

CL/192/SR.1  
21 May 2013

**SUMMARY RECORDS**

**OF THE**

**GOVERNING COUNCIL**

**(192<sup>nd</sup> SESSION)**

**23, 26 and 27 March 2013**

**QUITO (*Quorum Quito Convention Centre*)**

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## FIRST SITTING

**Saturday, 23 March 2013**

*The meeting was called to order at 9.15 a.m. with the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Abdelwahad Radi (Morocco), in the Chair.*

Item 1 of the agenda

### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

(CL/192/A.1)

**The revised provisional agenda, contained in document CL/192/A.1, was adopted.**

Item 2 of the agenda

### **APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 191<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

(CL/191/SR.1)

**The summary records of the 191<sup>st</sup> session of the Governing Council, contained in document CL/191/SR.1, were approved.**

Item 3 of the agenda

### **PROPOSALS FOR THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 128<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY**

**Mr. H. Tajam (Uruguay)** proposed that Mr. Fernando Cordero Cueva, President of the National Assembly of Ecuador, be nominated President of the 128<sup>th</sup> 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**

**The President** said that no formal requests for IPU membership had been received.

#### **(b) Situation of certain Members**

**The President** said that no Member was currently liable for suspension owing to non-payment of financial dues but that Members in arrears of two or more years were strongly urged to ensure timely payment of their dues.

With respect to the situation of parliaments in certain countries, the Executive Committee had taken particular note of the positive developments in Saudi Arabia, where the Shura Council now included 30 women members. In a hearing with the delegation of Syria, it had also

raised questions about the functioning of the Syrian Parliament and its efforts to alleviate the crisis in Syria.

Lastly, on the ground that the matter warranted further discussion, the Committee had recommended that the Council defer until the next Assembly its consideration of an amendment to Article 4 of the IPU Statutes. Proposed by the French Group, that amendment, set out in document CL/192/15-P.1, pertained to the suspension of the affiliation of a Member Parliament to the IPU. It was now understood, however, that the proposal might be withdrawn pending further consultations with Members.

**(c) Observer status**  
(CL/192/4(c)-P.1)

**The President** said that the Executive Committee had received requests for observer status from the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC) and ParlAmericas. He took it that the Council wished to approve the Committee's recommendation, contained in document CL/192/4(c)-P.1, that it approve those requests.

**It was so decided.**

Item 5 of the agenda

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

**(a) On his activities since the 191<sup>st</sup> session of the Governing Council**  
(CL/192/5(a)-R.1)

**The President** delivered his report on his activities since the 191<sup>st</sup> session of the Governing Council, as contained in document CL/192/5(a)-R.1.

**(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee**

**The President** said that most of the subjects discussed by the Executive Committee over its two full days of deliberations would be reported on under other items of the agenda. Concerning the IPU contribution to the design of the post-2015 development goals, the Committee had requested the Secretariat to produce a communiqué setting out the key proposals made during the General Debate of the Assembly on the "*Buen vivir*" theme with a view to feeding those proposals into the work of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda established by the United Nations Secretary-General. The communiqué would be presented to the Assembly for endorsement at its closing sitting, during which the Committee would also communicate a report on the implementation of decisions relating to the new format of IPU Assemblies and Standing Committees in the light of views presented to it during the current Assembly.

The Committee had received a progress report on implementation of the new IPU communications strategy and had also viewed a Skype presentation on a possible new IPU logo and tag line from the agency engaged to develop a new visual identity for the IPU. It decided to defer its decision on the matter to its next sitting in Geneva.

Furthermore, the Committee had decided that the process established in the IPU Statutes and Rules for the election of the new Secretary General should be launched earlier than originally planned by inviting applications shortly after the conclusion of the Quito Assembly. Given the overriding concern to select the most competent possible candidate for the post, the

Committee had been unreceptive to a Chilean proposal for amending the Rules of the IPU Secretariat with a view to guaranteeing a regular geographic rotation with each change of Secretary General. It would nonetheless revisit that matter at its next sitting as the Chilean delegation had requested that the issue remain on the agenda of the Council for a decision at its next session in October.

**The Council noted the report of the President.**

Item 6 of the agenda

**ANNUAL REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES  
OF THE IPU FOR 2012**

*The Secretary General*, reporting on the activities of the IPU for 2012, said that the cover of his annual report symbolized tolerance, inclusiveness and dialogue, which underpinned all IPU activities. The report outlined the role of the IPU Assemblies held in Kampala and Quebec in fostering political dialogue and described the work of the IPU to enhance parliaments and strengthen democracy as part of its new five-year Strategy. The IPU had notably supported the fledgling parliaments in Egypt, Libya and Myanmar by sharing expertise and providing advice and capacity-building assistance. As indicated by the record statistics cited in the report, the IPU's continuing efforts to advance gender equality in politics were also bearing fruit, as were its efforts to develop gender-sensitive parliaments, including through support for implementation of the new *Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments*.

Activities to end violence against women were also covered in the report, together with those aimed at protecting the parliamentary "guardians" of human rights, in particular through the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, which had now adopted more field-oriented and proactive working methods. Efforts were also ongoing to increase vital parliamentary involvement in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process of reviewing, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, the human rights record of all UN Member States. Indeed, only two days earlier the Human Rights Council had adopted by consensus a resolution designed to promote its cooperation with parliaments.

Further outlined in the report were activities aimed at protecting children's rights; connecting politics and trade through the annual Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO); working more closely with the United Nations, including by providing input to the post-2015 development agenda; and promoting achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with a special emphasis on those relating to HIV/AIDS and maternal, newborn and child health.

The report provided a succinct and fair description of a dynamic organization with a wide remit that essentially worked with parliaments in support of global democracy. An additional activity not mentioned in the report was the work of the Committee on Middle East Questions, which had recently conducted two missions to Palestine and Israel, respectively, in order to explore options for promoting dialogue between the two sides. The Committee possessed a unique advantage and IPU Members were urged to examine and discuss its forthcoming report and support its work going forward.

**The Council noted the report of the Secretary General.**

Item 16 of the agenda

**ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

(CL/192/16-P.1 and P.2)

**The President** said that two candidatures for membership of the Executive Committee had been submitted: that of Mr. R.M.K. Al Shariqi (United Arab Emirates) to succeed, for a full four-year mandate, Mr. M.A.M. Al-Ghanim (Kuwait), who was no longer a member of parliament; and that of Ms. F. Diendéré Diallo (Burkina Faso) as a replacement for Ms. A. Koala Kaboré (Burkina Faso), who was also no longer a parliamentarian, to complete her term, due to end in October 2015. He took it that the Council wished to elect those two proposed candidates for membership of the Committee.

**It was so decided.**

Item 7 of the agenda

**REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS**

**(a) Parliamentary Workshop on Strengthening the role of parliamentarians in the implementation of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Recommendations**  
(CL/192/7(a)-R.1)

**The Secretary General** said that, as detailed in document CL/192/7(a)-R.1, participants from 21 parliaments around the world had attended a two-day workshop at IPU Headquarters, in November 2012, in order to explore the UPR process referred to in his annual report and ways of promoting parliamentary involvement in that process. The workshop had been hailed a success and further workshops on the subject were promised.

**(b) Annual 2012 Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO**  
(CL/192/7(b)-R.1)

**The Secretary General** drew attention to the outcome document annexed to the report of the two-day annual Parliamentary Conference on the WTO (CL/192/7(b)-R.1), held in Geneva in November 2012 under the joint auspices of the IPU and the European Parliament. The document included a call for the Ninth WTO Ministerial Conference, due to take place in Bali in December 2013, to recognize the benefit to the WTO of closer cooperation with parliaments in its activities. It was hoped that the WTO General Council would respond positively to a request for parliamentarians to receive the same accreditation to the Conference as non-governmental organizations, the aim being for them to contribute and provide input to the deliberations.

**(c) Parliamentary workshop on Developing good practice in political representation and constituency work in the Caribbean region**  
(CL/192/7(c)-R.1)

**The Secretary General** said that, as reported in document CL/192/7(c)-R.1, a two-day parliamentary workshop, held in November 2012 in Trinidad and Tobago, had examined the lessons learned from the *Global Parliamentary Report* in order to identify ways in which parliamentarians could develop closer relations with citizens, particularly in the area of constituency work.

**(d) Regional Seminar for East and Southern African Parliaments on preventing and responding to violence against women and girls: from legislation to effective enforcement**

(CL/192/7(d)-R.1)

**Mr. H. Mohammed (United Republic of Tanzania)**, presenting the report on the two-day regional seminar relating to violence against women (CL/192/7(d)-R.1), held in Tanzania in December 2012, said that further recommendations could be added to those contained in the

report. Specifically, parliamentary budget committees should be set up to ensure the allocation of adequate resources to combating violence against women, including through the judicial system. Parliaments should also make use of their security-related committees to prevent the brutalization of vulnerable women in the custody of police and security forces.

**(e) Joint IPU-UN Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations**  
(CL/192/7(e)-R.1)

**The Secretary General**, stressing the unique opportunity offered by the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations for parliamentarians to join in debating and formulating recommendations on priority items on the United Nations agenda, said that the well-attended 2012 Parliamentary Hearing on the crucial theme of conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding had been an extremely interactive event that had left an impressionable mark. As stated at the time, the successful promotion of peace in conflict-ridden countries was ultimately dependent on strong national leadership and national commitment to reconciliation and reform, which often emanated from parliaments. Members were therefore strongly recommended to consult the report of the proceedings, contained in document CL/192/7(e)-R.1.

**(f) Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women**  
(CL/192/7(f)-R.1)

**The Secretary General** said that the report on the one-day parliamentary event organized on the occasion of the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CL/192/7(f)-R.1), in March 2013, captured the salient points of the debate that had taken place on the chosen theme of parliamentary strategies for combating violence against women and girls. Particular emphasis had been placed on the implementation of relevant legislation, the allocation of resources for that purpose and the problem of political violence against women. Annexed to the report was the statement delivered at the plenary session of the Commission by Mrs. M. Mensah-Williams, Vice-Chairperson of the National Council of Namibia.

**The Council took note of the reports on recent IPU specialized meetings.**

Before the end of the sitting, the **President** announced that in total, 182 Council members were present in the room at the first sitting and the quorum, therefore, was 92 members.

*The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.*

**SECOND SITTING**

**Tuesday, 26 March 2013**

*The meeting was called to order at 2.45 p.m. with the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Abdelwahad Radi (Morocco), in the Chair.*

Item 8 of the agenda

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IPU STRATEGY 2012-2017**



**(a) Strategic Objectives 4 and 5**  
(CL/192/8(a)-R.1)

**The Secretary General** drew attention to document CL/192/8(a)-R.1, which outlined the steps thus far taken by the IPU in pursuit of objectives 4 and 5 of the IPU Strategy, both relating to the IPU's contribution to the design of the post-2015 development goals. As already mentioned at the previous sitting, the Quito communiqué encapsulating the General Debate of the Assembly on the "*Buen vivir*" theme would form part of that contribution. Members were additionally urged to participate in the My World global survey, launched by the United Nations with partners, including the IPU, with the aim of canvassing views on the priorities for a better world and channelling those views into the post-2015 development process. Full details of the survey and how to participate were provided in the document, which further comprised an annex containing a summary of a round-table discussion conducted in Monrovia, in January 2013, between parliamentarians and members of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Linkages between democratic governance and the new sustainable development framework were also to be explored at an open workshop on the final day of the Assembly with a view to providing inputs to the global consultations concerning that framework.

**(b) Strategic Objective 7**  
(CL/192/8(b)-P.1)

**The Secretary General** highlighted a set of proposals, spelt out in document CL/192/8(b)-P.1, which related to objective 7 of the IPU Strategy, specifically the component aimed at improving IPU structures and working methods. The first proposal was to hold two four-day Assemblies annually, each with a similar work programme, in accordance with the draft general timetable contained in annex 1 of the document. Annex II contained proposals designed to enhance functioning by broadening the responsibilities and functions of the Standing Committees and restructuring the role, decision-making methods and composition of their Bureaux. Also proposed were new methods for selecting items for the agendas of Standing Committees, for appointing co-Rapporteurs and preparing draft resolutions. A further proposal was to establish the current Committee on United Nations Affairs as the Fourth Standing Committee subject to the same rules and regulations as the other Standing Committees. Lastly, the document included suggestions for better harnessing information and communication technology tools in order to strengthen the overall impact of IPU Assemblies and widen the engagement of parliamentarians.

If the proposals were approved by the Council, subsequent proposals for the necessary amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules would be presented to it for consideration at the next Assembly in October 2013. If adopted at that time, the amendments would take effect on 1 January 2014.

**Mr. R.M.K. Al Shariqi (United Arab Emirates)**, supported by **Mr. J. Fakhro (Bahrain)** and **Mr. R.H. Al-Meadadi (Qatar)**, said that the proposal to allocate Standing Committee Bureau seats in proportion to the size of the geopolitical groups was inequitable and would create an undesirable imbalance. Nor would it go towards resolving the problems associated with the current system of titular and substitute members, which would be appropriately addressed by the appointment of two titular members for each geopolitical group.

**Mr. F.-X. de Donnea (Belgium)** expressed unreserved support for the proposals but noted their failure to reflect the consensus agreement, reached at the recent meeting of the Standing

Committee Bureaux, that the Committee on United Nations Affairs should be empowered to propose subject items for future resolutions. Concerning the preparation of preliminary draft resolutions, he said that application of the standard parliamentary procedure might be worth considering.

**Mr. J.P. Winkler (Germany)** endorsed the proposal for altering the composition of the Bureaux, which was unsatisfactory in the sense that substitute members, notwithstanding their contribution to the work of the Standing Committees, were presently entitled to vote only in the absence of the titular member. He pointed out that the Arab Group would acquire an additional vote under the proposed proportional representation arrangement, adding that such an arrangement had been in place for some time in the Executive Committee and that it more closely mirrored the reality of the IPU membership.

**The Secretary General** confirmed that, in accordance with the proposals relating to the Standing Committees, the Committee on United Nations Affairs would be in a position to propose subject items in its new capacity as a Standing Committee. In fact, all Standing Committees would have that prerogative. As to the preparation of preliminary draft resolutions, adoption of the standard parliamentary procedure whereby draft resolutions were presented in conjunction with an explanatory statement was indeed envisaged. The relevant paragraph of the document would therefore be fine-tuned in order to better clarify that fact.

Concerning the composition of the Bureaux, the Executive Committee had agreed to propose a new system in order to address the dysfunctionality of the present system under which substitute members, except in the absence of a titular member, had no more than an observer role to play. As a result, they were not necessarily included as members of delegations and were therefore often unavailable to step in as and when required, which created difficulties in establishing a quorum. With respect to the proposed allocation of Bureau seats, it was in no way intended to introduce any element of inequality to the system; on the contrary, it was aimed at achieving a more proportionate representation of the IPU membership on the basis of the same Sainte-Laguë or highest-averages method adopted by the Executive Committee after two years of extensively debating the matter of its own composition. The allocation of Bureau seats on that basis would furthermore provide not only a welcome margin in the event that not all members were able to attend sessions, which was more often the case than not, but also the opportunity for seats to be divided among the subregions of a geopolitical group.

**Mr. R.M.K. Al Shariqi (United Arab Emirates)** responded that not all members of the Executive Committee had agreed to the proposal concerning the allocation of seats; on behalf of the Arab Group, he had expressed a reservation on it at the time of its discussion. To increase the number of representatives of a geopolitical group would defeat the purpose of representation. Moreover, how would votes be counted? Only that morning, subject items ruled out by a Standing Committee Bureau had been reopened for discussion by the Standing Committee concerned, which was a forewarning of the type of risks that might arise from changing the allocation of seats.

**The Secretary General** said that, as he understood it, the overwhelming majority of Executive Committee members had agreed that each geopolitical group should be represented on each Bureau by a minimum of two titular members. They held different opinions, however, concerning the matter of proportional representation.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the proposals set out in document CL/192/8(b)-P.1, while taking note of the reservation expressed by the delegate of the United Arab Emirates.

**It was so decided.**

**(c) Strategic Objective 8**  
(CL/192/8(c)-R.1)

**The Secretary General** said that, in line with objective 8 of its Strategy, the IPU had been working to enhance its visibility through the modern communications strategy set forth in document CL/192/8(c)-R.1, which outlined the work conducted in the past six months in connection with the IPU's visual identity and website, information products, and the media and social media, including Twitter. Implementation of the strategy was more complex than it might appear, however; the redesign of the website alone involved a huge re-engineering exercise and also hinged on the visual identity currently being developed with expert assistance and advice. The Executive Committee would continue its debate on the issue in Geneva and report to the Council on the outcome.

**Mr. R. Walter (United Kingdom)** congratulated the IPU on the positive and reassuring progress thus far made in implementing a modern communications strategy, as illustrated in particular by the statistics set out in the document concerning the traffic to the new homepage of the IPU website and the number of followers of the IPU Twitter account. With respect to the IPU's visual identity, the existing IPU logo remained fit for purpose and it was therefore unnecessary to incur consultancy fees for the development of a new logo.

**The Secretary General** said that the IPU logo was an issue that aroused strong opinions and heated debate. The brief of the consultancy hired to develop the IPU's visual identity was not confined to the logo, however.

**Mr. R. del Picchia (France)** endorsed the view of the United Kingdom delegate concerning the logo and added that more effort must be made to draw attention to the IPU website. Using the right software, an e-mail reminder would be a cost-effective and potentially fruitful means of encouraging the many thousands of parliamentarians around the world to consult the website more frequently. To that end, he suggested that heads of delegations could provide to the IPU the e-mail addresses of their country's parliamentarians.

**The Secretary General** said that efforts in that vein had already been attempted but that the constant updating of such an enormous e-mail database was a difficult and resource-consuming task. Any e-mail addresses provided would nonetheless be welcome.

**Mr. A. Omari (Morocco)**, while commending the valuable work in progress, suggested that communication would be greatly enhanced if the IPU website was made available in all of the IPU's working languages. All information posted on the website should also be updated on a regular basis.

**The Secretary General** said that the financial implications of providing different language versions of the website were already being assessed with a view to establishing a budget for that purpose. Given the inevitable size of those implications, potential sources of extrabudgetary funding were likewise being explored.

**(d) Strategic Objectives 1 and 7**  
(CL/192/8(d)-P.1)

**The President** drew attention to a proposal, contained in document CL/192/8(d)-P.1, to establish a Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU in furtherance of objectives 1 and 7 of the IPU Strategy relating, respectively, to strengthening democracy through parliaments and encouraging greater participation of young parliamentarians.

**Mr. K. Dijkhoff (Netherlands)**, *Rapporteur of the Meeting Young Parliamentarians*, introducing the proposal, said that participants in the informal meetings of young parliamentarians held at each Assembly for the past two years had quadrupled in number to 60, signalling that the time was ripe to establish a formal structure for enabling young parliamentarians to inject a vital youth perspective into the work of the IPU. It would likewise enable them to bring their enthusiasm and skills to bear in aspiring to promote achievement of the IPU objectives through the measures described in the proposal.

**Mr. J.P. Winkler (Germany)** said that, in the event that the proposal was adopted, it should be further decided at the next Assembly who qualified as a young parliamentarian and who was eligible to attend the meetings of the forum in an observer capacity.

**The President** said he took it that the Council wished to approve the proposal to establish a Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

**It was so decided.**

Item 9 of the agenda

**COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM**

(CL/192/9-R.1 and 9-P.1)

**The Secretary General** drew attention to document CL/192/9-R.1, which contained a checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system during the past six months, covering, inter alia: the IPU's contribution to the United Nations-led process to redefine the development framework; the annual joint Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations; cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the World Health Organization; and the annual Parliamentary Conference on the WTO.

**Mr. E. Mokolo (Democratic Republic of the Congo)** expressed the hope that the new interactive format adopted for the Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations would continue to apply in future. His delegation had positively benefited from the opportunity it had provided to engage directly with United Nations officials and exchange experiences with other conflict-affected countries.

**The President** announced that the IPU had been invited to collaborate with the World Future Council and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in selecting the recipient of the 2013 Future Policy Award, full details of which were provided in document CL/192/9-P.1. The IPU's involvement would require but a minimum of time and resources and he therefore took that the Governing Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee to accept that invitation.

**It was so decided.**

Item 10 of the agenda

**FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR 2012**

(CL/192/10-R.1, R.2 and R.3)

**The Secretary General**, presenting the financial results for 2012, said that the audited Financial Statements contained in document CL/192/10-R.1 complied fully with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), representing a major new achievement for the IPU and one that lent credibility to the financial management of the Organization. The information provided accordingly was more transparent, comprehensive and complex than ever before and

Members were urged to familiarize themselves with the entire content of the document, including the notes and annex. Steps taken to achieve compliance had included a revaluation of the IPU Headquarters building and IPU investments and a restatement of pension fund liabilities, leading to changes in net assets, which had combined with unexpected voluntary revenue and expenditure savings to yield an operating surplus of over CHF 1 million.

He expressed gratitude to the External Auditor from the Swiss Federal Audit Office for his thoroughness in auditing the Financial Statements. It was worth noting that the number of recommendations made by the External Auditor had diminished from 13 in 2011 to only four, which were already on the way to being implemented.

**Mr. K. Örnfjäder (Sweden)**, Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Finance, delivered in the absence of the Internal Auditor, Mr. M. Sheetrit of Israel, his report as contained in document CL/192/10-R.2.

**Mr. R. del Picchia (France)** congratulated the IPU on its positive financial results and in particular on its IPSAS compliance, which was an onerous task failed by many international organizations that had attempted it. Noting that expenditures were likely to increase in the future, he stressed that efforts must be made nonetheless to limit or avoid increases in assessed contributions.

**The President** said he took it that the Council wished to approve the financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2012, as recommended by the Internal Auditor in his report.

**It was so decided.**

**The Secretary General**, turning to the financial situation of the IPU as at 28 February 2013, drew attention to document CL/192/10-R.3, which addressed in that context the subjects of the transition to IPSAS, currency markets and investment yields. It also covered the subject of national fiscal restraint, which was relevant to the justifiable and recognized concern raised by the delegate of France in connection with rising expenditures. Lastly, it provided a summary of the IPU's cash balance, revenues, expenditures, receipts of assessed contributions and arrears of contributions for past years.

Item 11 of the agenda

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

(CL/192/11-R.1)

**The Deputy Secretary General and Director of the IPU Programmes Division**, reviewing activities carried out under the Programme for the Promotion of Democracy, said that the report contained in document CL/192/11-R.1 should be read in conjunction with the annual report by the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU for 2012 and the financial results of the IPU for 2012 (CL/192/10-R.1), the annex to which provided detailed information on the activities undertaken. The document focused on activities pursued since January 2013, which included ongoing support to various parliaments; research and standard-setting in the areas of democracy and democratic governance and the representation of indigenous peoples in parliament for input into, respectively, the post-2015 development architecture and the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples to be held in 2014; the promotion of parliamentary action to support women's rights and combat violence against women; and the protection and promotion of the human rights of parliamentarians in particular. Highlighting the IPU's work in that regard in the Maldives, he welcomed that country's recent adoption of legislation

providing guarantees for the protection of Maldivian parliamentarians and appealed to the Maldivian authorities to ensure the strict enforcement of those guarantees.

Item 12 of the agenda

**ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES**

**(f) Gender Partnership Group**

(CL/192/12(f)-R.1)

**Mr. D.H. Oliver (Canada)**, *Rapporteur of the Gender Partnership Group*, presenting the Group's report (CL/192/12(f)-R.1), said that the positive momentum indicated by the figures for the composition of delegations at the current Assembly must be maintained: in an all-time record, women accounted for 32.6 per cent of delegates, as well as for over 30 per cent of members in the majority of delegations and half of all members in 20 delegations. Women's participation in the Governing Council and Executive Committee remained steady at about 30 per cent, whereas a less satisfactory situation prevailed in the Standing Committees and ad hoc committees, as detailed in the report. The gender guidelines governing the composition of the Committee on Middle East Questions served as an example of good practice that should be followed in order to transform that situation into one that accurately reflected the spirit of the IPU. Efforts must now additionally focus on mainstreaming gender equality as a cross-cutting issue across all IPU bodies. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the five parliaments that had no women members, namely Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Qatar and Vanuatu, would soon give the same cause for congratulation as Saudi Arabia, where 30 women had entered parliament for the first time ever in January 2013.

**(g) Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health**

(CL/192/12(g)-R.1)

**Ms. L. Davies (Canada)**, *Chair of the Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health*, delivered the report of the Advisory Group, as contained in document CL/192/12(g)-R.1.

**(h) Meeting of Young Parliamentarians**

(CL/192/12(h)-R.1)

**Mr. K. Dijkhoff (Netherlands)**, *Chairperson of the Meeting of Young Parliamentarians*, introducing the report of the Meeting (CL/192/12(h)-R.1), said that participants had unanimously adopted a proposal for the establishment of a Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU. The Council's earlier approval of that proposal was an encouraging sign of recognition and young parliamentarians would continue to work through the Forum in pursuit of shared objectives. No country could singlehandedly resolve the challenges facing an old planet with a young population; environment, economy and youth unemployment were all global issues. On the other hand, the global rise of democracy facilitated dialogue among the peoples of the world and communication costs had been drastically reduced with the advent of social media. Such tools must be fully utilized in seeking solutions to challenges. Young parliamentarians had already demonstrated their keenness at the current Assembly to offer their insights and capabilities. Wishing for no more than to be heard and judged on their merits and competence, they were confident that they would not disappoint.

Item 13 of the agenda

**129<sup>th</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY (GENEVA, 7-9 OCTOBER 2013)**  
(CL/192/13-P.1)

**The President** informed the Council that, in order to avoid a clash with the religious festival of Eid al-Adha, the 129<sup>th</sup> Assembly would be held from 7 to 9 October 2013. He additionally drew attention to the list of permanent Observers to the IPU, contained in document CL/192/13-P.1.

Item 15 of the agenda

**AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES AND RULES**  
(CL/192/15-P.2)

**The President** drew the attention of the Council to the amendments proposed by the President of the Chilean Group to Articles 21(l) and 24(h) of the IPU Statutes, as set forth in document CL/192/15-P.2. Those amendments affirmed the principle of striving throughout the process of selecting a new Secretary General to guarantee rotation among the various geographical regions. At its most recent sitting, however, the majority of Executive Committee members had taken the view that the overriding concern in that process was to find the best possible candidate. The Chilean Group had now requested deferral of the matter until the Committee's next sitting in Geneva in order to allow time for the geopolitical groups to hold further consultations. He took it that the Council wished to agree to that request.

**It was so decided.**

*The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.*

**THIRD SITTING**

**Wednesday, 27 March 2013**

*The meeting was called to order at 9.10 a.m. with the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Abdelwahad Radi (Morocco), in the Chair.*

Item 5 of the agenda  
(continued)

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

**(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee**  
(CL/192/5(b)-Inf)

**The President** said that, at an additional sitting held on the previous afternoon, the Executive Committee had reconfirmed the procedure for the selection of the Secretary General. It had also agreed on the minimum selection criteria and the content of the vacancy announcement, which was to be published on 1 May 2013 and which would set 1 September

2013 as the deadline for the submission of candidatures. Full details of those matters were contained in document CL/192/5(b)-Inf.

Item 12 of the agenda  
(continued)

**ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES**

**(a) Meeting of Women Parliamentarians**  
(CL/192/12(a)-R.1)

**Ms. P. Pabón (Ecuador)**, *Rapporteur of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians*, presenting the report of the Meeting (CL/192/12(a)-R.1), said that participants had considered from a gender perspective the subject items debated by the First and Second Standing Committees, namely: *Enforcing the responsibility to protect: The role of parliament in safeguarding civilians' lives and Fair trade and innovative financing mechanisms for sustainable development*. The discussion had focused on the parliamentary role and responsibility in ensuring legislative action to address, in the first case, the problems endured by women and children in conflict situations and, in the second case, the issues of women's socioeconomic empowerment and access to land ownership. All of the ensuing proposals for amendments to the draft resolution on the first subject item had been accepted, together with some of those to the draft resolution on the second subject item. The additional debates held on women in politics and violence against women, in particular sexual violence, were as described in the report, which also contained details of information provided to the Meeting on activities relating to the Gender Partnership Programme and cooperation with the United Nations on gender-related issues.

**(b) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**

**(i) Election of one substitute member**  
(CL/192/12(b)-P.2)

**The President** said that the candidature of Mr. A.B.M.F.K. Chowdhury (Bangladesh) had been submitted as a replacement for Mr. F.N. Pangilinan (Philippines) to the post of substitute member of the Committee for a five-year term starting on 1 July 2013. He took it that the Council wished to elect that candidate to the post.

**It was so decided.**

**(ii) Reports of the Committee**  
(CL/192/12(b)-R.1 and R.2)

**Mrs. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland)**, *substitute member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians*, presenting the Committee's reports in the absence of its President and Vice-President, said that the Committee had met with 11 delegations during its session in Quito. It regarded such meetings as vital to enhancing its understanding of the cases before it and to conveying its concerns and exchanging views. She therefore thanked those 11 delegations for their time and likewise thanked the many parliaments that had provided the Committee with information in writing.

During the current session, the Committee had examined the individual situation of 147 parliamentarians in 24 countries, while the draft resolutions submitted to the Council for



adoption concerned the cases of 86 parliamentarians in 17 countries. It had also organized its first-ever open session in order to raise awareness of its work among parliamentarians and mobilize them in support of their colleagues. The deep interest shown by participants reconfirmed that the Committee's work was hugely appreciated and that parliamentarians worldwide were ready to make a greater investment in its mission.

Taking the opportunity to draw attention to the special situation and day-to-day reality of Afghan parliamentarians, she said that they performed their duties at great risk and that it was not uncommon for them to be violently attacked. Two weeks previously, for example, eight people had been killed in a suicide attack during a sports event in northern Afghanistan. According to witnesses, the attacker had targeted the family of the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, Mr. Abdul Rauf Ibrahimi. The victims included Mr. Ibrahimi's father, brother, nephew and cousin. The Committee stood in complete solidarity with Mr. Ibrahimi and all other Afghan parliamentarians working in such very difficult conditions.

Presented by region and in alphabetical order, the cases covered by the draft resolutions before the Council were as detailed below.

## **AFRICA**

### **CAMEROON**

Mr. Ambassa Zang, a member of the National Assembly, had been charged with the misappropriation of public funds during his time as Minister of Public Works. According to the Cameroonian authorities, the charges had been prompted by complaints from the development agencies that had funded the works in question. Mr. Ambassa Zang's parliamentary immunity had been lifted in August 2009 and the authorities had opted to instigate penal proceedings against him. Mr. Ambassa Zang had been abroad at the time and had since been unable to return to Cameroon. He had obtained political asylum and fervently wished to return home and see his family, from which he had now been separated for almost four years.

The Committee's concerns related to the fairness of the proceedings against Mr. Ambassa Zang. It remained convinced that, in the present conditions, there was no guarantee that Mr. Ambassa Zang's case would be fairly and objectively handled should he return to Cameroon. It noted in particular that Mr. Ambassa Zang's prosecution must be seen in the context of the anti-corruption campaign known as "Opération Épervier" (Operation Casting Net), which reportedly served as a pretext to purge politicians who expressed views critical of those in power.

The Committee requested the Cameroonian authorities to do everything in their power to facilitate a satisfactory settlement of Mr. Ambassa Zang's case.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Dieudonné Ambassa Zang.**

### **CHAD**

During the rebel attack on the Chadian capital in February 2008, Mr. Yorongar, an opposition member of parliament, and other political opposition members had been arbitrarily arrested and subjected to ill-treatment while being held at a secret place.

More than five years after those events, the Committee remained deeply concerned that no progress had been made towards identifying the perpetrators, despite the significant avenues of investigation indicated in the report by the Commission of Inquiry established by the authorities in 2008 to shed light on the serious human rights violations committed at the time.

The Committee had deemed it useful to send the Committee President, Mr. Kassoum Tapo, on a visit to Chad to assess the situation. It wished to thank the Chadian authorities for

their cooperation and sincerely hoped that the ongoing investigations would shortly yield tangible results. It also noted that Mr. Yorongar's refusal to cooperate with the Chadian justice system was an obstacle to the smooth conduct of the investigations.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Ngarleji Yorongar.**

## **RWANDA**

In the case of Mr. Léonard Hitimana, which had been before the Council for a very long time, the regrettable fact was that Mr. Hitimana, a member of the Transitional National Assembly at the time of the events, had last been seen alive exactly 10 years earlier, on 7 April 2003.

Despite its long-standing dialogue with the Rwandan authorities and its mission to Rwanda in June 2011, the Committee now had no choice but to consider that the absence of a serious investigation corroborated the long-standing charge that Mr. Hitimana had been the victim of a forced disappearance. The Committee considered that the hypothesis put forward by the Rwandan authorities that Mr. Hitimana had fled abroad was not valid, more than 10 years after the events and given that they had had several notices for missing persons published via Interpol.

Enforced disappearances were a serious human rights violation and the forced disappearance of a member of parliament, if not elucidated and punished, stood as a threat to parliament as such, to all its members and, in the final analysis, to the people parliament represented, as it could only encourage the repetition of such acts.

Consequently, the Committee urged the authorities to carry out an independent and prompt investigation examining all lines of enquiry and exploring in particular the information provided by the sources, according to which Mr. Hitimana had been abducted, tortured and assassinated by the Rwandan military intelligence services (DMI) in order to silence all opposition to the dissolution of his party in the run-up to the 2003 presidential and legislative elections. The Committee remained convinced that following new lines of inquiry would soon lead to the emergence of new evidence.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Léonard Hitimana.**

## **TOGO**

In Togo, following a split in an opposition party, nine former parliamentarians had been excluded from the National Assembly on the grounds that they had established and joined a new political party. As that situation had further exacerbated the political tension between majority and opposition parties in the run-up to the forthcoming elections, the President of the Committee had visited Togo in order to examine the possibilities of a resumption of the political dialogue with a view to resolving the case. As a result of his visit, the Committee was convinced that a resumption of the political dialogue between opposition members of parliament and the authorities was key to a political settlement. It therefore encouraged such dialogue and fully supported the organization of mediation facilitated by the IPU before the elections in Togo and the adoption of appropriate legislation aimed at averting similar situations in the future.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of nine parliamentarians.**

## **ZIMBABWE**

The Committee had received the Speaker of the House of Assembly of Zimbabwe during the current session and wished to express its special gratitude for the information he had provided on both Mr. Chamisa's case and recent constitutional developments in Zimbabwe. It was also pleased to note that the Parliament of Zimbabwe continued to exercise its duty of oversight to ensure that the competent authorities respected and effectively upheld the rights of parliamentarians.

The case covered by the draft resolution concerned Mr. Nelson Chamisa, a member of parliament for Zimbabwe's main opposition party and currently Minister for Information, Communication and Technology in the Government of National Unity established in 2009.

Mr. Chamisa had been tortured and subjected to ill-treatment after being arbitrarily arrested in March 2007. Shortly thereafter, on 18 March 2007, he had been brutally attacked, in the presence of police officers, by eight security agents at Harare International Airport while travelling to Brussels. As a result of that attack, Mr. Chamisa had been admitted to hospital in critical condition. The Committee had expressed concern for several years at the absence of any police or judicial inquiry. It therefore invited the Council to urge the competent authorities, in the draft resolution, to do all in their power to identify and punish the culprits.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Nelson Chamisa.**

## AMERICAS

### COLOMBIA

The Committee's Vice-President, Senator Juan Pablo Letelier, had visited Bogotá on behalf of the Committee just before the 128<sup>th</sup> Assembly. His mission had provided an opportunity for an exchange of views with the Colombian authorities and with the victims and their families on the many Colombian cases before the Committee. It had focused on investigations into the murders of members of Congress, the protection of threatened persons and the question of full respect for the right of parliamentarians to a fair trial.

The mission had showed that the judicial authorities were truly determined to advance investigations into the murders of and threats against parliamentarians. They also appeared to be more open to the possibility of enhancing the legal protection of parliamentarians. The Committee considered that such protection was in the interest of democracy and crucial to strengthening the role of Congress. Public opinion was nevertheless opposed to any move in that direction, which it assimilated to impunity for parliamentarians. The Committee therefore hoped that the National Congress, with the support of the relevant executive, judicial and administrative authorities, would make the public aware of the importance of such protection. The aim was to introduce an avenue of appeal in criminal proceedings against parliamentarians and to eliminate the revocation of the parliamentary mandate as a disciplinary sanction.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the five draft resolutions relating to, respectively, the case of seven parliamentarians, the case of Mr. Luis Carlos Galán Sarmiento, the case of Mrs. Piedad Córdoba, the case of Mr. Álvaro Araújo Castro and the case of five parliamentarians.**

### ECUADOR

In the long-standing case of Mr. Hurtado and Mr. Tapia, who had been shot dead in February 1999, a suspect had been apprehended in Colombia and extradited to Ecuador in April 2010. Shortly thereafter, however, an Ecuadorian court had ruled that the statute of limitations had expired and that the suspect could not be tried. That decision had been appealed and the suspect was now in custody in Ecuador. The Committee and the Ecuadorian Parliament considered that there were sufficient legal grounds for the trial to take place. They sincerely

hoped that the proceedings would start soon and serve to shed light on that crime, the masterminds of which had yet to be identified.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Jaime Ricaurte Hurtado González and Mr. Pablo Vicente Tapia Farinango.**

## **ASIA**

### **CAMBODIA**

Mr. Sam Rainsy, an opposition leader, had been sentenced to 11 years in prison, above all for having removed temporary border posts in October 2009 along the border between Cambodia and Viet Nam. He had been charged on a second count, of spreading false information, when he had tried to show that the border posts encroached on Cambodian territory. The Committee considered that the case was purely political in nature and should therefore be resolved at the political level. It made a final appeal to the parties, both in power and in the opposition, to reach agreement on a solution enabling Mr. Sam Rainsy to return to Cambodia and take part in the national elections in July 2013.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Sam Rainsy.**

### **IRAQ**

As part of his work as a parliamentarian, Mr. Al-Dainy had documented and publicly denounced on many occasions the security forces' use of torture in secret places of detention. Arraigned on extremely serious charges, he had been sentenced to death in January 2010. The Committee's belief that those charges were pure fabrications had been borne out by the investigation of an ad hoc parliamentary committee of inquiry. The Committee fully supported the committee of inquiry's recommendation that the case be retried. It noted with interest that the recommendation had been the subject of follow-up meetings with all the competent authorities. It considered that a mission to Iraq by a delegation of the Committee would allow it to obtain direct first-hand information on the prospects for progress in the case.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Mohammed Al-Dainy.**

### **MALDIVES**

A mission by a delegation of the Committee had travelled to the Maldives in November 2012, prompted by concern about the case of several parliamentarians in the context of the transfer of power on 7 February 2012. The Committee fully endorsed the conclusions on the report on that mission (CL/192/12(b)-R.1). While deploring above all the murder of Mr. Afrasheem Ali in October 2012, it was nevertheless pleased that material progress had been made in the investigation of that crime.

The Committee was concerned that not a single police officer had thus far been held to account for the ill-treatment inflicted on the parliamentarians the day after the transfer of power. It was also concerned by the source's allegation that opposition parliamentarians no longer received the official protection they required.

Judicial proceedings had been launched against a number of parliamentarians from the opposition Maldives Democracy Party (MDP) for having participated in demonstrations or simply for having exercised their right to freedom of expression. The Committee urged the authorities to tread extremely carefully in pursuing those cases.

In conclusion, the Committee was extremely concerned about the context of confrontation that continued to exist between parliament and the other branches of the State

and about the fact that parliament's authority appeared to be continuously challenged. It therefore called on all sides to move beyond political expediency and partisanship, engage in dialogue and promote consensus-building in order to facilitate free, fair and meaningful presidential elections in September 2013.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 21 parliamentarians of the Maldives.**

#### **MYANMAR**

The Committee took note of the many measures taken in the past two years by the authorities to reinforce the rule of law and give effect to human rights. In that context, it was pleased to note that there were no more former parliamentarians in prison. It nevertheless reiterated that those persons had all been political prisoners held on the basis of unjust laws and unfair procedures.

The Committee considered that parliament had an essential role to play in reviewing and, if necessary, repealing those laws. It wished to know whether parliament had established, as suggested by the United Nations Special Rapporteur, a timeline for undertaking that task. It called on parliament to ensure that the regulatory and legislative framework in place protected members of parliament in their work, and suggested that the IPU's capacity-building assistance take account of that need.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of nine parliamentarians.**

#### **PALESTINE**

In 2012, 23 parliamentarians elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) on the Change and Reform list were being held in administrative detention in Israel. By the previous day, 26 March 2013, that number had been reduced to five, and the Committee had now since been informed of the release of Mr. Nayef Rojoub.

The Committee had received extensive information from the Israeli authorities to the effect that criminal proceedings had been opened against three Palestinian parliamentarians. The Committee wished to understand the facts underpinning the charges. In that regard, it reiterated its previous concerns that the members of the PLC sentenced shortly after the 2006 elections had not been convicted on specific criminal charges but rather on account of their political affiliation.

The Committee wished to understand how, in cases of administrative detention, which often relied on classified evidence, the detainees could benefit from due process in practice and effectively challenge their deprivation of liberty. It therefore appreciated the invitation to attend one or more judicial reviews relating to the cases of Palestinian parliamentarians being held in administrative detention.

The Committee remained concerned about the decision to revoke the residence permits of three members of the PLC and about how that decision had been implemented. It trusted that the Supreme Court would rule speedily on the petitions filed in that connection.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 11 parliamentarians.**

#### **THAILAND**

Mr. Jatuporn Prompan, a leader of the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) and at the time a member of the House of Representatives, had played a prominent role in the "Red Shirt" demonstrations in central Bangkok in 2010.

Although Mr. Jatuporn had been re-elected in 2011, his election had been invalidated on

grounds that would appear to run directly counter to Thailand's international human rights obligations. The Committee sincerely hoped that the competent Thai authorities would reconsider the invalidation and ensure that all legal provisions were in line with international standards. It remained concerned about the alleged legal basis for the charges pending against Mr. Jatuporn and planned to send an observer to his trial.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Jatuporn Prompan.**

## **YEMEN**

According to the sources, Mr. Hashed had been the target of threats and harassment because of his human rights activities. On 12 February of the present year, he had been brutally attacked and seriously wounded by five anti-riot soldiers during a peaceful demonstration. The Committee was particularly concerned at the allegation that the attack had been premeditated and carried out with the complicity or at the instigation of senior State officials. A panel of inquiry had been immediately set up, but the Committee had doubts about its independence. The Committee urged the authorities to do everything required to ensure that the attack did not go unpunished. It called on parliament in particular to do all it could to monitor the inquiry.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Ahmed Saif Hashed.**

## **EUROPE**

### **BELARUS**

Mr. Victor Gonchar and a friend, Mr. Anatoly Krasovsky, had been missing for over 12 years. The Committee pointed out that the decision by the United Nations Human Rights Committee in the case of Mr. Krasovsky confirmed the absence of an effective investigation into both disappearances. It trusted that the authorities would fully comply with that decision, notably by thoroughly investigating the case.

The Committee believed that a visit to Belarus by a Committee delegation would offer a timely opportunity to obtain first-hand information on the current state of the investigation and the prospects for progress in the case. It hoped that the country's authorities would agree to such a visit.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Victor Gonchar.**

### **RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

In its judgement of June 2005 in the case of Ms. Galina Starovoitova, the St. Petersburg City Court had concluded that her murder was politically motivated. Unfortunately, nearly 15 years after the murder, the case had yet to be fully elucidated. The Committee wished to receive information on the progress made in the case since its meeting with a member of the Russian delegation in Kampala in 2012. It would be particularly interested to know if the results obtained thus far showed whether the presumed mastermind of the crime, a former parliamentarian and businessman involved in large-scale criminal activities, had acted on his own or not.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Ms. Galina Starovoitova.**

## **TURKEY**

The Committee had before it the case of nine Turkish parliamentarians being prosecuted for having violated the constitutional order. Although all nine had been authorized to stand in the elections and were subsequently elected, they had not been authorized by the judicial authorities to discharge their parliamentary mandate and currently remained in pre-trial detention, in some cases for the fifth year running. Only one of the nine had thus far been convicted at first instance.

The sources had raised serious concerns with regard to the Turkish courts' systematic refusal to release the parliamentarians concerned on bail. The sources had stressed the excessive length of the pre-trial detention in terms of the duration of the proceedings, which appeared not to be advancing towards a rapid conclusion. Other preoccupations raised by the sources included the fairness of the judicial proceedings given the evidence produced against the accused. The Committee was also concerned by the fact that the nine parliamentarians were all known for their opposition to the present Government.

As stated by the President of the Committee when he had presented his report in Quebec in October 2012, the Committee was pleased that the President of the Turkish IPU Group had agreed to a mission by the Committee to enhance understanding of the cases before it and of the political and historical context in which they had to be seen. The Committee duly noted that the Grand National Assembly of Turkey had a busy schedule owing to its critical involvement in the ongoing process of constitutional and legal reform. It nevertheless sincerely believed that, given Turkey's ambitious reform efforts, the Committee's mission would be all the more timely at the dates agreed, at the end of May 2013. The Committee therefore hoped that those dates would be confirmed as soon as possible.

**The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of nine parliamentarians.**

Concluding her presentation, Ms. Kiener Nellen recalled, on behalf of all the members of the Committee, that the Committee relied heavily on the cooperation of the Governing Council and the assistance of all IPU Member Parliaments for the effective implementation of the resolutions just adopted. Emphasizing the parliamentary spirit of solidarity underpinning the Committee's work, which constituted the *raison d'être* of the IPU, she said that the Committee remained convinced that, through their work, all parliamentarians could help colleagues whose fundamental rights had been violated.

### **(c) Committee on Middle East Questions**

#### **(i) Election of one titular member and one substitute member**

(CL/192/12(c)-P.1 and P.2)

**The President** said that two candidatures for membership of the Committee had been submitted: that of Mrs. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia) for the post of titular member and that of Mrs. H. Amran (Indonesia) for the post of substitute member. He took it that the Council wished to elect those two candidates for the posts.

**It was so decided.**

#### **(ii) Report of the Committee**

(CL/192/12(c)-R.2)

**Lord Judd (United Kingdom)**, *President of the Committee on Middle East Questions*, presenting the report of the Committee's delegation on its mission to Israel and Palestine

(CL/192/12(c)-R.2), said that the magnitude of the daunting task of addressing the issues reflected in the report called for the closest possible cooperation with the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and for support and honest guidance from parliamentarians and the IPU Secretariat. He expressed genuine appreciation to all those without whom the mission would have been impossible, including the Secretary General, staff at the IPU and the United Nations Works and Relief Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the hosts of the delegation and above all his fellow members of the delegation.

The Committee would take into account in its future work the helpful observations made by the Palestinian delegation to the Assembly in response to the report, with particular reference to the issues of the continuing harassment of Palestinians; repeated arrests and detentions of young Palestinians especially; administrative detention; and water. The Committee now looked forward to receiving similar input from Israel at the earliest opportunity. His own overall impression was of the vital need for reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas and for an end to the blockade that continued to wreak such devastating socioeconomic and humanitarian consequences for Palestinians.

The paradox was that, notwithstanding Israel's grave fear of rocket attacks from Palestine, peace did not feature in the manifestos of the main players in the recent Israeli elections. The mission had ultimately been convinced that the solution for a just peace must be owned by the parties themselves and found in the process of the negotiation, with no outside management. It was furthermore provocative of outside leaders to refuse to recognize the outcome of the democracy for which they constantly advocated if that outcome was not to their liking. Time was not on the side of finding a solution when international attention was increasingly focused on a growing multitude of global challenges and the United States was becoming more energy self-sufficient.

Highlighting the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report, he emphasized that the people of the region must be kept constantly in sight. There was no room for empty rhetoric or self-indulgence. In order to defeat the cynics, the IPU must demonstrate its genuine will of commitment to meaningful and substantial outcomes with respect to Middle East questions and ensure the resources needed for that purpose, failing which it would do better to drop those questions from its agenda altogether. It must therefore seize the opportunity of its potential to make a practical contribution to resolving the Middle East situation.

**The President** said he took it that the Council wished to endorse the recommendations contained in the report.

**It was so decided.**

**(e) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law**

**(i) Election of two titular and two substitute members**

(CL/192/12(e)-P.1 to P.3)

**The President** said that the candidatures of Mrs. M. Osman Gaknoun (Sudan) and Mrs. V. Petrenko (Russian Federation) had been submitted for the two available posts of titular member of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law and that only one candidature, that of Mr. T. Al-Sehry (Egypt), had been submitted for the two available posts of substitute member of the Committee. He took it that the Council wished to elect those three candidates to the respective posts.

**It was so decided.**



**(ii) Report of the Committee**  
(CL/192/12(e)-R.1)

**Mr. F.-X. de Donnea (Belgium)**, *Rapporteur of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law*, presenting the Committee's report (CL/192/12(e)-R.1), said that participants at the meeting held by the Committee on 26 March 2013 had been briefed on recent developments with respect to statelessness, internally displaced persons and refugee protection. In outlining the details of those briefings, as set out in the report, he stressed the vital role of parliaments in the effective implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL) and in driving efforts to ensure the universal ratification of such instruments as the two key conventions dealing with the issue of statelessness. Lastly, he drew attention to the summary of the Committee's open session on the theme *The IHL dimension of the responsibility to protect*, which was annexed to the report.

**The President** stated that note had been taken of the request contained in paragraph 13 of the report for the Secretariat to examine the practical and other issues relating to the wish expressed by members of the Committee to conduct in the near future a field visit to Syrian refugee camps in the region.

**The delegate of Iraq** requested that Iraq be acknowledged in the report as a country that was fulfilling its humanitarian obligation to the 160,000 Syrian refugees it was hosting on its territory.

**The President** responded that note was taken of that comment.

Item 14 of the agenda

**FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS**  
(CL/192/14-P.1)

**(a) Statutory meetings**

**The President**, drawing attention to the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings set out in document CL/192/14-P.1, announced that Azerbaijan had offered to host the 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly, in April 2014, in Baku. Although the requisite visa assurances were yet to be received from the Government of Azerbaijan, he took it that the Council wished to approve Baku as the venue for that Assembly, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

**It was so decided.**

**Mr. V. Alasgarov (Azerbaijan)** expressed his gratitude to the IPU for its endorsement of the offer by his Government to host the 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Proud to be hosting that event, the Azerbaijani people and authorities would do their utmost to ensure its success and looked forward to welcoming delegates and to sharing with them the rich culture, history and traditions of Azerbaijan. In the coming days, his Government would formally communicate to the IPU the assurances already provided by the Parliament of Azerbaijan to honour the commitment to ensure access to the country for all delegates.

**The President** added that, on the basis of the Secretary General's positive report following his recent mission to Viet Nam, the Executive Committee had further recommended approval of Hanoi as the venue for the 132<sup>nd</sup> Assembly, to be held from 29 March to 1 April 2015, which did not coincide with any religious festivities. He took it that the Council wished to agree with that recommendation.

**It was so decided.**

**The President** said that the Executive Committee had also welcomed an invitation from Zambia to host the 134<sup>th</sup> Assembly in the spring of 2016. The customary exploratory mission would shortly be undertaken to Zambia and the Council would receive a report on the outcome in due course.

**(b) Specialized meetings and other events**

**The Secretary General** said that, as indicated in document CL/192/14-P.1, the Council was requested to approve a number of specialized meetings. In some cases, the dates and venue of those meetings had still to be finalized but in no case were there any financial implications in that funding was available for each meeting from either the regular budget or external sources.

Concerning the regional seminar on gender-sensitive parliaments to be held in Gabon, the dates of 13 to 15 June 2013 had now been set, whereas the Parliamentary Meeting listed as due to take place in New York in September 2013 had been postponed to a later date in order to avoid close proximity with the 129<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Geneva. Not listed but also requiring Council approval was a regional meeting of Arab parliaments on the theme of the evolving relationship between citizens and parliament, to be organized in conjunction with the Moroccan Parliament and the United Nations Development Programme during the week commencing 13 May 2013. No financial implications were associated with the meeting.

**The President** said he took it that the Council wished to approve the list of specialized and other meetings.

**It was so decided.**

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE SITUATION IN  
THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

**The President** informed that Council that in Quito, on 27 March 2013, he had made the following statement to the press concerning the situation in the Central African Republic:

"I was deeply concerned to learn of the coup d'état in the Central African Republic, where an armed group has seized power, suspended the Constitution and dissolved the elected Parliament. Once again, an elected Parliament has become the main casualty of a political crisis. The IPU strongly condemns this coup d'état. It urges the new authorities of the country to take immediate steps to return to constitutional rule and to establish a parliament that is the outcome of the will of the people. The IPU is committed to working with the authorities along these lines and to continuing its support to the Parliament."

The events in the Central African Republic, he added, demonstrated that democracy was not irreversible and that continued vigilance was required in its defence. Precious as democracy was, it remained under constant threat.

After the customary exchange of courtesies, the **President** declared the session of the Governing Council closed.

*The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.*