinator for the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN).

250. Ms. Badejo (WFP) highlighted the profound challenges faced by the world's most vulnerable populations in relation to food security. People living in fragile and conflict-affected regions were now also grappling with the added burden of the climate crisis. Frequent disasters were causing damage to lives, livelihoods and harvests. There was an urgent need for governments to take climate action. The El Niño phenomenon which reached its peak in September 2023, is expected to last until May 2024. It causes droughts and increased rainfall that jeopardize agricultural production and food security. The paradox was that while some regions of the world faced both drought and flooding simultaneously, other regions were struggling to recover from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Although food, fertilizers and energy prices had decreased, they were still higher than their pre-pandemic levels. Furthermore, global food needs were outstripping the humanitarian system's ability to meet those demands.

251. Governments must invest in tackling the root causes of food insecurity and parliaments must bolster the political will and funding to enhance food security, improve people's lives worldwide, expand training programmes and focus on long-term resilience while promoting peace and sound economic policies.

252. Ms. Healy-Throw (GAIN) emphasized the critical importance of involving young people in discussions about their own future, especially when they were the ones directly impacted by the decisions made today. Food, a fundamental human need, holds immense significance not only in terms of nutrition but also in terms of its role

in environmental degradation and even conflict. It was crucial to engage young people in developing solutions. She presented a set of actionable commitments aimed at ensuring food security, including making healthy food affordable, ending harmful chemical use in farming, providing every child with a healthy school meal, educating everyone about the environmental impact, halting land use degradation, banning single-use plastics, embracing indigenous food knowledge, ending destructive practices, and supporting local growers through tax incentives. It was important to involve young people in co-creating and driving these initiatives forward. She encouraged leaders to engage with youth councils and organizations in their respective countries.

253. A total of 22 delegates took the floor to share their experiences, insights and concerns on the pressing issue of ensuring a stable and sustainable food supply for the world's population. Delegates highlighted the intricate interconnectedness of countries and their food systems. Consequently, food and nutrition security were not merely a National concern but a global challenge that necessitated international collaboration.

254. Parliaments, as the legislative bodies of nations, were pivotal in fostering this global collaboration. They hold the power to create and amend policies that can influence trade agreements, agricultural practices and food distribution on a national level. Nevertheless, food security cannot be achieved in isolation. Nations must work together to ensure that food is produced, distributed, and accessed fairly and sustainably on a global scale. Equitable access to food is a shared responsibility that parliaments must recognize.

255. By fostering cooperation with other countries and international organizations, parliaments can help create a more inclusive and just global food system. This involves supporting initiatives to combat climate change, reduce conflicts and ensuring that vulnerable regions receive the aid they need. Moreover, the emphasis on sustainable agriculture underlines the importance of practices that do not deplete resources, harm the environment, or negatively impact other nations.

Parliaments have a role in promoting policies that encourage responsible agricultural practices that consider the global consequences of local actions.

## **O. RECOMENDATIONS BY THE KENYA DELEGATION**

The Kenya Parliament Delegation to the 147<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly and related meetings, pursuant to Article 7 of the IPU Statutes, urges the two Houses of Parliament to-

1. Note this Report; and
2. Follow up on the implementation of the Declaration and Resolutions of the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and Related meetings.

## APPENDIX 1

### REPUBLIC OF KENYA



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### PARLIAMENT

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#### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT RESOLUTION BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ON ORPHANAGE TRAFICKING: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN REDUCING HARM

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##### Operative clauses

The Senate, Parliament of Kenya proposes that the operative clauses of the draft resolution on "*orphanage trafficking: the role of parliaments in reducing harm*" be amended as follows -

- (1) by inserting the following new clause immediately after clause 6-
  - 6a. *Urges* parliaments to put in legislative and regulatory measures that promote the re-integration back into their families or foster families of children in institutions such as orphanages, children's homes and rescue centres.
- (2) In clause 7 by deleting the words "for profit" appearing immediately after the words "and volunteer to".
- (3) by deleting clause 8 and substituting therefor the following new clause-

*Urges parliaments and parliamentarians to promote awareness of orphanage trafficking among civil society, charities, community groups and families and thus provide protection to children*
- (4) in clause 10 by inserting the following new paragraph immediately after paragraph (a)-
  - (ab) Ensuring that laws related to the protection and welfare of children provide that in as far as is possible children remain in the

custody and care of their families except in circumstances in which harm can only be prevented by placing the child in a home, orphanage or rescue shelter.

- (5) In clause 10(d) by deleting the words “a prohibition” appearing immediately after the words “that include” and substituting therefor the word “restrictions”.
- (6) In clause 10(e) by deleting the words “prohibiting” appearing immediately after the words “regulations and specifically” and substituting therefor the word “restricting”.

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