

# The World of Parliaments

Quarterly Review of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

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## *Chilean Senator Sergio Pérez elected President of the IPU Council*

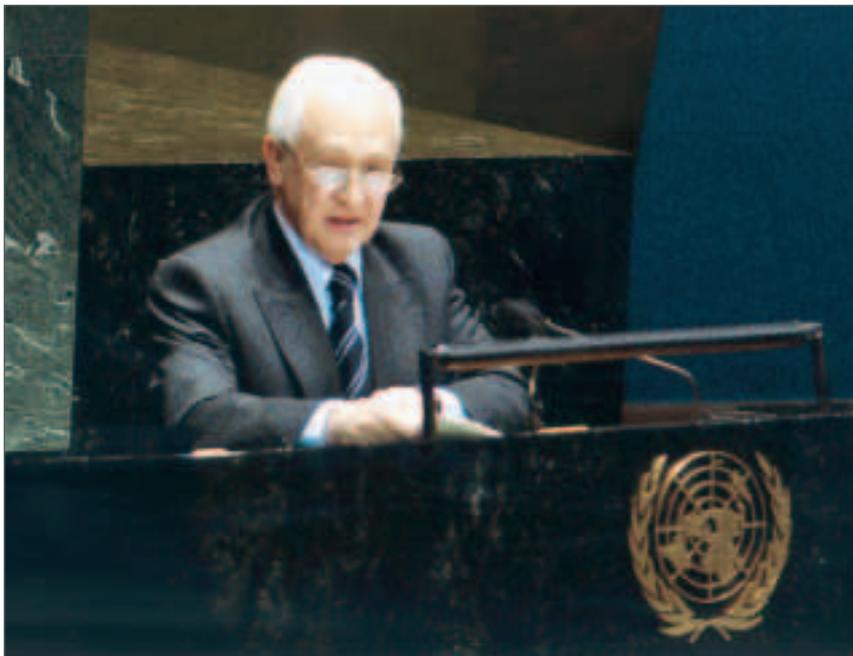


Photo : UN

Chilean Senator Sergio Pérez was elected President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Council at its 171st session, held in Geneva from 23 to 27 September 2002. He won by 106 votes to 99 against the Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia, Mr. Mosé Tjitendero. Senator Paéz succeeds Dr. Najma Heptulla (Deputy Chairperson of India's Upper House) for a three-year term. Senator Paéz, a member of the Christian Democrat Party, is married and has two children. He was born on 1 June 1933 in Santiago (Chile).

The new President of the IPU Council, Chilean Senator Sergio Pérez, taking the floor at the UN General Assembly.

## *UN General Assembly granted observer status to the IPU with exceptional right to circulate its documents*

On 21 November 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). After granting observer status to the IPU earlier that week (see p.2), the Assembly went on to give the IPU the exceptional right to circulate its official documents. Speaking at the UN General Assembly, the President of the IPU Council, Chilean Senator Sergio Pérez, expressed the

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gratitude of the IPU to the United Nations and its Member States. “This resolution represents an important milestone in the evolving relationship between the world organization of national parliaments and the United Nations”, he said.

Over the years, the IPU has played a discreet but rewarding role in bringing people together. “As parliamentarians, we are particularly apt at helping to solve problems by using our personal and parliamentary skills. We are often able to open up channels of communication and build bridges of international understanding when official diplomacy is unable or unwilling to do so. The fundamental notion underlying the exercise of democracy is the respect of the other. Democratic life entails both the right to differ and the acceptance of such difference by all. Parliamentary practice takes those differences and uses them to build majorities and forge agreements; we parliamentarians can therefore help to assemble the national consensus that is necessary for international action”, added Senator Páez.

The President of the IPU Council recalled that “two years ago, the IPU brought to this hall the Speakers of the world’s parliaments. In an unprecedented summit, the world parliamentary community, at the highest level, committed itself to providing a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation. The declaration adopted on that occasion also stated that parliaments embody the sovereignty of the people and can, in all legitimacy, contribute to expressing their will in the international arena. This assertion underpins the first important step on the long road towards a more democratic international order”.

### **“Exception granted in view of the unique inter-State character of the IPU”**

Senator Páez concluded by welcoming “this opportunity to reinforce the relationship between the United Nations and national parliaments through the IPU” and committing the Union “to a new stage of cooperation with the United Nations that will provide mutual benefit to both organizations”.

In its resolution, the UN General Assembly decided that the IPU will be authorized to circulate its documents at the UN. For the IPU Secretary General, Anders B. Johnsson, “this exception is granted in view of the unique inter-State character of the IPU as the world organization of parliaments. It is only natural that it should be able to distribute its official documents at the United Nations”. He added that “it is one important way of bringing the voice of the people, through their elected representatives, to the United Nations”.

As the General Assembly was in session, more than 120 MPs from 34 countries and three regional assemblies participated in the UN/IPU Meeting of parliamentarians attending the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly. They engaged in a dialogue with senior UN officials on major issues facing the United Nations.

### **The President of the General Assembly expressed his appreciation for the**

## **Cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations**

Addressing the opening ceremony, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Jan Kavan, expressed his appreciation for the cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations. “The 57th session of the General Assembly should be a new milestone in the cooperation between the UN and the IPU” he declared. “The world is still far from the goal of lasting peace, which was the main objective of the IPU founders more than a hundred years ago and which also inspired the founders of the United Nations. The world is, moreover, still struggling against poverty and underdevelopment, diseases, environmental degradation, unequal distribution of resources, human rights abuses and several other problems. None of these problems has a simple solution but all require the cooperation of the people of good will who can contribute to tackling them. The role of parliamentarians in the endeavour is crucial”, he concluded.

### **Message from the United Nations Secretary-General**

Sir Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, read a message to the participants from the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in which he recalled IPU’s substantive contribution to the work of the United Nations. He stated “the IPU has seized the opportunity to support the efforts of the international community – not least by familiarizing parliamentarians with the work of the United Nations and how it relates to the needs of their constituencies. That activity has brought us to the eve of the vote by the General Assembly to grant observer status to the IPU. I look forward to this action, which will usher in a new era in our relationship that will benefit both our organizations”.

## **- READ IN THE PRESS -**

### **First Chilean MP to address UN [on behalf of IPU]**

Chilean Senator Páez will become the first Chilean parliamentarian ever to address the United Nations. This historic event will take place at the 57th United Nations General Assembly, shortly after observer status has been granted to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) [the Council of which is] chaired by Senator Páez.  
*Ultima Hora (Chile), 18 November 2002*

### **Senate: Too much of everything except efficiency**

A study conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has highlighted the waste and lack of transparency in the parliamentary field which most of our national legislators, over the years, have preferred to overlook. The technical report in question, carried out by experts from the international organization of parliaments at the request of the Senate of the Nation, calls attention to the “great many” legislative committees, staff and advisors in the upper house.

*La Nacionline (Argentina) – 5 November 2002*

# A Parliamentary dimension for the United Nations

On 21 November, the Inter-Parliamentary Union was granted observer status in the United Nations. The status includes the right, awarded to the IPU on an exceptional basis and currently enjoyed only by Palestine, to distribute its documents as official General Assembly papers. The world organisation of parliaments has thus taken a significant step towards its goal of endowing the United Nations with a parliamentary dimension.

This exceptional right was given to the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of its being an inter-State organisation. Only two years after the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, held at the United Nations on the eve of the Millennium Assembly, IPU resolutions will be distributed in the United Nations. In practical terms, this means that the IPU resolutions have been placed on a par with those of the UN Member States.

For the Inter-Parliamentary Union, this is an auspicious moment, long awaited and carefully prepared over the months and years. When he took the floor before the United Nations General Assembly - the first time a Council President had addressed the Assembly in that capacity - Mr. Sergio Pérez expressed deep appreciation of the new opportunity to bolster relations between the United Nations and national parliaments through the IPU and to commit the Union to a new era of cooperation with the United Nations.

Meanwhile, in Geneva, preparations continue to establish a parliamentary dimension for the World Trade Organization (WTO). In February 2003, the IPU and the European Parliament will be holding a joint conference on the WTO which will be attended by the WTO Director General, Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi. As governments prepare to address the Doha Development Agenda adopted in November 2001 and prepare for the Fifth WTO Ministerial Conference in September in Cancún, the meeting in Geneva will provide MPs who specialise in international trade with an opportunity to glean first-hand information from the new WTO leadership. They will hold talks with the government representatives involved in multi-lateral trade negotiations, exchange views with the representatives of the foremost international organisations executing trade-related assistance programmes, and hold a round table discussion with leaders of civil society.

Both in New York and Geneva, the IPU thus continues to build on its traditional role of providing a bridge between government and the citizen. As it takes possession of the House of Parliaments, its new Geneva headquarters, the Union is in a stronger position than ever before to channel the views of ordinary people into the international negotiating fora. ■

L.B.

## Sergio Pérez refers to US-Iraq conflict: "A war is unacceptable"

Christian Democrat Senator Sergio Pérez, the new President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, said that following the granting of UN observer status to the IPU, the world organization of parliaments, the latter would strive to muster political support for UN resolutions. "We will back what the UN decides, but it is clear for each and every one of us that a war is unacceptable", he said after expressing satisfaction at his election, as a result of which Chile is chairing the IPU Council for the first time.

*El Mostrador (Chile) – 28 September 2002*

## Fewer than two MPs out of ten around the world are women

Women are still vastly under-represented in the world's parliaments, which have an average of 14.7% women members, i.e. fewer than two out of ten, as against 12.8% in January 2000, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which speaks of "democracy in the making". Five northern European countries (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland), with an average of nearly four women MPs out of ten, still lead in terms of women's representation in parliament, based on the latest IPU statistics, valid as of 20 September 2002. The information provided by 180 national parliaments puts Sweden in first place, with 45.3% women in parliament.

*Yahoo Actualités – Agence France Presse (AFP) – 21 September 2002*

## Chile happy at Chilean MP's election as President of IPU Council

The Chilean Government has welcomed the election of Senator Sergio Pérez as President of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which it views as "recognition for the country and for Latin America". In an official press release, the Chilean Foreign Affairs Minister stressed that the election of Pérez to head the world organization of parliaments was "a political act of faith which commits Chilean MPs". He added that this commitment should help make the IPU "a body capable of facilitating solutions to the challenges and problems which are faced by millions of men and women affected by growing insecurity and which systematically impact on social stability and international peace".

*Spanish agency EFE – 27 September 2002*

## Bringing Israeli and Palestinian MPs together: Liliane Maury Pasquier supports peace initiative

The President of the Swiss National Council, Ms Liliane Maury Pasquier, has expressed support for an initiative by the association "The Manifesto – Movement for a Just and Lasting Peace in the Middle East" to bring Israeli and Palestinian MPs together in Switzerland. The meeting could take place this winter. The President of the National Council was speaking in Geneva at a joint press conference with the Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Anders Johnsson, on the eve of IPU's annual session. As Manifesto co-President Alain Bittar explained, contacts have been established with the Speakers of the Israeli and Palestinian parliaments. The IPU Secretary General has also come out in favour of this initiative.

*Agence télégraphique Suisse (ATS) – 20 September 2002*

# Are quotas necessary to have more women in parliament?

Parity is one of the priorities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which states in its Universal Declaration on Democracy (1997) that *the achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences*. Does this mean that women's election to parliament depends on quotas? Three women give their views.

**Mrs. Liliane Maury Pasquier**  
President of the Swiss National Council  
(until 26 November 2002)

*"Women can fundamentally change the way parliament works"*

**Q : You are one of the rare women to lead a Chamber. Why is it important to have women presiding officers in parliaments?**

**Liliane Maury Pasquier :** Because they can put forward another point of view, even if it is only through the way they do things. I hope that this will be the start of equitable representation of society, which is composed of men and women. I will be delighted the day the subject of women's representation in parliaments becomes a non-issue because it has become something natural.

**Q : Does having women in politics make a difference?**

**L.M.P. :** I am certain of this because, above and beyond opinions, what I have seen as an MP is that women in parliaments and in society in general are always respectful of others. They attach more importance to meetings, to devising solutions that enjoy the broadest consensus, they work to secure a solid and effective majority. They are in touch with others and are more interested in what works than putting themselves forward. In this respect, they can fundamentally change the way parliament works.

**Q : Are quotas necessary to have more women in parliament?**

**L.M.P. :** I believe that unfortunately, there is no getting round quotas, because in the end only Swedish women have managed to achieve parity with Swedish men in parliament. I think that without firm action, we will not achieve our goal, or perhaps only in a few centuries... But I can't wait that long!

**Q : You took the floor at the 171st session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council. Why in your view is the IPU important?**

**L.M.P. :** The IPU is important because it brings male and female representatives of practically all of the world's countries together at the parliamentary level. It provides a means of creating relations, ties and networks and strengthening the role of parliaments, particularly in the globalization process, where parliaments must ensure that the people's voice is heard.

**Q : You are interested in parliamentary diplomacy and more particularly in the Middle East. The IPU Council hopes that the IPU will sponsor a proposal submitted by the Swiss**

**Inter-Parliamentary Group and "The Manifesto – Movement for a Fair and Lasting Peace in the Middle East", to organize a meeting in Geneva between members of the Knesset and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. Why do you support this cause?**

**L.M.P. :** The situation in the Middle East is particularly worrying. Instead of working itself out, it is becoming more and more complicated. This conflict seems insoluble and in a field like this, parliaments cannot sit idly by. As parliamentarians, we can perhaps try an approach, arrange a meeting, bring people together or foster dialogue with a view to changing the way people think. When people meet, it helps them understand the way others see reality. If this is the case, then we will have taken a step in the right direction. Naturally, the parliamentary sphere is not the governmental sphere, but parliament is one of the components of public opinion and can help to make things change.

## Morocco:

*"Quotas may not be democratic, but they are a path leading to democracy"*

In the Arab countries, even though men still have a firm grip on politics (on average, only a scant 4.6% of all Arab MPs are women), there are encouraging signs as far as women's participation is concerned. In Morocco, after the election of 35 women on 27 September 2002 (out of a total of 325 seats), women now account for 10.8% of all MPs, thanks to the introduction of a 30-seat quota.

**Mrs. Amina Ouchelh** is one of the women elected on the national women's list. A professor of Arabic and Education Studies she is also First Secretary General of the women of the USFP (main, center-left political grouping) and Vice-President of the Council for the commune of Agdal Ryad (Rabat). Her views on the challenges of this historic result follow.

**Q : What is going to change after the elections?**

**Amina Ouchelh :** The way people think, I hope! And priorities too. The fact that 35 women have entered parliament will ensure that questions like literacy and education, the family, the status of women and that of abandoned children, as well as violence against women and children, are given priority rather than being viewed as minor issues. These questions are essential to the social and economic development of Moroccan society. I do not mean that Moroccan women MPs should focus exclusively on these fields – we are the militants of political parties which have their own social projects. We must therefore show an interest in all fields, but the family and women's place in society must be tackled urgently. Women have another way of approaching problems, they are interested in the



Photo MAP

King Mohammed VI surrounded by the women elected to the Moroccan Parliament.

are better listeners and they have the patience to follow even the smallest details of a case through to the end. They also have an overall view of problems, which is a real asset. Moreover, we hope to establish contacts and exchanges with other MPs from democratic countries, who believe that women's participation in politics is important for social progress.

**Q : What do you think of quotas?**

**A.O. :** I feel that quotas are not democratic, but in order to achieve democracy, this stage is necessary to change the way people think. Quotas are a tool designed to help parties and people finally to realise that women are men's equals. Instead of waiting generations for a change in the way people think, we are forcing mentalities to change, and the role of the 35 elected women MPs is very important at this stage. It is up to them, or rather us, to prove that Moroccan women can be politicians, just as they have proven that they can be lawyers and doctors, for example. In Morocco, people are prepared to put their lives in the hands of lady doctors because they trust them. The same holds true for those who turn to a female lawyer to defend their interests or to solve their problems. Today, the unresolved problem is women's participation in political life, and quotas are a very important tool for getting past this stage. Even though quotas are not democratic, they are a path leading to democracy. I hope that later on, we won't need them any more. I am counting on the wholehearted commitment of all in this respect.

**Q : Is it necessary to help women who do not necessarily have extensive political experience, after this first stage?**

**A.O. :** Yes, they will need help, because some women have no parliamentary experience. In my view, it shouldn't be difficult to organise the corresponding meetings or workshops. I believe that most of the women MPs will fit in easily, because they have valuable experience in the field of associations, as some are communal councillors. We must now shoulder our responsibilities and take up an essential yet daunting challenge. Here, I would like to stress that this result came under the reign of His Majesty Mohammed VI, due to the will of the new majority government headed by Mr. Abdelhmane Youssef. I do not know whether we could have achieved this under another government.

**Djibouti:**

*A political will to promote women in Djibouti*

In Djibouti, Parliament has adopted a law setting aside 10% of the seats in the National Assembly for women, a key first step which **Mrs. Hawa Ahmed Youssef**, Officer-in-charge of the Promotion of Women, Family Welfare and Social Affairs in Djibouti, views as a "decisive stage".

**Q : Why is this law important?**

**Hawa Ahmed Youssef:** The decision to set aside 10% of the seats for women is a decisive stage, which shows political resolve. 1999 was an important year as far as women's integration in politics was concerned.

**Q : Are the political parties prepared to implement this measure?**

**H.A.Y. :** The new law obliges all political parties to include women on the lists they present in the December elections so as to ensure that women obtain 10 % of the seats in the National Assembly. We have asked them to abide by this law and include many women's names on these lists, for women represent 52% of the population. Before, women were virtually shut out of the decision-making process.

**Q : Why is women's arrival in politics important in Djibouti?**

**H.A.Y. :** Because women can help change the way people think. Since 1999, the government has done a great deal to promote the cause of women. The elected women MPs will be able to prove that they are as responsible as men and can contribute to the country's development. Men recognise that women appointed to high-level positions are always totally committed, do serious work and display great willingness. By tabling bills, women will have an opportunity not only to help improve the living conditions of other women but also to boost development.

**Q : Are women prepared to shoulder this responsibility?**

**H.A.Y. :** They are prepared and they have sound arguments to take on this responsibility. They have fought for their rights since independence, but also for their own independence! The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Djibouti is a woman, and women serve as technical advisors and directors in public establishments.

**Q : Can the Inter-Parliamentary Union be of help?**

**H.A.Y. :** We are indeed expecting support from the IPU. A year ago, an IPU representative came to Djibouti (editor's note: the former Assistant Secretary General, Ms. Christine Pintat) to see how women had organised themselves to take up their responsibilities and to vote and stand as candidates in the legislative elections. She noted that the President of the National Assembly was willing to back the project to get women into political life, which we subsequently implemented together. Accordingly, we look to the IPU for support not only to help women mobilise, but also to teach them how to campaign and, once in office, to train them and explain, to women and men MPs alike, exactly what an MP does. We do not intend to discriminate. Once elected, we will have to educate all MPs, with the IPU's help.

*Letdown in Bahrain despite recognition of equality*

The first legislative elections held in Bahrain in 27 years were a letdown. According to the French daily *Le Monde* (1 November 2002), "two women, Latifa Al-Gaoud and Fawzia Ahmad Al-Raoui still in the running were edged out in the second round. The women who ran in the first municipal elections in May did not make it to Parliament. Nevertheless, by granting women equal rights, Bahrain is a pioneer in a region where much remains to be done to ensure that women enjoy full citizenship rights".

# Decisions taken by the IPU Council during its 171st session



MPs present at the 171st session of the IPU Council elected the new President of the IPU Council.

During its 171st session held in Geneva from 23 to 27th September 2002, the IPU Council decided to re-affiliate the Parliaments of the Central African Republic and Fiji to the world organization of parliaments.

At the conclusion of its debate on the five parliaments (Georgia, Marshall Islands, Malawi, Paraguay and United States of America), which have not paid their assessed contributions to the IPU budget for more than three years, the Council decided to postpone any decision to suspend their membership until its next session, to be held during the 108th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Santiago de Chile.

## Elections

The Council elected Szabolcs Fazakas (Hungary), Rudy Salles (France), Shoeib Y. Almansury (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) and Franklin M. Drilon (Philippines) to the IPU Executive Committee. Maryse Berge Lavigne (France) and Paddy Torsney (Canada) were elected titular and substitute members of the Committee on Middle East Questions.

## **IPU condemned violence in Côte d'Ivoire**

On behalf of the 405 MPs representing 123 parliaments who were present at the session, Council President Heptulla strongly condemned the acts of violence which threaten the democratic and representative institutions in Côte d'Ivoire. "We reiterate that dialogue is the only means of resolving differences and the only way to achieve a stable and lasting peace, and we wish to express our solidarity with the authorities and people of Côte d'Ivoire. We cannot but share the sentiments voiced by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean countries, which have expressed their concern and condemnation of any attempt to disrupt the normal functioning of the democratic institutions.

## **Financing for Development Adopt legislation that would promote free and fair trade**

Following the pattern it launched last year with the WTO Director General, the IPU organized a

parliamentary hearing with an international authority on financing for development, former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, who is currently Director of the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization and author of the eponymous report that went to the UN Conference on Financing for Development. After hearing Mr. Zedillo declare that "rich countries' agricultural protectionism remains at a level which, frankly, is scandalous", the IPU Council adopted a resolution which recommends the enactment of legislation that would promote free and fair trade, afford greater market access to developing countries, and encourage the reduction of subsidies and financial support policies, as well as the elimination of other trade-distorting measures, particularly in agriculture.

The resolution also urges IPU Member parliaments to follow up the Financing for Development process and help make it more effective by reinforcing mechanisms which enable parliamentarians to monitor the work of the multilateral financing

institutions. It also called upon parliaments to enact legislation that would strengthen the productive capacity of the grassroots economy.

Parliaments are also asked to encourage the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus by their respective governments, paying particular attention to the development aspect of the multilateral trade and financial systems. Cooperation between IPU, UN the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO is therefore encouraged. Last but not least, it also recommends measures to help eliminate corruption from politics and public administration and from economically powerful entities, and to combat the abuse of power.

### ***The Committee on Middle East Questions supports the idea of holding a meeting in Geneva between Israeli and Palestinian legislators***

The IPU Committee on Middle East Questions also met in Geneva. It held a hearing of an Israeli parliamentary delegation and a Palestinian delegation, in the presence of the President of the People's Assembly of Egypt, and two representatives of Jordan, as well as an observer from the League of Arab States. In its report, the Committee asked Parliaments to support the presidential and parliamentary elections which will take place in the Palestinian territories on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2003. It called for a safe, free and fair process. The Committee called on parliaments to send MPs as observers and asked the IPU to organize a mission to observe the elections.

The Committee also studied the proposal submitted by the Swiss Group and the "Manifesto – Movement for a Just and Lasting Peace in the Middle East", to hold a meeting in Geneva between legislators from the Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council. The members of the Committee gave their unanimous support to the proposal and urged the IPU to do its utmost to organize the meeting and play an active part in its work.

### ***The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians will hold its 100<sup>th</sup> session in Geneva in January 2003***

During its meeting in Geneva, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians took up 54 cases involving 203 MPs from 31 countries includ-

ing: Belarus, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Gambia, Guinea, Honduras, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Rwanda, Turkey and Zimbabwe. The IPU Council decided that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was authorized to examine a case concerning a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council. This recommendation was made on strictly humanitarian and non-political grounds in view of the special status of Palestine under international law and within the IPU.

The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, which is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, will hold its 100<sup>th</sup> session in Geneva from 20 to 23 January 2003.

### ***Forthcoming IPU-European Parliament conference on the WTO***

The Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament will hold a conference on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> February 2003 in Geneva, which will be attended by the Director general of the WTO, Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi (Thailand).

The IPU and the European Parliament aim to strengthen democracy at the international level by bringing a parliamentary dimension to multilateral cooperation on trade issues. The conference, foreseen in the Final Declaration adopted by parliamentarians at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in September 2003 in Cancun.

The conference in Geneva will be organised primarily for parliamentarians who specialise in international trade issues in their respective parliaments. It will provide them with an opportunity to examine the main issues arising from the Doha Ministerial Conference and to obtain first-hand information on the subject from the new WTO leadership. The conference will also offer opportunities to exchange views and experiences with colleagues in other parliaments, interact with government representatives directly involved in the process of multilateral trade negotiations, and engage in a dialogue with representatives of leading international agencies carrying out programmes for technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of international trade.

# The House of Parliaments becomes the new IPU Headquarters

On 2 December 2002, the Inter-Parliamentary Union took possession of its new headquarters, known as the House of Parliaments and located on the Chemin du Pommier in Geneva. The official inauguration is set for early 2003. Before moving into the house previously known as the Villa Gardiol, the IPU Secretariat staff, FIPOI representatives, architects and construction workers gathered at the site for the traditional *bouquet*.



Photo: Brauen Brauen & Wälchli architectural firm

The House of Parliaments, the new IPU Headquarters will be officially inaugurated in February 2003.

## The Bouquet

In the words of Mr. Vanuxem, of the Induni construction company, "the *bouquet* comes at the end of the heavy building work, once we have completed the robust, indestructible shell of the whole edifice. The term refers to the construction workers' traditional celebration. "

## Converging Interests

Pierre Gilliot represents the FIPOI (Buildings Foundation for International Organisations). "It is very important for Geneva to have a home for parliaments, because IPU is an organisation which has an impact on the international world of Geneva. The new House of Parliaments, anchored in both past and future, is emblematic of Geneva, a city of dialogue and peace. The idea of using an existing building for the project, as if to embody the IPU's deep roots, was a judicious one. The project also shows that IPU is open to the future and wants to invest and bring its assets to the fore in order to do a better job. The House of Parliaments thus stands for a convergence of noble interests in the sense that a venerable building has been embellished with a modern-day addition. The Canton of Geneva welcomed this opportunity to upgrade a fine bourgeois mansion to house an organisation that is in the throes of change. The

IPU can now project itself into the future from a site that combines the old and the new. "

## A Challenge for the Architects

"As an interior designer, I worked mainly on the offices. I discovered the project as an outsider, as I didn't monitor the work on the site as closely as my colleague Doris Wälchli did, but I'm very impressed to see it now that the structural work is finished. This is the most exciting stage because all the different volumes are there, even if the finishings remain to be done" said architect Ueli Brauen, of Brauen Brauen & Wälchli, the architectural firm that won the contract.

Doris Wälchli added "restoring an old mansion is not the hardest thing in the world, because you can trace features back to their historical roots, with specialists to help you, and discover their initial layout - because there have been changes - and more or less unearth the original functions. It's much harder to step into the breach and add something that fits into the whole, as in this case, and create a new ensemble which doesn't offend the old one. I think you have to respect the soul of the original, and protect it up to the very end of the work. I think we have managed to do that with our project, in the sense that all the new additions bring out the original qualities of the old house."

## Through the Photographer's Eye

Swiss photographer Jean Mohr said "If there was one thing I almost regretted about this house, it was that I never went inside it at the start, while it was still inhabited by squatters, who are part of the youth of Geneva. They left visible traces of their stay, and bequeathed it a kind of soul. I'm not in favour of squatting buildings, but it's always something which stops us in our tracks, which has a fascinating, intriguing side to it. I was also interested in the different tradesmen as each left their mark - the metalworkers, tilers and stonemasons were all different, but each was an artisan deeply attached to a trade he had learnt. It was almost like stepping back into the last century. Visiting the site was a way of drawing new resources. Photographers aren't always welcome on building sites. Here I was almost alone, with nothing but the Jura mountains in the background. Sometimes you saw flocks of sheep grazing lower down in the meadow, which has disappeared now because other buildings are being put up there. I was prey to all kinds of sensations, to different values of light and dark, and I was entirely free to do what I wanted. I climbed the scaffolding, and approached things discreetly at first, gradually becoming more involved with my camera, engaged in a kind of photo-journalism in which my only idea was to try and understand what was happening and then turn it into pictures."

## Brief History

"The villa Gardiol was built by Marc Camoletti in 1908. It was apparently the last work of this architect who also built the Mont-Blanc central post office and Victoria Hall, both in Geneva. This fine building which underwent a careful refurbishment that respected its history and materials was enlarged with a modern addition. The latter is an adjacent unit which will contain the meeting rooms, and which

embellishes the old villa and enhances its identity. When I look at the different periods and some of the architectural features, I cannot help thinking of the Inter-Parliamentary Union itself, its establishment, its durability and development over the years, and finally the current reforms which in no way alter the basic foundations of the IPU. The future House of Parliaments has afforded a welcome new impetus that will encourage dialogue, the implementation of the reform principles, and change - in a word, greater openness" said Mrs. Micheline Rutsch, a member of the IPU Secretariat, who helped coordinate the project work.

## The Site

"There were 22 masons in the team which started in mid September 2001. Other artisans followed. We were the engine driving the rest. Most of the workers were Portuguese. Portugal did a lot for the building project" added the site foreman, Mr. Antonio Soares.

## Switzerland Supports the Initiative

Built by the winners of the IPU/FIPOI architectural contest, Braun and Wälchli of Lausanne, the project to restore the Villa Gardiol and enlarge it with an annex was funded by a 9.5 million Swiss franc loan from the Swiss Federal Council in December 2000. The decision was approved by the Swiss Parliament in 2001. The House of Parliaments boasts reception rooms, two conference rooms, a cafeteria and two libraries along with some fifty offices. The loan is interest-free and payable over 50 years. The land was provided by the Canton of Geneva; the work started in Spring 2001. In a press statement by the Swiss Federal Department for External Affairs (DFAE), the Federal Council expressed its willingness, in making the offer, to support "first, an international organisation to which the Swiss parliamentarians are attached, and second, Geneva as a centre for international cooperation".

# Quote/Unquote

Mr. Sergio Pérez, IPU Council President

**"The IPU enjoys a certain notoriety, but it must make a greater mark on the international political scene"**

Straight after being elected as President of the IPU Council, in September 2002, Chilean senator Sergio Pérez paid a visit to the new IPU Headquarters. "The House of Parliaments is important" he commented "because it will be open to all parliaments of the world. These new premises will mean that we can organise large-scale meetings. The IPU enjoys a certain notoriety, but it must make a greater mark on the international political scene. All the parliaments associated with IPU must do their bit to publicise the vital role that the world organisation of parliaments is capable of playing. MPs visiting Geneva must know that there is a House of Parliaments that they can visit and where they can consult unique archives on everything to do with the daily life of parliaments.

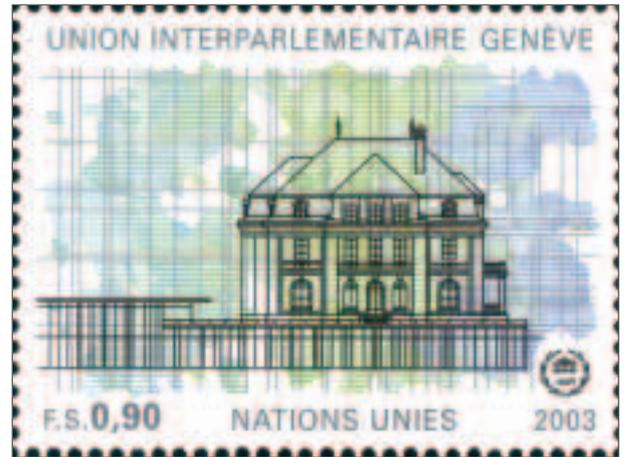
Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, IPU Secretary General

**"A new life for the Villa Gardiol and for the IPU"**

The House of Parliaments will give a new lease of life not only to the Villa Gardiol but also, in a sense, to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Secretary General Anders Johnsson recalled that "during the first thirteen 113 years of its existence, the IPU was homeless since it never had its own headquarters. This is the first time it is really putting down roots in a city. It represents a new phase for the world organisation of parliaments which will doubtless be a productive one. It will put the organisation on the map, at the very heart of international Geneva. We will at last be able to hold meetings under our own roof, which is a major advantage. The project itself is evocative of the IPU since we are settling in a building that is almost as old as the organisation. We have added a modern annex, so the future of the organisation is represented as well."

# The United Nations issues a stamp featuring the IPU

After the United Nations had decided to produce a (Swiss) postage stamp to mark the occasion of the inauguration of the new headquarters, the IPU invited the students at the Lausanne school of Arts and Communication to design a stamp to symbolise the House of Parliaments. The jury short-listed designs submitted by four students, one of whom was a young woman. The 1200 Swiss franc prize was awarded to Mr. Cyril Wursten. Ms. Rosaline Favre took the second prize of 600 francs and the third prize of 300 francs went to Mr. Thierry Rey. Mr. David Duran's research work was commended and rewarded with 200 francs.



## "A classy, peaceful and protective image of the IPU"

For Cyril Wursten, the winner of the contest, "this great experience provided a fantastic opportunity which would probably not come again. Working on a stamp is a bit out of the ordinary, and is a privilege reserved for recognised artists. I am grateful to the IPU for thinking of our class for this contest and for giving us a chance to work in a medium that was new for us. This enabled us to explore another facet of the trade and to acquire new skills".

His aim: "To give a classy, peaceful and protective image of the IPU. I wanted to create a visual contrast between the clean lines of the building and the coloured abstract background – an interesting way to bring out the architectural scheme of the *House of Parliaments*. In my mind, the coloured background represents the earth with its continents and its countries, composed of different colours and cultures, and in the foreground is the house which covers everything and which gives an image of protection, security and benevolence. This was one way of representing the work of the IPU, which strives to promote peace and security in the world. So I didn't want something too graphic or too "off-the-wall", like you see nowadays, because that wouldn't have fitted in with the period architecture of the building or with the image which the IPU was trying to convey".

## The House of Parliaments as seen by the other candidates:

### Rosaline Favre

#### Second Prize

"I believe that the UN and the IPU are made up of constituent parts, all different but which come together as a whole. This idea appears on the stamp. The project is more of a graphic and aesthetic statement than one of pure communication".

### Thierry Rey

#### Third Prize

"I wanted to illustrate the global dimensions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, its importance in setting up contacts and exchanges between the various countries and cultures that make up our society. The IPU will now pursue its objectives with a new building designed for that very purpose. It was crucial to show the importance of the building, its deeply rooted foundations and its strong walls. A solid shell within which better conditions for all humankind can be developed".

### David Duran

#### Commended by the Jury

"The IPU is an organisation which seeks to improve the situation of individuals and between peoples, so as to make the world slightly less unjust. I wanted to depict an organisation open to the world, which works steadily and puts its trust in human nature. I hope the house of Parliaments will be a powerful symbol that will send a positive and encouraging image to the four corners of the world for all those who do not have the good fortune to be born in a country where individual freedoms are respected."

# Parliamentary Developments

## AZERBAIJAN

On 24 August 2002, a total of 39 changes to 24 articles of the Constitution were overwhelmingly approved in a referendum for which turnout was recorded at 83.6 per cent. Opposition parties had called for a boycott of the referendum claiming that it was designed to allow President Geidar Aliyev to name his son, Ilgam Aliyev, as his successor. In particular, the opposition drew attention to an amendment specifying that the Prime Minister (who is appointed by the President) rather than the Speaker of the Parliament would become officially the second most powerful person in the political hierarchy, exercising executive powers if the President were to become unable to govern. However, the government stated that the constitutional changes had been prompted by the country's membership of the Council of Europe.

On 18 June 2002, Parliament passed a law regulating relations between Parliament and the Cabinet. The law stipulates that the Cabinet must deliver to Parliament, at the fifth sitting of each spring session, a report on its activities for the previous year. The legislature may also request that individual ministers report at more frequent intervals. The law further provides that Parliament shall be empowered to raise the issue of a confidence vote in the Government, provided it does so no less than six months prior to parliamentary or presidential elections.

## CAMEROON

On 27 November 2002, a bill amending the Standing Orders of the National Assembly was adopted. The new text confirms that the National Assembly is the sole body competent to validate the mandates of its members and their admission once the Constitutional Council has proclaimed the final results of legislative elections. In addition, the new law increases from two to three the number of ordinary sessions lasting 30 days each. Yet another change is an increase in committee membership from six to 30 members per committee to nine to 20 members each. Moreover, speaking time has been cut from 15 to five minutes per speaker, and the President of the National Assembly is empowered to limit speaking time to 30 minutes per parliamentary group. Finally, the Secretary General of the National Assembly will henceforth be an *ex officio* member of the Bureau of the Chamber.

## CANADA

In May 2001, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs of the House of Commons tabled a report that granted the electronic media the right to broadcast public meetings of any committee of the House of Commons, subject to certain guidelines. The report proposed a trial period ending on 31 December 2001. The experiment was subsequently extended to 31 December 2002.

On 5 February 2002, the Senate adopted an amendment to its rules granting official recognition to political parties that are registered as parties under the Canada Election Act at the time when recognition is sought in the Senate and that have at least five members in the Senate. Recognition would be withdrawn only if the party's membership in the Senate falls below five members.

On 4 June 2002, an Act respecting Royal Assent to bills passed by the Houses of Parliament received Royal Assent.

The bill provides an alternative to the formal Royal Assent procedure currently used in the Parliament, so that the Royal Assent could be signified by written declaration. It would preserve at least two traditional Royal Assent ceremonies per year. This issue had been discussed for almost 20 years.

## CUBA

In May 2002, more than eight million people put their names to a petition to support an amendment to the Constitution that declares Cuba's socialist system to be untouchable, long after the death of President Castro. The President himself initiated the petition, in response to growing calls for reform of the socialist system he has led for more than 40 years. The document was a resounding 'no' to change. On 26 June 2002, more than 500 members of the National Assembly unanimously adopted the constitutional reform declaring socialism "irrevocable".

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

On 13 July 2002, the National Congress enacted a law amending the Constitution to allow an incumbent President to run for a second consecutive term of office. Under the terms of an accord signed in August 1994 by the major political parties to end the political crisis that had followed the disputed presidential election of that year, re-election of an incumbent President to a second term had been prohibited.

## INDONESIA

On 10 August 2002, the People's Consultative Assembly adopted 14 amendments to the Constitution. The main change introduced is the institution of direct presidential elections. Before the amendment, it was the legislature that acted as an electoral college to elect the Head of State for a five-year term. The first presidential elections under this new system are due in 2004. Another change to the Constitution is the abolition by 2004 of the 38 appointed parliamentary seats reserved for the military rather than by 2009 as initially stipulated.

## LATVIA

On 9 May 2002, Parliament voted to change the Elections Law, scrapping the provision requiring parliamentary candidates to prove they can speak Latvian. A similar provision, concerning politicians running for local government seats, was also abandoned. This Law was seen as one of the biggest obstacles to Latvia's admission to NATO and was sharply criticised as violating the rights of the country's Russian-speaking minority, who account for around one-third of the population.

## MOROCCO

On 6 May 2002, the Chamber of Representatives unanimously adopted a new Electoral Code, introducing a list system rather than the single-constituency system. The 325 deputies will be elected using a list, to be decided by proportional vote, in a single round. Thirty deputies will be elected at national level and 295 at constituency level. The 30 national seats will in principle be reserved for women. Another change is that voting is no longer compulsory. The next legislative elections are scheduled for September 2002.

## PAKISTAN

On 30 April 2002, a popular referendum granted a five-year term to the President of the country, General Pervez Musharraf, who seized power in a bloodless coup in 1999. In August 2002, President Musharraf introduced drastic amendments to the Constitution. The changes were made by Executive decree, thus preventing the new Parliament, elected in October 2002, from overturning them. The main opposition parties sharply criticised the changes, describing them as deeply undemocratic. One of the main amendments is the restoration of the President's right to dismiss an elected parliament - a power withdrawn by the government of the last Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif. Among his new powers, President Musharraf will now be able to choose the heads of Pakistan's army and navy.

## PALESTINIAN NATIONAL AUTHORITY TERRITORY

On 29 May 2002, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Yasser Arafat ratified the "Basic Law", a fundamental constitutional law. This instrument, which stipulates the separation of powers between government bodies, was first presented by the Palestinian Legislative Council in 1996 and is intended to form the "nucleus" of a future Constitution. Established under the 1993 interim peace accords with Israel, the Palestinian Authority has no formal Constitution.

## RUSSIAN FEDERATION

On 20 November 2002, the State Duma approved in its third and final reading a draft law on the election of members of the State Duma. This new law raises the percentage of the vote necessary for parties to qualify for the 225 seats allocated by the party-list system from five to seven beginning with the December 2007 Duma elections. It also eliminates the requirements for parties represented in the Duma to gather signatures in support of their presidential candidates.

## TUNISIA

On 27 May 2002, a referendum on a constitutional reform was held and approved by a 99 per cent majority of the votes cast. The constitutional reform, which concerns at least half of the articles of the Constitution, provides for unlimited candidacies to the presidency of the Republic instead of three terms as contained in the previous text, and sets the upper age limit for a President at 75 instead of 70. The current President Ben Ali was due to retire in 2004 after 15 years in office, but the proposed constitutional amendments will allow him to stand for a further two terms.

## TURKEY

On 1 August 2002, Parliament adopted a package of European Union harmonisation laws. All political parties except the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), a member of the ruling coalition, expressed support for the package. One of the main issues included in the new legislation is the abolition of the death penalty except in times of war. The amendments also included the lifting of the ban on Kurdish-language education and broadcasting. In addition, Parliament eased restrictions on public demonstrations, lifted penalties for criticising State institutions, articulated new freedoms for the media, made it easier for international organisations to work in the country, and authorised non-Muslim religious organisations to buy property. The package also outlined tougher measures against illegal immigration and redefined the duties of the police.

## UGANDA

On 9 May 2002, the Ugandan Parliament passed the Political Organisations Bill, which allows parties to operate at a national level but maintains a ban on activities such as holding meetings or canvassing for support outside the capital. The bill was passed by acclamation despite the absence of some 60 members of Parliament, who walked out in protest saying the new law does not go far enough to promote democracy. President Yoweri Museveni banned party activities when he took power in 1986 after a five-year guerrilla war.

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