

CL/186/SR.1
18 June 2010

SUMMARY RECORDS

OF THE

GOVERNING COUNCIL

(186th SESSION)

28 March and 1 April 2010

BANGKOK (*Centara Bangkok Convention Centre (CBCC)*)

Participation

President: T.-B. Gurirab (Namibia)

Members and substitutes: Mrs. R. Azimi, Mrs. N. Hussaini and Ms. F. Nazri (Afghanistan); B. Boutouiga, Mrs. Z. Drif Bitat and A. Ziari (Algeria); J. Dalleres, Ms. M. Gonzalez and J. Serra (Andorra); Mrs. M.Â. Bragança, J.M. Gonçalves Lourenço and Mrs. B. Martins Da Silva (Angola); A.N. Atanasof, O.B. De Marchi and D. Filmus (Argentina); Mrs. H. Bisharyan, S. Nikoyan and M. Vardanyan (Armenia); Ms. J. Hall, H. Jenkins and Ms. J. Troeth (Australia); M. Graf, Ms. G. Moser and Mrs. H. Silhavy (Austria); K. Al-Dahrani, Ms. L. Al-Gaoud and J. Fakhroo (Bahrain); F.H. Badsha, Md. A.M. Khan and R.K. Roy (Bangladesh); V. Ivanov and Ms. A. Naumchik (Belarus); F.-X. de Donnea and G. Versnick (Belgium); M. Nago (Benin); D. Kalabić (Bosnia and Herzegovina); K. Molatlhegi, Ms. M.N. Nasha and M.R. Reatile (Botswana); Mrs. M.M.G. Guigma Diasso, R.M.C. Kabore and S.T. Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso); C. Kimyeat, Ms. S.A. Krouch and T. Nhem (Cambodia); B. Abdulaye, M. Ahidjo and Mrs. J. Fotso (Cameroon); B. Calkins, Ms. S. Carstairs, W. Keon and M. Silva (Canada); Ms. Pang Lijuan (China); Mrs. P. Fouty-Soungou, J. Kignoumbi Kia-Boungou and J. Koumba (Congo); Ms. M. Lugarić and N. Mimica (Croatia); R. Pez Ferro and Ms. Y. Regueiferos Linares (Cuba); N. Anastasiades, Mrs. A. Kyriakidou and Y. Thoma (Cyprus); I. Bárek, Ms. I. Koci, D. Reisiegl and Ms. H. Šedivá (Czech Republic); Ms. M.-L. Ekpoli Lenti, B. Mbuku Laka and Ms. B. Nkoy Mafuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo); Ms. L. Blixt, K. Christiansen, Ms. P. Christmas Møller, K.P. Lorentzen and J.C. Lund (Denmark); S. Al Gammal, M. El-Said, Mrs. S. Greiss and M. Sherdy (Egypt); Mrs. I. Eenmaa, E. Nool, J. Tamm and Mrs. M. Tuus (Estonia); Mrs. G. Abasiya, B. Anemut and D. Bula (Ethiopia); Ms. K. Komi, J. Laakso and R. Vistbacka (Finland); R. del Picchia, Ms. G. Gautier and P. Martin-Lalande (France); Mrs. D. Mekam'ne, Mrs. S. Moulengui-Mouele, E. Moussavou Moundziegou, R. Ngombela, F. Owono Nguema and P. Oyoumbou (Gabon); Ms. P. Ernstberger, W. Gerhardt, Ms. A. Krüger-Leissner, T. Silberhorn, A. Ulrich and J.P. Winkler (Germany); Mrs. E. Papademetriou and M. Voriadis (Greece); R. Pereira (Guinea-Bissau); Ms. T. Backman, E.K. Gudfinnsson and G. Hannesson (Iceland); K.R. Khan, K.R. Raman Singh and Ms. Y.R. Scindia (India); Ms. N. Ali Assegaf, E. Lukita and M.H. Nur Wahid (Indonesia); H. Fallahat Pisheh, Mrs. T. Safaee and N. Soudani (Iran, Islamic Republic of); N. Coonan, B. Howlin and Ms. A. Ormonde (Ireland); M. Whbee (Israel); Mrs. B. Contini and Mrs. A. Napoli (Italy); K. Fujitani and T. Nakashima (Japan); Mrs. H. Abughazaleh, M. Dudin and A. Majali (Jordan); Mrs. P. Yathotou (Lao People's Democratic Republic); J. Dobelis (Latvia); Ms. N. Motsamai (Lesotho); M. Elforjani and F. Elmugassabi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya); F. Bausch, Mrs. L. Mutsch and Mrs. L. Polfer (Luxembourg); Ms. Chew Mei Fun, Hee Loy Sian and Ms. S.J. Usha Nandhini (Malaysia); M. Gonzi and J. Mizzi (Malta); A. Alonso Díaz-Caneja, Ms. R. Green Macias and E. Rubio (Mexico); Ms. M. Dittlot, F. Notari and G. Rose (Monaco); Ms. D. Dzakula and Z. Sturanovic (Montenegro); Mrs. K. Panta, Mrs. P.K. Subedi and Ms. T.M. Thapa Magar (Nepal); J. Atsma, Mrs. M. Meindersma and H.E. Waalkens (Netherlands); C. Calder, D. Clendon and P. Hodgson (New Zealand); U. Dahiru (Nigeria); G. Gundersen, Ms. I. Heggø, Ø. Vaksdal and T. Wickholm (Norway); S. Al-Saadi, Ms. S. Moosa and F. Sajwani (Oman); Q. Abdelkarim, Ms. N. Alastal and T. Quba'a (Palestine); M. Maladina (Papua New Guinea); Ms. R.C. Nicolas, V.F. Ortega and A.Q. Pimentel Jr. (Philippines); Ms. B. Mazurek, J. Rzymelka and M. Ziolkowski (Poland); Ms. R.M. Albernaz, A. Costa and D. Pacheco (Portugal); I.M. Al-Misnad, S.B. Al-Sahouti and A.M. Obidan (Qatar); J.-Y. Lee, M.-S. Lee and C.-C. Ooh (Republic of Korea); Ms. C. Axenie, V. Ion and I. Palar (Romania); Ms. A. Mukarugema and F. Munyakabera (Rwanda); F.L. Tolofuaivalelei (Samoa); P. Herminie (Seychelles); A.N. Bankole Stronge, M. Betts-Priddy and Ms. A. Foyah (Sierra Leone); T. Cabaj

and M. Číž (Slovakia); Ms. J. Klasinc and F. Žnidaršič (Slovenia); Z.L. Madasa, L. Ramatlakane and M.V. Sisulu (South Africa); A.I. El-Tahir, M.M. El-Tigani and Ms. M. Osman Gaknoun (Sudan); Ms. B. Eriksson, H. Gustafsson, U. Nilsson, K. Örnfjäder and Ms. I. René (Sweden); E. David, Mrs. B.M. Gadiant and Mrs. D. Stump (Switzerland); F. Abed Alden and K. Kassam (Syrian Arab Republic); Ms. T. Boontong, Mrs. P. Krairiksh, P. Phalusuk and P. Tanbanjong (Thailand); Ms. M. Exposto, D. Nunes and Ms. M.T. Viegas (Timor Leste); Ms. F. Dağci Ciglik, A. Kurt and Mrs. N. Serter (Turkey); Ms. R. Kadaga, Ms. P. Turyahikayo and B. Wacha (Uganda); Mrs. V. Demianchuk, Y. Kliuchkovskiy and O. Zarubinskyi (Ukraine); K. Abu Shehab, Mrs. A. Al Qubaisi and Y.A. Bin Fadel (United Arab Emirates); J. Austin, Lord J. Morris of Aberavon and Baroness S. Thomas of Walliswood (United Kingdom); M.H. Haji, Ms. C. Ishengoma and S.J. Sitta (United Republic of Tanzania); J. Larrañaga, Mrs. I. Passada and Mrs. M. Xavier (Uruguay); Ms. Dang Thi My Huong, Ngo Quang Xuan and Tran Van Do (Viet Nam); S. Al-Barakani (Yemen); Mrs. L.S. Changwe, J. Chongo, G. Lubinda and J.J. Mwiimbu (Zambia); B. Gaule, W. Madzimore and Ms. V. Muchenje (Zimbabwe)

Secretariat: A.B. Johnsson, Secretary General, M. Chungong, Director of the Division of the Promotion of democracy, and Ms. J. Toedtli, Secretary of the Governing Council

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FIRST SITTING

Sunday, 28 March 2010

(Morning)

The meeting was called to order at 9.20 a.m., with Dr. T.-B. Gurirab (Namibia), President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in the Chair.

Item 1 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

(CL/186/A.1)

The revised provisional agenda was adopted.

Item 2 of the agenda

**APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 185th SESSION OF
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

(CL/185/SR.1)

The summary records of the 185th session of the Governing Council were approved.

Item 3 of the agenda

**PROPOSALS FOR THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF
THE 122nd ASSEMBLY**

Ms. Pang Lijuan (China) proposed that Mr. Chai Chidchob, President of the National Assembly and Speaker of the House of Representatives of Thailand, be nominated President of the 122nd Assembly.

The Governing Council approved the nomination by acclamation.

Item 4 of the agenda

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

(a) Requests for affiliation and reaffiliation to the IPU

(CL/186/4(a)-R.1)

The President said that requests for reaffiliation had been received from the Parliaments of Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau and Malawi, in addition to a request for new membership from the Parliament of Seychelles and a request for associate membership from the Transitional Arab Parliament. The recommendations of the Executive Committee with respect to all five requests were set forth in document CL/186/4(a)-R.1. He took it that the Governing Council first

wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee contained in that document concerning the request for reaffiliation from the Parliament of Djibouti.

The Governing Council approved by acclamation the recommendation of the Executive Committee to readmit the Parliament of Djibouti as a Member of the IPU.

The President said he further took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee concerning the request for reaffiliation from the Parliament of Guinea-Bissau.

The Governing Council approved by acclamation the recommendation of the Executive Committee to readmit the Parliament of Guinea-Bissau as a Member of the IPU.

Mr. R. Pereira (Guinea-Bissau) said that the Parliament of Guinea-Bissau greatly welcomed its return to the IPU fold after a seven-year absence and was firmly resolved to make a valuable contribution to the work of the IPU, a prestigious organization that symbolized the triumph of democracy. The spirit of cooperation manifested during the reaffiliation process indeed inspired full confidence in the IPU and its approach to overcoming difficulties. It was the recent elections and other measures taken to strengthen democratic institutions and promote dialogue, reconciliation and stability in Guinea-Bissau that had paved the way for its reintegration into the international community. Its Parliament, which had continued to play a key role during the worst times of crisis, was now organizing both a national conference on conflict-related themes and a parliamentary symposium on the consolidation of nascent democracies, activities for which IPU support would be welcome. Such exchanges of parliamentary experience were undoubtedly an effective tool for advancing sought objectives, particularly given the instrumental role of parliaments in directing national policies aimed at tackling scourges and crises that impeded peace and development. In conclusion, he reiterated his gratitude to the IPU for its unstinting work to realize his Parliament's desire for reaffiliation and looked forward to the further strengthening of peace and the institution of parliament in Guinea-Bissau as a result.

The President said he also took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee concerning the request for reaffiliation from the Parliament of Malawi.

The Governing Council approved by acclamation the recommendation of the Executive Committee to readmit the Parliament of Malawi as a Member of the IPU.

The President said he trusted in addition that the Governing Council wished to welcome the Parliament of Seychelles as a new Member.

The Governing Council approved by acclamation the recommendation of the Executive Committee to admit the Parliament of Seychelles as a Member of the IPU.

The President lastly invited the Council to approve the request for associate membership received from the Transitional Arab Parliament.

The Governing Council approved by acclamation the recommendation of the Executive Committee that it respond favourably to the request for associate membership submitted by the Transitional Arab Parliament.

(b) Situation of certain Members
(CL/186/4(b)-P.2)

The President said that he was pleased to report that no Members were liable for suspension at the current Assembly.

The Governing Council took note of the President's oral report on the situation of certain Members.

(c) Observer status

The President said that the Executive Committee had, at its last session, begun its four-yearly evaluation of the situation of observers to IPU Assemblies. It had asked the Secretary General to write to those observers who had rarely or never participated in IPU meetings in order to gauge their interest in remaining as observers. As only three of the nine organizations concerned had responded to that enquiry, the Committee had decided to defer any recommendation on the matter until its next session in October 2010.

The Governing Council took note of the President's oral progress report on observer status.

Item 5 of the agenda

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(a) On his activities since the 185th session of the Governing Council
(CL/186/5(a)-R.1)

The President drew attention to document CL/186/5(a)-R.1, which contained full details of his activities since the 185th session of the Governing Council and had been circulated to all Members.

The Governing Council took note of the report of the President on his activities since its 185th session.

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee
(CL/186/5(b)-P.1)

The President said that the Executive Committee had thus far held two sittings and would again meet in a further sitting to complete its agenda. He had been personally delighted to have such an experienced "IPU man" as Mr. G. Versnick of Belgium, who had been appointed Vice-President of the Committee, to assist him in his work. The Committee had concluded its deliberations on some items, reports on which were in preparation for the consideration of the Governing Council at its next sitting. With respect to other items, it had not yet resolved the matters under debate and would therefore return to them at its forthcoming meeting.

The Committee had been briefed on all of the arrangements for the present Assembly and recommended that two organizations be invited to observe its proceedings in the light of the debate due to take place on organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal arms sales, human trafficking and cross-border terrorism. The organizations concerned were the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.

The Governing Council approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee to invite as observers to the 122nd Assembly the two organizations mentioned.

The President said that the Executive Committee had also discussed IPU's cooperation with the United Nations and gladly welcomed the presence of a number of senior United Nations officials at the current Assembly. In particular, the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) would brief the Assembly on the latest developments in the field of HIV/AIDS and provide information on how parliaments could play their part in curbing the epidemic. Concerning one of the human rights aspects of HIV, he drew attention to a draft statement, annexed to document CL/186/5(b)-P.1, which called for the lifting of HIV-related travel restrictions in countries where they still applied. Recalling that the Governing Council had adopted five broad principles on the subject at its 184th session in Addis Ababa, he said that the matter was one of concern both to UNAIDS and to the IPU, working through its Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS. If endorsed, the draft statement, which had the approval of the Executive Committee, would be very helpful to the legislatures in the countries concerned.

The Governing Council endorsed the draft statement on HIV-related restrictions on entry, stay and residence.

Item 6 of the agenda

**ANNUAL REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON
THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU IN 2009**

The Secretary General, introducing his report, said that the cover depicting the consequences of global warming denoted just one of the many serious worldwide crises addressed in much of the IPU's work during 2009, as first reflected in the report's summary of the IPU's organization of and contribution to debates on the financial and economic crisis, including those conducted at the United Nations Conference on the World Financial Crisis and Its Impact on Development. The report further covered IPU activities relating to such other crises as climate change and food, in addition to the Middle East situation, in which context the IPU President had visited both Gaza and Israel. It also described IPU activities in the area of peace and security, among them efforts to promote the early entry into force of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty and enhance cross-cultural tolerance and understanding.

In the field of promoting democracy, the preponderance of IPU activities included the development of a self-assessment toolkit designed to assist capacity-building and the improvement of standards. Much attention had also been devoted to reconciliation work in post-conflict societies, with emphasis on parliaments as a privileged venue for universal participation in national decision-making, and to the promotion of political tolerance, which had been the theme of the International Day of Democracy. The report listed some of the parliamentary events organized across the globe to commemorate that occasion, which had been additionally marked by a Parliamentary Conference on Democracy in Africa, hosted by the Parliament of Botswana. One new handbook on combating trafficking in persons and another on missing persons had been developed in the interest of further strengthening the capacity of parliaments as guardians of human rights, an area on which subject the IPU continued to organize seminars. In that context, the important work of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians went without saying.

During 2009, the IPU had also sought to develop a more comprehensive programme on development, as well as promote greater awareness of parliamentary responsibility in the area

of climate change efforts. In that regard, a broad agenda for parliamentary action had been identified during the successful one-day IPU meeting held in December 2009 on the sidelines of the United Nations Climate Change Conference. Proposals for implementing that action would be tabled during the current session. Other IPU work had focused on areas relating to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including HIV/AIDS, child and maternal health issues, and the development of a global partnership. Case studies were also ongoing with a view to reporting on parliamentary achievements in those same areas to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2010, which was to focus on accelerating progress towards the achievement of all MDGs by 2015.

Cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations was in fact a recurrent theme of the report, which additionally devoted a separate chapter to the growing relationship between the two organizations in the context of bringing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations. A separate chapter was similarly devoted to the subject of information and communication technology (ICT) in parliaments, including the annual World e-Parliament Conference. Lastly, the report illustrated in the form of a graph the relatively rapid institutional developments that had taken place within the IPU and also presented details of the financial results in the interest of providing comprehensive information.

The Governing Council took note of the annual report by the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU in 2009.

Item 7 of the agenda

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

(CL/186/7(a)-R.1, 7(b)-R.1, 7(c)-R.1, 7(d)-R.1, 7(e)-R.1, 7(f)-R.1, 7(g)-R.1, 7(h)-R.1, 7(i)-R.1, 7(j)-R.1, 7(k)-R.1 and 7(l)-R.1)

The Secretary-General provided a brief introduction to each of the following 12 reports on recent IPU specialized conferences and meetings, which Members were encouraged to examine in greater detail: regional conference and iKNOW Politics Partners Arabic website launch: *The role of the media and information technology in increasing the number and effectiveness of women in politics* (CL/186/7(a)-R.1); World e-Parliament Conference 2009 (CL/186/7(b)-R.1); parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the World Food Summit on Food Security (CL/186/7(c)-R.1); Joint IPU-UN Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations (CL/186/7(d)-R.1); Third Parliamentary Conference on maternal and newborn health: *Ensuring access to health for all women and newborn – the role of parliaments* (CL/186/7(e)-R.1); regional seminar on the contribution of parliaments to long-term peace and security in the extended Great Lakes region (CL/186/7(f)-R.1); Fourth Conference of Women Parliamentarians and Women in Decision-making Positions in the Gulf Cooperation Council States (CL/186/7(g)-R.1); regional seminar for the Twelve Plus Group on migration and violence against women in Europe (CL/186/7(h)-R.1); regional seminar on HIV/AIDS for the parliaments of the IPU Asia-Pacific Group on taking effective parliamentary action against HIV and AIDS (CL/186/7(i)-R.1); parliamentary meeting on the occasion of COP-15 (CL/186/7(j)-R.1); regional seminar for the Twelve Plus Group of the IPU on human trafficking (CL/186/7(k)-R.1); and parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CL/186/7(l)-R.1).

The Governing Council took note of the 12 reports on recent IPU specialized conferences and meetings.

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.

SECOND SITTING

Thursday, 1 April 2010

(Morning)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m., with Dr. T.-B. Gurirab (Namibia), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 5 of the agenda

(continued)

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

(CL/186/5(b)-P.1)

The President said that he would report on the outcome of the Executive Committee's discussions of the previous day under the relevant agenda items. One matter not covered under those items, however, concerned the financial contribution to the IPU by the Parliament of Palestine. In that connection, the Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should apply the United Nations practice of treating Palestine as a least developed country with regard to financial matters, meaning that its contribution would be assessed at the same rate as all other Members from least developed countries.

The Governing Council approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee for Palestine to be treated in financial matters as a least developed country.

Item 8 of the agenda

COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

(CL/186/8-R.1 and 8-Inf.1)

The Secretary General, introducing the item, drew attention to document CL/186/8-R.1, which contained a brief checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations systems since October 2009. The IPU had sought in its statements to the United Nations General Assembly and its subsidiary organs to reflect the position of its Members in a wide range of areas. The annual joint Parliamentary Hearing with the United Nations was among the numerous meetings organized in that context. The Hearing held in November 2009 on the theme of building political support and implementing effective responses to the global financial crisis had culminated in an interesting set of recommendations concerning the role of parliaments in bringing greater accountability and responsibility to the global financial system, with particular reference to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The final report of that Hearing was available on the IPU website and had also been circulated as an official document of both the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Other cooperation activities outlined in the report included the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and the first High-level Symposium of the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), in addition to various gatherings at which such matters as climate change, gender-related issues, ICT and food security were discussed. The report also outlined the IPU's work with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNAIDS, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization.

Concerning the relationship between the IPU and the United Nations, he drew attention to document CL/186/8-Inf.1, which provided an overview of progress in cooperation since 2005, the date of the 2nd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament at which a course had been charted for increasing and facilitating the IPU's interaction with the United Nations. In the final declaration adopted at that Conference, parliamentary leaders had pledged to play a stronger role in bridging the democracy gap in international relations, with the result that the 2005 World Summit Outcome had included a section on cooperation between the United Nations and parliaments. The General Assembly had since received regular progress reports and adopted resolutions accordingly on the subject of that cooperation, which continued to develop apace, particularly in MDG-related areas. As detailed in the report, the IPU also actively collaborated with newly established United Nations bodies, primarily DCF, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. All such activities had an influence on the international agenda, as exemplified in the General Assembly's endorsement of the IPU proposal to designate 15 September as the International Day of Democracy, which coincided with the date of the IPU's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Democracy and highlighted the essential parliamentary role in promoting democratic practice. The fact that the annual Parliamentary Hearing was now a joint activity also enabled the IPU to address issues high on the United Nations agenda in a more integrated manner. Further efforts were needed, however, to build a more strategic relationship with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. Another welcome development was the increasing inclusion of parliamentarians in national delegations to United Nations meetings, which was indeed encouraged by the United Nations General Assembly. Even more importantly, cooperation between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU would for the first time be considered as a separate agenda item at the General Assembly autumn session of 2010. It was therefore vital for Members to reflect on the nature of that cooperation in order to assist the preparations for engaging in the debate.

In conclusion, he urged Members who had not yet done so to respond to the questionnaire on interaction with the United Nations system, as the information received was vital to compiling a fully representative and balanced report on the subject for presentation to the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments in July 2010. Further details were available on the IPU website. In September 2010, the IPU President would also deliver a report to the MDG Summit on progress achieved towards attainment of the MDGs. The IPU was therefore gathering information, including through case studies, on the parliamentary contribution to that progress and would welcome input from Members for inclusion in the report.

The Governing Council took note of the report on cooperation with the United Nations system and of the report providing an overview of progress achieved in cooperation since 2005.

Item 9 of the agenda

**CONSOLIDATION OF THE REFORM OF
THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

(CL/186/9-Inf.1)

The President said that the Executive Committee had examined a summary of the opinions expressed by the geopolitical groups at the Governing Council session of October 2009 concerning the new format of the second Assembly of the year. Its discussions had remained inconclusive, however, and it would therefore revert to the subject at its next session in October 2010.

It had also discussed the proposal to convert the IPU into an international organization that was based on an international convention. At the conclusion of its discussions, it had recommended first that the Secretary General be requested to provide a set of documents outlining the proposal, the rationale for which was set forth in document CL/186/9-Inf.1. Secondly, Members were encouraged to study the matter over the coming months and share any questions with the IPU Secretariat, which would respond to concerns. Questions received and clarifications provided would be shared with Members on a continuous basis with a view to advancing the common understanding of and building common support for the proposal by the time of the next Assembly in October 2010. Thirdly, all geopolitical groups were urged to follow the example of the African Group, which was establishing a working group with representation from the different regions of Africa and the participation of its Executive Committee members in order to study the proposal in depth. After consulting with experts and governments, the group would present its opinions to the African Group when it met in October 2010. The IPU Secretariat was also at the disposal of the African Group to assist in its deliberations and the same indeed applied to all of the other geopolitical groups. Fourthly, the Executive Committee would establish its own working group to continue reflecting on the subject and consult with a small group of Members. Lastly, Speakers of Parliament were encouraged to discuss the matter at their 3rd World Conference in July 2010.

The proposal was very far-reaching and would require solid support from IPU Members in order to be carried forward successfully. They would therefore be given sufficient time to consider every aspect of the proposal in a thorough and measured manner. The IPU very much hoped that the proposal could be turned into a reality.

The Governing Council took note of the paper on consolidation of the reform of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Item 10 of the agenda

FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR 2009
(CL/186/10-R.1, R.2, R.3 and P.1)

The Secretary General, introducing the financial report and audited financial statements (CL/186/10-R.1), said that the IPU and its operations had not surprisingly been affected by the financial crisis and market volatility. Consequently, although savings had been possible, gains had not and the year had ended with a substantial operating surplus of over CHF 512,000. First of all, revenues had exceeded the budget by some CHF 137,000, primarily due to contributions arising out of new affiliations or reaffiliations not originally taken into account. Incomes higher than forecast had also been received from staff assessments and investment income, specifically capital gains from mutual fund holdings. As shown in the analysis of expenditures by Division contained in the report, significant savings had been achieved in that certain operating costs had been under budget, including those of the Executive Office, the Division of Assembly Affairs and Member Relations and the Division for External Relations. In the latter case, the savings were attributable mainly to the effect of a weak United States dollar on the cost of operating the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York but also to the cancellation of various activities. In addition, the allowance for doubtful accounts had not been fully used owing to improved diligence on the part of the membership in paying its contributions.

The gender analysis of expenditures indicated that women were well represented in the IPU Secretariat, including at the higher levels, and indeed the IPU recruitment procedures afforded due attention to gender-equality matters. There was, however, room for improvement of the gender-specific allocations, which were little different from the 2008

figures. An area of concern highlighted in the report related to the legacy Staff Pension Fund; in short, a further actuarial loss of CHF 600,000 was incurred during 2009, although the overall situation had improved considerably over the previous year in that payments from the Fund had not exceeded its assets. It nevertheless remained volatile, as the Fund was so small as to be dramatically affected by even the smallest change in the number of beneficiaries.

He drew attention to the statements of financial position, financial performance and cash flows, as well as to the usual notes to the financial statements, which included information on advances and receivables from donors. That information was incomplete, however, as it excluded the contributions of a more general nature made by the Canadian International Development Agency, the Finnish International Development Agency, Irish Aid and Swedish International Development Agency, for which the IPU was extremely grateful as they permitted it to engage in many of the activities for which there was a huge demand from its membership. Lastly, he drew attention to the programme results for 2009, set forth in annex 2 of the report, which listed the outcome, indicators and results pertaining to each activity or output in an annually improving exercise designed to facilitate assessment of the IPU's achievements. In short, the IPU remained in a healthy financial situation approved by the External Auditor.

The Governing Council took note of the financial report and audited statements for 2009.

Mr. D. Reisiegel (Czech Republic), Internal Auditor, introducing his report (CL/186/10-R.2), said that he had first examined the IPU's response to the key findings reported to the 120th Assembly by his predecessor, which were an important aid to improving the work of the IPU. He was pleased to state that due attention had been paid to those findings and that appropriate remedial measures had been adopted, leading to greater efficiency and transparency in spending. The IPU had also begun to purchase services by tender, particularly in the case of travel and printing. Indeed, it was vital to insist on the use of transparent procedures for the selection of any main service contractor.

As for the current findings of the External Auditor, the absence of a conclusive inventory of IPU's long-term fixed assets, in particular ICT and art works, had been noted. He therefore emphasized the need for such an inventory, including details of the location and value of each individual item; in accounting terms, unregistered items that were not properly inventoried in that manner represented a serious deficiency. The low appreciation of available finances was another problem highlighted by the External Auditor. As at 31 December 2009, the IPU had had over CHF 7 million in cash, current accounts and term deposits, which was a safe approach but one that achieved lower interest revenues. He nevertheless recommended that the security of finances entrusted to the IPU should be favoured over any riskier appreciation. The same problem was true of the IPU legacy Staff Pension Fund, where the value of the invested capital had been steadily falling as a result of the global economic crisis. The ensuing loss in that value was reflected in the financial results, with a potential liability contribution of CHF 2,044,000 at 31 December 2009. Again, it was imperative to weigh up very carefully the security of pension finances against the acceptable level of profitability.

The internal audit necessarily included a review of the systems and processes in place within the IPU. In that regard, the compilation of the budget provided the fundamental basis for the financial management of the IPU, while the recording of its fulfilment offered an overall view of the IPU's economic parameters and the progress of its work. Unfortunately, however, that fulfilment of the budget had not been taken into account in the compilation and planning of subsequent budgets. Each year, a budget item designated as voluntary contributions in revenues and as promotion of democracy in expenses had been overvalued. The true figure of CHF 2 million confirmed his view that a serious mistake had been repeatedly made in compiling that part of the budget, which in the last three years had accounted for over one

third of the total IPU budget. The budget compiled for 2010 and the outlook to 2012 featured the same mistake. Furthermore, it was impossible to identify from the budget in its present form whether IPU activities were financed from assessed or voluntary contributions. He therefore recommended that, at the time of preparing the budget, the project expenditures should be separated on the basis of their financing. In conclusion, he said that the accounts for 2009 faithfully reflected the IPU's financial position as at 31 December 2009. He therefore recommended that the Governing Council approve the financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2009.

The Secretary General, clarifying the issue of the discrepancy between the amount of funding budgeted for activities requiring voluntary contributions and the implementation of those activities as reported at the end of the year, recalled that the IPU had some years previously launched an ambitious programme of additional activities to be funded through voluntary contributions. At that time, it had been decided to include those activities together with those funded from the regular budget. The problem was that the amount of voluntary contributions was unknown at the time of preparing the budget, which gave rise to that discrepancy between the budgeting for and the implementation of the activities concerned. The Internal Auditor's recommendation was an eminently sensible one and efforts should be made to arrive at a more realistic funding prediction. It was even more important, however, to make a clear distinction as to how activities were funded and thus assist understanding of the reasons for any non-implementation of activities. That practice would henceforth be followed, beginning with the budget exercise for the next financial year.

The President said he took it that the Governing Council, taking into account the clarification provided by the Secretary General, wished to approve the financial results for 2009.

The Governing Council approved the financial results for 2009.

The Secretary General, introducing the report on the financial situation of the Union at 28 February 2010 (CL/186/10-R.3), said that the financial outlook was affected by such factors as currency markets, investment yields, equity values and national fiscal restraint. As detailed in the report, the IPU would pursue its efforts to counter the impact of those factors on its operations and holdings. The report also contained a summary of the IPU's financial situation and outlook on the basis of its cash balance, revenues and expenditures, as well as its Pension Fund liabilities, receipts of assessed contributions and arrears of contributions. He drew attention to annex II of the report, which set forth details of unpaid contributions at 30 March 2010, including for previous years, and appealed to all Members to ensure the timely payment of their contributions.

The Governing Council took note of the report on the financial situation of the Union at 28 February 2010.

The Secretary General further drew attention to document CL/186/10-P.1, which contained recommended revisions to the programme and budget for 2010 in order to take account of three unplanned activities. The first such activity had been a two-day extraordinary session of the Executive Committee, held in February 2010 in Windhoek, Namibia, in order to lay the groundwork for the future development of the IPU. Retroactive approval was therefore sought for the incurred cost of CHF 42,000, most of which had been spent on interpretation and other support services. In addition, the 3rd World Conference of Speakers to be held in Geneva in July 2010 was now estimated to require an extra expenditure of CHF 36,000, for

which authorization was also sought. Lastly, it was proposed that a consultant on development issues be recruited to report on parliamentary involvement in working towards achievement of the MDGs, the aim being to strengthen the IPU's contribution to the forthcoming MDG Summit in September 2010. The cost of hiring such a consultant was estimated at CHF 40,000. The Executive Committee had recommended that the total sum of CHF 118,000 for financing those three activities be reallocated from the existing budget on the very clear and unequivocal understanding that it would not lead to an increase in the budget.

The Governing Council approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee for the reallocation of CHF 118,000 from the existing budget to finance the three activities mentioned.

Item 11 of the agenda

**ACTION BY THE IPU TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY
AND PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS**

**(a) Report on activities carried out under the Programme for the
Promotion of Democracy
(CL/186/11(a)-R.1)**

Mr. M. Chungong, Director of the IPU Democracy Division, introducing the report on activities carried out under the Programme for the Promotion of Democracy (CL/186/11(a)-R.1), said that the activities carried out in 2009 and early 2010 in the four focal areas that constituted the IPU's democratic work were highlighted in the body of the report and also summarized in table form. In the area of strengthening parliaments, the focus of attention remained on promoting reconciliation, dialogue and security in countries in transition or in conflict or post-conflict situations, with activities undertaken in 15 such countries. Other work included action to promote greater parliamentary involvement in the implementation and forthcoming review of the Brussels Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries, as well as in aid effectiveness. In the field of human rights, the IPU continued to pursue its two-pronged approach of protecting the human rights of parliamentarians and strengthening the parliamentary capacity to defend and promote human rights. In that context, it was currently conducting a pre-publication review of a major study on exercise of the parliamentary mandate and had also pursued its work to combat human trafficking.

Concerning the promotion of respect for children's rights, particular emphasis had been placed on ways in which parliaments might contribute to achievement of the MDGs relating to maternal health and child survival. Prevention of violence against children had been another area of focus. Activities to promote women's participation in political life had similarly included a new initiative to combat gender-based violence and otherwise sought, inter alia, to continue building on gains already achieved and focus on improving women's political representation in the Pacific and Arab regions. Lastly, the IPU had been particularly active in promoting and facilitating self-assessment as a useful tool for the enhancement of parliamentary performance. All of the IPU's democracy-related activities were largely informed by the rolling three-year plan on promoting peace, democracy and development. Continuing expansion of the donor base would, however, be essential to guaranteeing the resources needed for those activities, the sensitive political nature of which was also sometimes conducive to constraint in cases where it proved difficult or impossible to secure buy-in from stakeholders.

Mr. Z.L. Madasa (South Africa) asked whether the Division had considered undertaking work in the area proposed by the First Standing Committee as its subject item for the 124th Assembly, which related to the prevention of electoral violence and improvement of election monitoring, an issue of growing concern in view of the increasing tendency for election results to be disputed. If not, how did the Division intend to coordinate its activities with those of the Standing Committees?

Mr. M. Chungong, *Director of the Division of Promotion of democracy*, replied that the IPU was not involved in election monitoring, which was beyond its scope. Since the early 1990s, however, it had been actively engaged with partners in developing standards for free and free elections that had served to guide other institutions involved in the organization or monitoring of elections. The IPU welcomed the discussion of any subject item approved by the Assembly and the Secretariat would, as always, endeavour in that context to give operational value to decisions taken by the IPU governing bodies.

The Secretary General, responding to a question from **Mr. W. Madzimore (Zimbabwe)** as to whether the IPU took steps to ensure that representatives of IPU Members had been elected in accordance with set guidelines, said that it was the IPU policy not to interfere in Members' decisions relating to representation. On the other hand, the IPU continually sought to play an important role in developing standards for free and fair elections, guidelines for election monitoring and criteria for what constituted a good parliamentary democracy. In that context, it promoted awareness and use of such instruments as the Universal Declaration of Democracy, but all policing of implementation was in the hands of sovereign parliaments.

The President, responding to a comment by **Mr. K.R. Khan (India)** that measures to improve election monitoring and ensure the smooth transition of power were the responsibility of legislative mechanisms alone, said that such issues were among those to be taken up by the IPU Assembly, as and when necessary.

The Governing Council took note of the report on activities carried out under the Programme for the Promotion of Democracy.

The Secretary General drew attention to a publication entitled *Highlights and Major Findings of the World e-Parliament Report 2010*, which had recently been issued by the Rome-based Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, established in 2005 as a joint initiative of IPU and the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs. The findings painted a mixed picture; ICT use by parliaments was increasing worldwide, but statistics relating to the various areas of e-Parliament indicated a growing gap that mirrored the digital divide, leaving a significant number of parliaments at a structural disadvantage. On the other hand, the collaboration under way in the ICT field was encouraging, as was the establishment of regional networks for the sharing of information and good practices. Nonetheless, almost half of parliaments in high-income countries, generally the most ICT-proficient, provided no ICT support for parliaments elsewhere. Recommendations for moving the situation ahead included greater international and regional cooperation with a view to increasing resources, particularly for the benefit of the African continent, and greater solidarity among parliaments. A framework of strategic goals for the development of ICT in parliament over the coming decade had also been elaborated. The IPU and the Global Centre were ready to assist in implementing those goals and recommendations, which parliaments were encouraged to take on board.

The Governing Council took note of the publication entitled *Highlights and Major Findings of the World e-Parliament Report 2010*.

The Secretary General, with reference to the tenth anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, provided a running commentary to a PowerPoint presentation depicting many of the parliamentary activities that had taken place worldwide to mark that event on 25 November 2009. For its part, the IPU had produced a booklet and poster on the campaign, to which it had also devoted a section of its website. Examples of activities designed to show commitment to the cause had ranged from the holding of special sessions of parliament and of seminars and workshops to coverage of events by the mass media and the staging of exhibitions. All such activities had also been spotlighted on the UNIFEM website that served as a platform for its global advocacy initiative *Say NO – UNiTE to End Violence against Women*. In short, parliaments had helped to raise the national profile of the subject as a political issue of priority. The IPU had since continued to pursue its work in that area, including with parliaments in Europe and Latin America, and was planning other similar initiatives in the African and Asian regions during the coming year.

The Governing Council took note of the Secretary General's oral report on activities to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

(b) International Day of Democracy 2010

(CL/186/11(b)-P.1)

The Secretary General drew attention to document CL/186/11(b)-P.1, which set forth a number of proposed actions to mark the International Day of Democracy 2010. It was suggested that the theme of those actions might centre on the strengthening of links between parliaments and citizens. The IPU encouraged parliaments to organize activities relating to that theme to mark the event and planned to compile relevant background information and documentation for their benefit, which would also be available on its website. It furthermore intended to repeat its initiative of the previous year by organizing another regional conference, most probably in Asia. Funding from the core budget had already been allocated for the proposed activities, which would also be partly financed by voluntary contributions.

The Governing Council approved the proposed actions set forth in document CL/186/11(b)-P.1.

Item 12 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

(a) Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

(CL/186/12(a)-R.1, R.2 and R.3)

Mrs. T. Boontong (Thailand), President and Rapporteur of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, introducing the report on the Meeting (CL/186/12(a)-R.1), said that approximately 100 women parliamentarians from 62 countries had taken part in the debate and that a considerable number of male colleagues had also attended. The many issues of discussion included the gender-related aspects of the subject item considered by the First Standing Committee, namely cooperation and shared responsibility in the global fight against organized crime, in particular drug trafficking, illegal arms sales, human trafficking and cross-border terrorism. Participants had discussed means of preventing human trafficking, a crime to

which women and children were frequently prey, as well as the impact of drugs on women and families and women's role in prevention. The discussion gave rise to several proposed amendments to the draft resolution on the subject, which were accepted for incorporation into the final version. A dialogue session for men and women was also held on the theme of combating violence against women, with particular focus on the treatment and vulnerability of women prisoners and preventive action that parliamentarians might take. In her keynote address to the Meeting, Her Royal Highness Princess Bhajrakitiyabha, UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador for Thailand, had similarly emphasized the vulnerability of women prisoners to violence and the problems associated with such violence. The Meeting had culminated in the unanimous adoption of a declaration, which was annexed to the report. In conclusion, she congratulated the three newly elected members of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, which had stressed its commitment to ensuring women's continued presence within the IPU and to strengthening women's participation in politics.

The Governing Council took note of the report on the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians.

Mrs. S. Greiss (Egypt), President of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians and Panel Rapporteur, introducing the report on a panel discussion on *The role of parliament in fulfilling the Convention on the Rights of the Child (C/186/12(a)-R.3)*, said that the impact of the Convention on the lives of children and the crucial role of parliamentarians in ensuring its full implementation had been considered during the discussion. As for the panellists, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on violence against children had provided an overview of the Convention and its accomplishments and remaining challenges; the former Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography had reiterated the need to secure the best interest of the child by law; for her own part, she had shared her country's experience in ensuring the rights of all children; and a youth representative from Nepal had underscored the need for children's participation in advocating for their rights, describing her own experiences in the process. As stated in the report, children had long been subjected to the worst forms of violence, such as child labour, but domestic violence was another common form of exploitation and abuse. Parliamentarians should ensure the integration into all laws and practices of four key principles highlighted in the Convention, namely the best interest of the child, non-discrimination, right to survival and development, and participation. Many of the 150 participants in the discussion had shared information on improvements to the child-related laws in their countries, but challenges to the full implementation of the Convention remained. It was therefore agreed that parliamentarians should also ensure active engagement with and involvement of children in parliamentary processes, exercise their oversight functions more effectively, improve data-collection on children and allocate adequate resources for children. Further cooperation with international organizations should be encouraged in addition, as should greater involvement in child-focused programmes at the national level.

The Governing Council took note of the report on a panel discussion on *The role of parliament in fulfilling the Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

(b) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

The President urged Members who had not already done so to join those who had signed the petition for the release of their colleagues imprisoned in Myanmar.

(ii) **Reports of the Committee**
(CL/186/12(b)-R.1 to R.4)

Mr. A.Q. Pimentel Jr. (Philippines), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, presenting the Committee's report (CL/186/12(b)-R.1), first expressed gratitude to those delegations that had taken the time to exchange views with the Committee or provide information in writing. During the current session, the Committee had examined the individual situations of 293 parliamentarians in 32 countries. It had held 8 meetings with official delegations and had also met with the parliamentarians concerned or their representatives in 4 of the cases. The resolutions submitted for approval concerned cases in 22 countries around the world. Three of them were presented for the first time.

Cases in which some progress had been made

AFGHANISTAN

The Committee had had a very positive meeting in Bangkok with the leader of the Afghan delegation and was pleased to report that the criminal prosecution of Ms. Joya for a statement she had made might soon be put to an end. Furthermore, if she so wished, she could present herself without a problem in the elections in Afghanistan later during the coming year. The Committee also hoped that, in the few months to come before the elections, the Afghan Parliament would reinstate Ms. Joya as a symbolic gesture.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Ms. Malalai Joya which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

BANGLADESH

Investigations into the grenade attacks in January 2005 on Mr. Shah Ams Kibria, a former Finance Minister of Bangladesh, which had killed him, and in August 2004 on Ms. Sheikh Hasina, the opposition leader at the time, were making headway. The persons who had been arrested included not only those who were suspected of executing the crime and those who tried to cover up for the offenders but also the alleged masterminds. The Committee was hopeful that the truth would soon be fully revealed.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the two draft resolutions relating to the case of Mr. Shah Ams Kibria and to the case of Ms. Sheikh Hasina which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Committee was pleased to propose to the Governing Council that the case be closed. Thanks to the help of the Presidents of the National Assembly and the Senate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the parliamentarians whose election had been arbitrarily invalidated by the Supreme Court in May 2007 would be compensated for the prejudice they had suffered.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 13 members of the Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

TURKEY

The remaining case in Turkey was that of Mr. Sinçar, who had been killed in September 1993 in circumstances suggesting that he was the victim of an extrajudicial execution. The parliament had reported some time ago that a trial was under way and it was now known that two persons were being prosecuted and that Mrs. Sinçar was now a civil party to the case. The Committee hoped that after so many years justice would finally prevail in the case.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Mehmet Sinçar which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

Cases where no substantive new information had been provided

No substantive new information had been provided in connection with the cases in Burundi, Cambodia, Ecuador, Lebanon, Palestine and Sri Lanka, meaning that the concerns or focus of the draft resolutions before the Governing Council had not basically changed. It was not therefore necessary to present any summaries of those cases.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the two draft resolutions relating to the case of eight members of the Burundi Senate and to the case of Mr. Pasteur Mpawenayo, Mr. Hussein Radjabu, Mr. Théophile Minyurano and Mr. Gérard Nkurunziza of Burundi; the draft resolution relating to the case of Ms. Mu Sochua of Cambodia; the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Jaime Ricaurte Hurtado González and Pablo Vicente Tapia Farinango of Ecuador; the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Gibran Tueni, Mr. Walid Eido, Mr. Antoine Ghanem and Mr. Pierre Gemayel of Lebanon; the three draft resolutions relating to the case of Mr. Marwan Barghouti of Palestine, to the case of Mr. Ahmad Sa'adat, also of Palestine, and to the case of 22 parliamentarians from Palestine; and the six draft resolutions relating to the case of 7 parliamentarians from Sri Lanka, to the case of Mr. Joseph Pararajasingham, to the case of Mr. Nadarajah Raviraj, to the case of Mr. Thiyagarajah Maheswaran, to the case of Mr. D.M. Dassanayake and to the case of Mr. Kiddinan Sivanesan, all of Sri Lanka. Each of those draft resolutions had been submitted to the Governing Council by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

Cases not to be submitted at the present time

IRAQ

In October 2009, the case of an Iraqi member of parliament, Mohamed Al-Dainy, had been before the Governing Council. At the request of the source, the Committee had decided not to submit the case to the Governing Council on the present occasion.

Cases to which particular attention was drawn

BELARUS

It was now more than 10 years since Mr. Victor Gonchar and his friend Krasovsky had disappeared. The Committee was increasingly concerned by the secrecy in which the investigation was shrouded. Even the families of the victims were not being kept informed of the investigation. The Committee feared therefore that in fact no investigation was being carried out and that the case might be closed upon expiry of the statute of limitations, which was 15 years. It believed that in such high profile cases as the present one, it should be in the interest of the authorities to show that they were doing their utmost to reveal the truth.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Victor Gonchar, which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

COLOMBIA

At the invitation of the Colombian Congress, the Committee had carried out an on-site mission to Bogotá in August during 2009 in order to raise its concerns in the cases and to gain a better understanding of the political and legal environment in Colombia in which they had to be considered. The Committee's Vice-President, Senator Rosario Green of Mexico, had led the delegation, which had met with the President of the Republic and Ministers of his Cabinet, the Presidents of the Colombian Senate and House of Representatives, the President of the Supreme Court, and the Prosecutor General and Attorney General of Colombia. The delegation had also met with current and former members of Congress who were under threat and with family members of those who had been assassinated. In Colombia, the matter involved a number of very different yet complex cases in a highly complex political environment.

As could be seen from the delegation's report on the mission (CL/186/12(b)-R.2), the recommendations focused on promoting progress in the investigations into the murder of members of the Congress, protection for those at risk, and ensuring full respect for the right to fair trial for members of Congress.

The Committee was pleased to say that many of the investigations into the murders of parliamentarians had been reactivated in the last two years and had sometimes shown spectacular developments, such as in the high-profile case of Senator Luis Carlos Galán. In that particular investigation, a top state official had been taken into custody around the time of the mission. In yet another case, that of the murder of Mr. Cepeda for which the authorities bore direct and indirect responsibility, a Colombian State representative had recently asked his relatives for forgiveness in a public hearing before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In both those and the other cases, the Committee trusted that the authorities would do their utmost to shed full light on them and to punish the culprits, including the masterminds of those crimes.

The mission had also been extensively informed about the lack of fair trial guarantees in criminal proceedings against members of parliament in Colombia. The Governing Council had before it for the first time the case of former Senator Alvaro Araújo, along with a report by an IPU legal expert who had concluded that the criminal proceedings against him ran counter to basic principles of due process. The Committee fully shared his findings and was deeply concerned that Mr. Araújo, who had been found guilty during the previous week, could not appeal his sentence, as current and former members of Congress were investigated and judged at single instance by the Supreme Court. The Committee was particularly concerned that a new investigation had now been initiated and that Mr. Araújo might again be investigated under the same flawed procedure. It would closely follow the matter and meanwhile called on the Colombian authorities, in

particular the new Colombian Congress, to overhaul the procedure applicable to Colombian parliamentarians so as to make it fully compatible with fundamental fair-trial standards, including the right to appeal. The Committee believed that the IPU could make an important contribution to helping advance the public debate in Colombia on that complex and sensitive matter.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the five draft resolutions relating to the case of Mr. Pedro Nel Jiménez Obando, Mr. Leonardo Posada Pedraza, Mr. Octavio Vargas Cuéllar, Mr. Pedro Luis Valencia Giraldo, Mr. Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa, Mr. Manuel Cepeda Vargas and Mr. Hernán Motta Motta, to the case of Mr. Luis Carlos Galán Sarmiento, to the case of Mr. Jorge Tadeo Lozano Osario, to the case of Mr. Wilson Borja and to the case of Mr. Alvaro Araújo Castor, all of which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

ERITREA

The situation of the 11 parliamentarians in Eritrea was an affront to human dignity. Their only "mistake" had been to call for democratic reforms in Eritrea. They had been held for more than eight years without any contact with the outside world and without ever being formally charged. There were growing reports that they may in fact be no longer alive.

The Committee was appalled that the Eritrean authorities continued to remain completely deaf to the pleas by the IPU and by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights for their immediate release. The Committee was shocked that Eritrean State officials had been to Geneva recently to tell the United Nations Human Rights Council that freedom of expression was fully respected and that arbitrary and secret detention and torture were banned in Eritrea, even though United Nations reports clearly showed otherwise. The Committee urged the Eritrean authorities to take the matter seriously and to release the 11 persons immediately.

The Committee also believed that much more could and should be done by all to bring the necessary pressure to bear on the Eritrean authorities, including by making use of bilateral, regional and international trade, development and other agreements to which Eritrea was a party.

The Committee appealed therefore to its African colleagues, the African Union, the African Parliamentary Union and the Pan-African Parliament, as well as the European Union, through its High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to do their utmost in that respect.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 11 parliamentarians, which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

MADAGASCAR

Unfortunately, the Maputo Accord concluded in 2009 between the different political trends in Madagascar had not put an end to the crisis that had been prevailing in the country ever since the former Mayor of Madagascar's capital had taken power in March 2009. It was in such context that the members of parliament concerned had been arrested, humiliated, brutalized and charged with various public order offences. It might perhaps be remembered that in October 2009, the Governing Council had heard the testimony of Mrs. Naïka, one of the former parliamentarians concerned. She was still out of the country. While all of the other former MPs concerned had meanwhile been released, the cases against them were still

pending and travel bans had been imposed on them. The Committee believed that an on-site mission would be helpful and it requested the Secretary General to take the necessary steps to that end.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 10 parliamentarians from Madagascar which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

MONGOLIA

Although the case of Mr. Zorig Sanjasuuren had not made significant progress since October 2009, the Committee still wished to draw attention to it and inform the Governing Council that two countries had agreed to provide technical assistance to the Mongolian investigative authorities. Germany had indeed already provided such assistance and was prepared to continue to do so. In January 2010, all the diplomatic formalities required for the Japanese offer of assistance to materialize had been completed. The Committee hoped therefore that with the latest state-of-the-art technology, it would be possible to finally elucidate Mr. Zorig's murder of 12 years earlier.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Zorig Sanjasuuren which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

MYANMAR

In the hallway outside the present meeting room was a small exhibition organized by the Committee on the case in Myanmar that was under examination. Twelve parliamentarians elected in 1990 remained imprisoned to the current day and the parliament to which they had been elected under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi had been abolished. They had all been sentenced on the basis of legal proceedings which had blatantly disregarded their right to fair trial. The exhibition included a petition urging the Myanmar authorities to release those parliamentarians immediately, which all Members were asked to sign.

The year 2010 was crucial for Myanmar and for the international community's approach to Myanmar. The Committee called on the Myanmar authorities to ensure that the elections were inclusive, free and fair, which would require them to change the recently enacted electoral laws. The Committee called on IPU Member parliaments, in particular those of China and India as neighbouring countries, and on the Association of South-East Asian Nations, to lend their full support to help ensure a credible electoral process, in particular since, with the elections drawing close, time was running short.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of the 21 parliamentarians from Myanmar which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

NIGER

In October 2009, the Governing Council had suspended the affiliation of the National Assembly of Niger following its dissolution by President Tandja, which it had condemned, and had asked the Committee to look into the situation of the members of the dissolved Assembly. They had all been charged on account of allegedly having illegally received allowances and

benefits. Some of them had been arrested and detained. The Committee's delegation led by Senator Mahoux had been to Niamey from 30 November to 1 December 2009 and met with all parties concerned, in particular President Tandja himself. Shortly after the mission, the two former parliamentarians who were still in detention at the time of the mission had been released and a dialogue had started regarding the question of the allowances and other benefits. However, as the Council was aware, the military had taken power in February 2010, ousted President Tandja and dissolved the parliament elected in 2009. Under those circumstances, the Committee proposed that the case be closed as the question of allowances was no longer an issue and the two former parliamentarians had been released.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of the 113 parliamentarians from Niger which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

Mrs. S. Carstairs (Canada), Member of the Committee, took the place of the President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to present the cases on Philippines to the Governing Council.

PHILIPPINES

Ever since the rebellion case brought against the four parliamentarians concerned had been dismissed by the Supreme Court in 2007 for being politically motivated, the Committee had been concerned that the new criminal proceedings brought against them were part of an effort to remove them and their parties from the political process. The rebellion charges had been prepared by a special body, the Inter-Agency Legal Action Group (IALAG), created by President Arroyo to prepare cases of rebellion and sedition against suspected enemies of the State. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, arbitrary or summary executions had recommended the abolition of that institution. The Committee was pleased that the House of Representatives had asked its Justice Committee to examine the impact the work of IALAG had on the administration of justice in the Philippines.

The second case in the Philippines was that of Senator Trillanes, a Navy Lieutenant who had been elected in May 2007 while he was in detention. He was accused of participation in the so-called "Oakwood Siege" of July 2003, when more than 300 soldiers had gone to the Oakwood Hotel to make known their grievances over graft and corruption within the Philippine Armed Forces. The Committee was concerned that he had now been in pretrial detention for more than seven years with the case against him proceeding extremely slowly, which meant that not only could he not exercise his parliamentary mandate but also that the 11 million people who voted for him had no representation in parliament. The Committee was therefore pleased that the Senate had taken the initiative to amend its Rules and to provide for video-conferencing, which would allow him to exercise his mandate to some extent. However, the new rules still needed to be adopted by the Senate plenary and the Committee had asked the Senate to do that as quickly as possible. The Committee also considered that Senator Trillanes should be released pending trial.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the two draft resolutions relating to the case of Mr. Saturnino Ocampo, Mr. Teodoro Casiño, Ms. Liza Maza and Mr. Rafael Mariano and to the case of Mr. Antonio F. Trillanes which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

The President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians resumed his presentation of cases to the Governing Council.

RWANDA

Mr. Léonard Hitimana had disappeared in April 2003 and had still not been found. From the new information provided to the Committee on what had happened on the day of his disappearance, it appeared practically certain that he had been the victim of an enforced disappearance. No serious efforts had been made to hold the perpetrators to account. For instance, the Committee now knew that, one month after his disappearance, Mr. Hitimana's car had been retrieved from the police with blood stains on the front seat, which had apparently never been investigated. Eyewitnesses reportedly saw that, in the afternoon of 7 April 2003, military intelligence officers had intercepted Mr. Hitimana's car in the street, closing it to the public, and had taken him to Kami military camp, where he had allegedly been tortured and killed in May 2003. The Committee also had the name of a possible suspect. The Committee urged the Rwandan authorities to investigate those leads very seriously and called on the Rwandan Parliament to make use of its oversight function to ensure that real efforts were made to that end.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Léonard Hitimana which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

ZIMBABWE

The Committee remained deeply concerned at the continuing impunity in the case of Mr. Sikhala and Mr. Madzore, who had both been tortured, and of Mr. Biti and Mr. Chamisa, who had been beaten up by the police. The State officials responsible for those acts had yet to be held to account. The Committee had been pleased to meet in Bangkok with the Speaker of the House of Assembly of Zimbabwe and to hear from him that the Parliament was committed to protecting the human rights of its members. The Committee was therefore confident that the House of Assembly would make every effort to ensure that the perpetrators were identified and brought to justice and that the victims were paid due compensation.

However, as Mr. Biti had decided not to press for justice with regard to the ill-treatment which he suffered in March 2007 and as the treason charges against him were dropped after he had become Minister of Finance in 2009, the Committee proposed that the case be closed.

With respect to Mr. Bennett, the Committee believed that the charges against him of possessing weaponry for the purposes of banditry, insurgency and sabotage were part of an ongoing effort to harass him and keep him out of politics in Zimbabwe. The Committee considered that the charges should be dropped. It would be seen from the current day's news whether that had indeed happened, as the relevant court hearing had taken place the previous day.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of five members of the Parliament of Zimbabwe which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

New cases

MALAYSIA

The first new case concerned Mr. Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia, currently de facto leader of the opposition Peoples Alliance. It might perhaps be recalled that the Governing Council had dealt with Anwar Ibrahim's case some years earlier when he had been prosecuted and found guilty of abuse of power and sodomy. In 2004, the Federal Court had quashed the conviction in the sodomy case. There had been serious concerns regarding the fairness of the proceedings, which were largely considered to have been politically motivated. Although, as a result of his conviction, Anwar Ibrahim had been barred from standing in elections until April 2008, he had been able to campaign in the March 2008 elections. He had been finally re-elected in a by-election on 26 August 2008. Earlier that same month, a new sodomy charge had been brought against him and trial proceedings had started in February 2010. The investigation and the proceedings seemed to suffer from the same flaws as in the previous sodomy case. The Committee believed that the charges should not have been brought in the first place as there appeared to be insufficient medical evidence. It was alarmed that members of the former prosecution team were also involved in the new case, including the Attorney General, the lead prosecutor in the first sodomy case, accused of having fabricated evidence in that case. It was also deeply concerned that the defence had been denied access to crucial prosecution evidence. The Committee therefore requested the Secretary General to ensure the presence of an international observer at the proceedings.

Ms. Chew Mei Fun (Malaysia) expressed a reservation to the draft resolution and said that her country's judiciary operated in accordance with the legal standards of any other fully developed country. Its systems honoured and respected the independence of its courts in finding facts and applying the law impartially. The rule of law was respected and observed and an independent judiciary was the cornerstone of the justice system. The rights of both the accuser and the accused were respected, without prejudice and preference. All parties had the right and opportunity to present their cases to an impartial judge.

The Governing Council took note of the reservation expressed by the Malaysian delegation and adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Anwar Ibrahim which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

It was now almost 12 years since Mrs. Galina Starovoitova, a prominent Russian human rights advocate, had been shot dead on 20 November 1998 in the stairwell of her apartment in St. Petersburg. The investigation had concluded that her murder was politically motivated. Shortly before she was killed, Mrs. Starovoitova had denounced instances of high-profile corruption. Two persons had been found guilty of her murder and others of complicity; however, the masterminds had still not been identified. The Committee called on the authorities to do their utmost by lending fresh impetus to the investigation with a view to finally resolving that crime.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mrs. Galina Starovoitova which had been submitted to it by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

THIRD SITTING

Thursday, 1 April 2010

(Afternoon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m., with Dr. T.-B. Gurirab (Namibia), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 12 of the agenda

(continued)

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

(b) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

(continued)

(i) Election of one titular member and two substitute members

(CL/186/12(b)-P.2, P.3 and P.6)

The President said that it was necessary to elect one titular member for the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to replace its current President, Senator Pimentel of Philippines, whose term of office was due to expire at the end of June 2010. One candidature had been received for the post, that of Mr. K. Jalali of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as set forth in document CL/186/12(b)-P.2.

The Governing Council elected Mr. K. Jalali of the Islamic Republic of Iran as titular member of the Committee.

The President said that it was also necessary to elect three substitute members to replace Mr. S. Luetheusser-Schnarrenberger of Germany, who was no longer a member of the German delegation, Mr. Nelson Ávila Contreras of Chile, who was no longer a member of parliament, and Mr. K. Jalali of the Islamic Republic of Iran, now that he was a full member of the Committee. One candidature had been received for the Asia-Pacific post, that of Mr. F.N. Pangilinan of Philippines, as set forth in document CL/186/12(b)-P.3, and one for the Twelve Plus post, that of Mr. B. Barović of Slovenia, as set forth in document CL/186/12(b)-P.6. No candidature had yet been received for the post of substitute member from the Latin American Group, which would therefore remain vacant until October 2010.

The Governing Council elected Mr. F.N. Pangilinan of Philippines and Mr. B. Barović of Slovenia as substitute members of the Committee.

(c) Committee on Middle East Questions

(CL/186/12(c)-R.1)

Mr. F.-X. de Donnea (Belgium), member of the Committee on Middle East Questions, introducing the Committee's report (CL/186/12(c)-R.1), said that the Committee had twice met during the current session to exchange views concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the peace process. It had also heard the views of delegations from Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Turkey and been briefed by the IPU Secretary General on contacts and cooperation with the Israeli and Palestinian parliaments. Although convinced that it could usefully continue to provide a framework for direct talks between Israeli and Palestinian legislators, the Committee

noted with regret that the present political atmosphere was such that a dialogue within that framework had not been possible during the current session. It had therefore requested the Secretary General to pursue his efforts for a direct dialogue between the parties on a future occasion. In discussing its mandate and future plans, the Committee had proposed to increase its composition to seven members and to seek a broader regional and more equal gender representation. It had also decided to devote attention at future sessions to the gender aspect of the conflict, with particular reference to its impact on Israeli and Palestinian women. In conclusion, he read out a statement, annexed to the report, which had been adopted by the Committee at the close of its meeting and was submitted to the Governing Council for endorsement.

Mr. M. Whbee (Israel) expressed appreciation for the Committee's efforts to return the two sides to the negotiating table, as well as the hope that those efforts would ultimately bear fruit. He noted with respect to the Committee's statement, however, that it omitted to call for the immediate release of the Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, who, since the time of his kidnap three years earlier, had remained incommunicado and had moreover received no visits from representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which was contrary to international law. Furthermore, the statement incorrectly referred to political prisoners held by Israel; Israel held no such prisoners. It did, however, imprison persons convicted of terrorist-related offences.

Mr. T. Quba`a (Palestine) said that the statement failed to do justice to oppressed Palestinians insofar as it made no call for an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories. As for the one Israeli soldier captured by the Palestinian side during a tank battle, the contrasting scenario was that some 9,000 Palestinian citizens had been randomly abducted from their occupied land and mostly placed in administrative detention in Israel, all of which contravened the Fourth Geneva Convention. Only a few days earlier, moreover, scores of Palestinians, including prominent legislator Mr. Abbas Zaki, had been detained by the Israeli authorities for no other reason than their participation in a peaceful demonstration. Despite the omissions, he expressed support for the Committee's report and statement in the interest of cooperation. The inclusion of a reference to other Israeli-occupied Arab territories, such as the Syrian Arab Golan and the Shaba` Farms, was nevertheless imperative.

Mr. K. Kassam (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed similar support but said that the report and statement fell short in having failed to mention the Zionist attempts to alter the character and identity of Muslim and Christian holy sites that were part of the Arab heritage, in particular the Ibrahimi and Bilal ibn Rabah mosques. It was also vital to affirm the need to end the Zionist occupation of Syrian territories, including the Syrian Arab Golan, from where prisoners held by the Zionist entity must also be released. All Zionist practices in the occupied territories were in violation of international law and United Nations resolutions.

Mr. H. Fallahat Pishah (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation wished to express a reservation to the Committee's statement, which failed to address the issues at stake in a balanced and comprehensive manner. In particular, it made no call for an immediate halt to Jewish settlement or for the full protection of all historical and religious sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including al-Aqsa mosque, against the aggressive and illegal actions of the occupying Power. Nor did it urge withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and southern Lebanon. His delegation also wished to enter a reservation to the effect that neither that statement nor any other references to its subject matter in other documents of the current Assembly should in any way be construed as recognition of the Israeli regime.

Mr. M. Elforjani (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) recalled that the unsuccessful proposal for an emergency item concerning Israeli violations of the religious and cultural rights of the Palestinian people, in particular in and around Jerusalem, and Israeli settlement activities, inter alia, had been referred to the Committee on Middle East Questions for further discussion. He would like to know what the outcome of that discussion had been.

The Secretary General confirmed that the proposal mentioned by the previous speaker had indeed been referred to the Committee on Middle East Questions in response to a request following the Assembly's adoption of an alternative proposal for an emergency item, only one of which could be added to its agenda. The Committee had subsequently discussed the subject matter of the proposal referred to it in the wider context of the Middle East peace process, in which connection it had drafted the short and concise statement currently before the Council in articulation of its concerns over lack of progress. The Committee believed that the generic wording of that statement, specifically the reference to "Israeli settlement, construction and expansion activities anywhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem", adequately covered the matters raised in the proposal and that more specific details were therefore unnecessary.

The Governing Council endorsed the statement by the Committee on Middle East Questions on that understanding and also took note of the Committee's report.

(d) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus

(CL/186/12(d)-R .1)

The Secretary General, introducing the report of the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus (CL/184/12(d)-R.1) on behalf of the Group, said that representatives of the parties had met during the current session with a newly elected Facilitator from Israel. The message conveyed was that the parties were positive about progress achieved during the negotiations launched in 2008 under United Nations auspices, which they looked forward to continuing in 2010 with a view to a long-term and viable solution for the unification of Cyprus. A proposal for the Facilitators to pay a visit to engage with political parties in Cyprus, subject to consultation with the IPU, had been welcomed.

The Governing Council took note of the report of the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus.

(e) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

(i) Election of two titular members

(CL/186/12(e)-P.1 and P.2)

The President said that it was necessary to elect two titular members for the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law. The two candidatures received for the posts were that of Mr. A.A. Tjakra of Indonesia, as set forth in document CL/186/12(e)-P.1, and that of Mr. A. Si Afif of Algeria, as set forth in document CL/186/12(e)-P.2, which was supported by the African Group.

The Governing Council elected Mr. A.A. Tjakra of Indonesia and Mr. Abdelhamid Si Afif of Algeria as titular members of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law.

(ii) Report of the Committee
(CL/186/12(e)-R.1)

Mrs. B. Gadiant (Switzerland), President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, introducing the Committee's report (CL/186/12(e)-R.1), said that the meeting held during the current session had begun with a discussion of developments relating to the recently launched *Handbook on Missing Persons*, an important guide which was to be translated into a further five languages. In the area of refugee protection, nationality and statelessness, it had welcomed amendments to legislation in Bangladesh and Zimbabwe to enable women to confer nationality on their children on an equal footing with men. It had also proposed to devote its open session at the 124th Assembly in 2011 to highlighting the significance of the anniversaries to be marked during the forthcoming year by the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It had further discussed the issue of the world's 26 million internally displaced persons, in which connection she drew attention to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, adopted in Kampala in October 2009. African colleagues were encouraged to promote the signature and ratification of the Convention, which should inspire the development of similar legal frameworks elsewhere. Members had been invited to submit written suggestions for facilitating the work of the Committee, which had also held an open session on the role of parliaments in ensuring birth registration for all, as summarized in the annex to the report. She concluded with an expression of gratitude to ICRC and UNHCR for their support and cooperation.

The Governing Council took note of the report of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law.

(f) Gender Partnership Group
(CL/186/12(f)-R.1)

Mr. R. del Picchia (France), Rapporteur of the Gender Partnership Group, introducing the Group's report (CL/186/12(f)-R.1), said that at its two meetings during the current session, the Group had determined that 178 of the 621 delegates (28.7 per cent) to the 122nd Assembly were women, a figure similar to that of previous years but lower than that achieved for the 121st Assembly in Geneva. It was therefore time to set the bar higher in order to bring about a real change towards parity. In addition, 14 of the delegations composed of two or more delegates were all male. More positive developments noted from the financial report for 2009 were that women now constituted over 60 per cent of personnel in the IPU Secretariat and that the number of projects and activities under the Gender Partnership Programme was growing as a result of major financial support received primarily from extrabudgetary contributions. More gender indicators were nevertheless needed in budget allocations and expenditures for all programmes. It was also essential to ensure continuing financial support for gender-specific activities. As for the six parliaments in the world that had no women members, they were concentrated in the Pacific, Caribbean and Arab regions. The Group welcomed not only the publication and circulation during the current Assembly of the excellent *Map on Women in Politics 2010* but also the initiatives forming part of the campaign to end violence against women. Lastly, it urged parliaments to take advantage of the final opportunity to complete the questionnaire on gender sensitivity of parliaments.

The Governing Council took note of the report of the Gender Partnership Group.

(g) Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS
(CL/186/12(g)-R.1)

Mrs. M. Xavier (Uruguay), member of the Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS, introduced the report on the Group's field visit to Viet Nam (CL/186/12(g)-R.1), which had lasted five days and in which she had participated. Although a full understanding of the complex issues associated with such a complex epidemic would require a longer visit, those five days had enabled the participants to form a much clearer picture of the scale of the HIV/AIDS problem in Viet Nam. The report outlined the meetings and visits conducted in Hanoi with Vietnamese officials and with officers from such organizations as UNAIDS Viet Nam and CARE International, all of whom had been extremely generous in sharing information. On the basis of its visit, the Advisory Group had formulated a number of conclusions and recommendations relating to the role of the Vietnamese National Assembly in addressing the HIV/AIDS, budgeting for national HIV/AIDS strategies and programmes, measures for harm reduction and overcoming the stigmatization of men who had sex with men, civil-society participation in the national HIV/AIDS response, and such other issues as the improvement of data collection and the need for targeted responses to both generalized and concentrated populations. The report of the seventh meeting of the Advisory Group was also annexed to the report.

The Governing Council took note of the reports of the Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS on its field visit to Viet Nam and on its seventh meeting.

(h) Panel discussion on *Water: Preserving Our Oceans*
(CL/186/12(h)-R.1)

Mr. P. Phalusuk (Thailand), Chairperson of the Working Group on Water, introducing the report on the panel discussion (CL/186/12(h)-R.1), said that participants had engaged in a lively debate in which emphasis had been placed on strengthening institutional arrangements on ocean affairs in an integrated manner. As they saw it, progress in international cooperation for sustainable development of ocean resources and environment was visible in the economic, social and environmental areas only. Institutional capacities were therefore compromised in a variety of areas and the panel therefore recommended that advantage should be taken of the opportunity offered by the United Nations General Assembly to promote measures aimed at identifying a common approach by Member States and interested stakeholders. The panel furthermore underlined the need to honour the commitments established under United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/30 of 2005 on oceans and the law of the sea and also recommended that thought be given to the establishment of parliamentary committees on ocean affairs. Greater cooperation between the IPU and the International Ocean Institute would also be beneficial to promoting the parliamentary role in ocean affairs. In short, protection of the oceans was not a matter of choice but one of survival.

The Governing Council took note of the report on the panel discussion on *Water: Preserving our Oceans*.

Item 13 of the agenda

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 3rd WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT
(C/186/13-R.1)

The President drew attention to document C/186/13-R.1, which reported on the work of the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. Invitations to the Conference had been dispatched in early February 2010 to all Speakers, who were warmly encouraged to attend and had also been invited to submit comments by 16 April 2010 on a first draft of the outcome document to be adopted at the close of the Conference. The Preparatory Committee would again meet on 7 and 8 May 2010 in Geneva in order to finalize that document in the light of comments received.

The Governing Council took note of the report on preparations for the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

Item 14 of the agenda

123rd IPU ASSEMBLY
(Geneva, 4-6 October 2010)
(CL/186/14-P.1)

The Secretary General drew attention to document CL/186/14-P.1, which contained for approval by the Governing Council a list of international organizations and other bodies invited to follow as observers the work of the 123rd IPU Assembly, to be held in Geneva from 4 to 6 October 2010. In the light of the proposed agenda for that Assembly, which comprised items relating to elections, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs were included in that list.

The Governing Council approved the list of international organizations and other bodies invited to follow as observers the work of the 123rd IPU Assembly.

Item 15 of the agenda

FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS
(CL/186/15-P.1)

(a) Statutory meetings

The President said that the Executive Committee had given its warm endorsement to the report it had received from the IPU Secretariat concerning its visit to the proposed venue of the 125th Assembly in Bern in October 2011 and therefore looked to the Governing Council for approval.

The Governing Council approved the proposal for Bern to serve as the venue for the 125th IPU Assembly.

The President recalled the decision taken six months earlier to hold the 127th IPU Assembly in 2012, at the kind invitation of the Canadian Parliament, in Quebec. It had since been explained by the Canadian hosts that when it was agreed to hold the first Assembly of 2012 in Uganda, they had been under the impression that the second Assembly to be hosted

by them would also be a major meeting of five days' duration. The Executive Committee had discussed the matter, on which it had also heard the Canadian delegation, and it had furthermore examined the financial and statutory consequences of extending the second Assembly of the year to five days. Whatever decision was taken on the matter would be less than ideal, but the Executive Committee recommended acceptance of the Canadian proposal that a five-day event be held, with the first three days following the traditional format of the second Assembly of the year and the extra two days devoted to additional sessions on issues of shared political relevance to the IPU membership.

Were that proposal to be accepted, the Executive Committee had made it very clear that it would be an exceptional ruling and that it did not expect to have to take another similar decision in future. It also confirmed the need to uphold the statutory provisions regarding the size of delegations to IPU Assemblies, set out in Article 10.2 of the Statutes. In other words, as was customary for the second Assembly, Members would be able to register no more than five delegates, or seven in the case of larger countries. The Canadian hosts had also given their assurance that they would do everything necessary to uphold the IPU's visa policy.

The Governing Council approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee to extend the period of the second Assembly in 2012 to five days.

The Secretary General drew attention to the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings, contained in document CL/186/15-P.1, in particular four new meetings not included in the list already approved by the Governing Council and for which approval was therefore sought: a regional conference on the trafficking of children; a regional seminar for Latin America on security challenges and parliamentary oversight; a regional seminar for Arab parliaments on violence against women and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; and a conference on maternal health and child survival. The first meeting was to be held in Cotonou, Benin, in May 2010 and the three other meetings were each to be held in the second half of 2010 at a venue not yet decided. All four meetings were to be funded from external sources.

He further drew attention to four important meetings in which parliamentary participation was particularly encouraged: a three-day regional seminar for Latin American parliaments on violence against women, to be held in Ecuador in April 2010; a three-day parliamentary forum on ICT and the global economic crisis, to be held in Geneva in early May 2010; a one-day parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in New York, also in May 2010; and a one-day parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Forum, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in late May 2010.

Lastly, the IPU was actively continuing to work on climate change issues following the successful parliamentary meeting on the subject that it had organized on the sidelines of the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference. Although specific plans had not yet been formulated, it was to be invited by the Mexican Congress to join in organizing another such meeting on the eve of the 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference, to be hosted by Mexico in Cancún, in order to fashion the parliamentary input to the deliberations of the Conference.

The Governing Council approved the four new additions to the list of specialized meetings and other events.

Item 16 of the agenda

AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES AND RULES

(CL/186/16-P.1 and P.2)

The President drew attention to document CL/186/16-P.1, which contained proposed amendments to the Rules of the Standing Committees. At the present stage, those amendments were submitted for the preliminary consideration of the Governing Council with a view to their subsequent adoption at its 187th session in October 2010. The Executive Committee had also considered amendments to Article 3 of the Rules of the IPU Secretariat pertaining to the procedure for the election and re-election of the Secretary General. Again, those amendments were submitted for initial consideration with a view to their subsequent adoption at that same session in October 2010.

The Governing Council noted the proposed amendments to Article 3 of the Rules of the Standing Committees and Article 3 of the Rules of the IPU Secretariat.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.