

CL/193/SR.1  
5 December 2013

**SUMMARY RECORDS**  
**OF THE**  
**GOVERNING COUNCIL**  
**(193<sup>rd</sup> SESSION)**

**7 and 9 October 2013**

**GENEVA (Centre international de Conférences de Genève)**

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## FIRST SITTING

**Monday, 7 October 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/193/A.1)

**The revised provisional agenda, contained in document CL/193/A.1, was adopted.**

### Item 2 of the agenda

#### **APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 192<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

(CL/192/SR.1)

**The summary records of the 192<sup>nd</sup> session of the Governing Council, contained in document CL/192/SR.1, were approved.**

### Item 3 of the agenda

#### **QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS**

##### **(a) Requests for IPU membership**

(CL/193/3(a)-P.1)

**The President** said that the Executive Committee had examined and recommended approval of the decisions, set out in document CL/193/3(a)-P.1, relating to requests received from the Parliament of Bhutan for affiliation to the IPU and from the Parliament of Somalia for reaffiliation. In the latter case, the decision also noted the Committee's view that the exceptional political and economic conditions in Somalia would justify a waiver of the arrears in membership fees accumulated by the Parliament before its suspension from the Union in 2009. He took it that the Governing Council wished to approve those two decisions.

**It was so decided.**

**Mr. J. Zangpo (Bhutan)** stated that IPU membership was both a profound honour and a landmark achievement for the Parliament and people of Bhutan, where parliamentary democracy had been introduced in 2008 at the initiative of the ruling monarch in the belief that the people's interests were best served through a system that afforded them a true voice in their country's affairs and governance. Bodies had been established under the Constitution to provide checks and balances for that system, the belief in which was evidenced by the increase in the number of political parties fielding candidates in the general elections from two in 2008 to five in 2013. The current Parliament aimed to fulfil the people's aspirations and further strengthen the roots of democracy, including by learning from the wisdom and experience of parliamentarians from time-tested democracies. The privilege of IPU membership would unquestionably offer new opportunities for Bhutan to contribute to the collective efforts to build global peace and harmony founded on the principles of fundamental rights, justice and freedom. It was deeply grateful to be admitted to the IPU and pledged full support for its work.

**Mr. K.O. Ali (Somalia)** expressed the gratitude of the National Federal Parliament for the endorsement of its request for reaffiliation to the IPU. As Somalia's first permanent parliament for 21 years, it had a critical role to play in building peace and democracy in a country emerging from crisis to face the mammoth task of recovery. It was therefore keen to benefit from the experiences of other parliaments in that context with a view to addressing the immediacy of such major challenges as establishing the rule of law, ensuring good governance and striving for development and reconstruction through a strategy aimed at delivering on the high expectations of the Somali people and thus restoring public confidence. Its prime objectives for the coming four years were to enact quality legislation, review the Constitution and develop effective oversight of the executive; ensure parliamentary accountability to the people and provide leadership for the promotion of national unity and peace; and establish the administrative and infrastructural foundations for an efficient parliamentary institution. It looked forward to assistance from the IPU and its Members in achieving those goals.

**(b) Situation of certain Members**  
(CL/193/3(b)-P.1)

**The President** remarked that the Executive Committee had examined the situation of certain Members and concluded that, owing to the non-payment of their financial dues, the Parliaments of Bolivia, Djibouti, Mauritania and Sierra Leone were to be deprived of their voting rights in the statutory bodies of the IPU and restricted to representation at IPU meetings by two delegates only, in accordance with Article 5.2 of the Statutes. He urged those Members to ensure the timely payment of their contributions in order to avoid such sanctions. The President drew attention to the recommendation of the Executive Committee, set out in document CL/193/3(b)-P.1, to apply the provisions of Article 4.2 of the Statutes relating to loss of membership to the Parliament of Egypt. He asked if the Council agreed with the recommendation.

**It was so decided.**

**The President** added that the IPU looked forward to welcoming a new and vibrant parliament into its fold following the anticipated elections in Egypt.

**(c) Observer status**  
(CL/193/3(c)-P.1)

**The President** drew attention to a request for observer status received from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization, annexed to document CL/193/3(c)-P.1, and said he took it that the Council wished to approve the request, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

**It was so decided.**

Item 4 of the agenda

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

**(a) On his activities since the 192<sup>nd</sup> session of the Governing Council**  
(CL/193/4(a)-R.1.rev)

**The President** delivered his report on his activities since the 192<sup>nd</sup> session of the Governing Council, as contained in document CL/193/4(a)-R.1.rev.

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

**The President** observed that most of the subjects discussed by the Executive Committee during its two full days of deliberations would be reported on under other items of the agenda. Important issues considered had included the aforementioned situation of the Egyptian Parliament and a request by Canada for a reduction in the level of financial contributions and a general review of the IPU's priorities and activities. The Committee's initial response to the Canadian request had been transmitted to the geopolitical groups with a view to further discussion. The Executive Committee had also met the External Auditor, Director of the Swiss Federal Audit Office, who had applauded the IPU for its sound financial position and its compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

**The Council took note of the report of the President.**

Item 5 of the agenda

**INTERIM REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU  
SINCE THE 192<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

**(a) Oral report of the Secretary General**

**The Secretary General** said that, since the previous session of the Governing Council, IPU activities had been particularly focused on follow-up to the 128<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Quito. The outcome of the general debate on new approaches to development, as summarized in the Quito Communiqué, had been presented to the Open Working Group of the United Nations General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for input into its work. The IPU President had also communicated to Members the importance of pursuing the debate at the national level in order to advocate and ensure that the concerns outlined in the Communiqué were reflected in the post-2015 development agenda. The annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, to be held in November 2013, would likewise focus on follow-up to the Communiqué. Moreover, the IPU's development of goals, targets and indicators for democratic governance would be submitted for consideration to the Open Working Group in early 2014.

Budgetary matters had been another main focus of recent activities within the IPU. Voluntary contributions were part of the solution for balancing the reality of budget cuts with the need to resource additional activities, such as those relating to the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2015. He was therefore pleased to announce that Worldwide Support for Development (WSD), a foundation established by well-known Japanese philanthropist Dr. Handa, had generously pledged a five-year endowment of US\$ 3 million. It would be used to fund part of the IPU's parliamentary-strengthening programmes and gender-equality activities in the Asian region and for building the capacities of young parliamentarians. Expressing the IPU's gratitude for that extraordinary support, he said that he looked forward to working closely with WSD and with Dr. Handa himself.

In the area of core activities, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians had conducted several missions, engaged as it now was in more outreach work. The Gender Partnership Programme had pursued its endeavours to promote gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments, as well as combat violence against women. The IPU had continued to work with the United Nations for attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and development in general.

On that score, the IPU's efforts to tackle the critical issue of maternal and child health, including through the adoption of its resolution Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing the key challenges to securing the health of women and children, had been recognized as very timely and relevant. Part of the IPU's follow-up to that resolution included the production of English and French versions of an invaluable new IPU handbook for parliamentarians on sustaining parliamentary action to improve maternal, newborn and child health. The IPU was hopeful of support for translation of the handbook into additional languages, particularly as it contained useful practical examples of steps taken by parliaments to implement the resolution. An operational manual to accompany the handbook was currently being finalized.

**The President**, highlighting the role played by the Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament at the 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Kampala in initiating the work relating to the basic right of access to health for women and children, invited her to comment on the achievement of the new handbook.

**Ms. R. Kadaga (Uganda)** said that the publication of the handbook was a watershed moment for her personally in the light of her participation throughout in advocating for, developing and presiding over the adoption of the IPU resolution mentioned by the Secretary General. Her own country had achieved reasonable progress in reducing maternal and child deaths from preventable causes, yet they continued to occur unnecessarily every day. Concerted efforts would ensure, however, that it remained set to attain its MDG targets by 2015. Her Parliament had demonstrated its commitment to implementation of the resolution, appropriating larger health budgets and, with the benefit of assistance provided by the IPU project on maternal, newborn and child health, improving accountability for accelerating the reduction of maternal and child deaths. It now aimed to collaborate with the IPU in leading national and regional dialogues on issues of social health insurance and civil registration. It had field-tested the operational manual that was to accompany the new handbook, which, as a practical, readable, highly relevant, exhaustive and geographically comprehensive resource, would critically enhance capacities for deepening action on women and children's health. She therefore commended it to all parliamentarians and other relevant stakeholders at the national and regional levels.

**(b) International Day of Democracy**  
(CL/193/5(b)-R.1)

**The Secretary General** drew attention to the parliamentary events organized in 2013 to mark the International Day of Democracy, outlined in the annex to document CL/193/5(b)-R.1, and said that the IPU would be seeking proposals from Members for activities designed to promote the involvement of many more parliaments in future celebrations of the occasion.

**The Council took note of the interim report of the Secretary General.**

Item 6 of the agenda

**FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE IPU**  
(CL/193/6-R.1)

**The Secretary General** outlined the financial situation of the IPU, as described in document CL/193/6-R.1, covering the financial outlook, capital expenditures and the matter of the legacy Staff Pension Fund.

Item 7 of the agenda

**DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2014**  
(CL/193/7-P.1)

**Mr. K. Örnfjäder (Sweden)**, Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Finance, presented the draft consolidated budget for 2014 set out in document CL/193/7-P.1. He said that the Sub-Committee had collaborated closely with the IPU Secretariat in drawing up the budget. The main body of the document had been formatted to coincide with the strategic directions and objectives of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017, with additional information provided in the summarized logframe annexed to the document. He gave an account of the Secretary General's summary, as contained in the document, and said that the Executive Committee recommended the draft consolidated budget for 2014 to the Council for adoption.

**The President** suggested that the draft consolidated budget be set aside for consideration at the next meeting of the Council.

**It was so agreed.**

Item 10 of the agenda

**REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS**

**(a) Regional seminar on the evolving relationship between citizens  
and parliaments in the Arab world**  
(CL/193/10(a)-R.1)

**Mr. M. El Hassan Al Amin (Sudan)**, presenting the report contained in document CL/193/10(a)-R.1, said that the regional seminar held in Morocco had examined citizens' expectations of parliaments in the Arab world and identified challenges to meeting those expectations. He outlined the recommendations formulated by participants for addressing the challenges concerned, as described in the report, which also mentioned the recommendations likewise formulated for newly elected parliaments on building close relations with citizens and for follow-up action. The seminar had provided the opportunity for a very fruitful debate.

**(b) Parliamentary workshop on the right to identity: Promoting universal  
birth registration in Latin America and the Caribbean**  
(CL/193/10(b)-R.1)

**The Secretary General** said that, as indicated in the report annexed to document CL/193/10(b)-R.1, such matters as an overview of birth registration in the Latin American and Caribbean region, the equity angle, barriers to birth registration and the role of parliaments in advancing birth registration had been discussed at the parliamentary workshop organized in Peru. He drew attention to the figures cited in the conclusions set out in the document and to the 13 recommendations for action to redress the situation of birth registration in the region.



**(c) Regional seminar for French-speaking African Parliaments  
on "Gender sensitive parliaments"**  
(CL/193/10(c)-R.1)

**Ms. P. Nongou Moundounga (Gabon)**, introducing the report contained in document CL/193/10(c)-R.1 on the regional seminar hosted by her country's National Assembly, said that participants had shared their experiences of gender-mainstreaming in parliament and agreed on the conditions for achieving that objective. She highlighted some of those conditions, as detailed in the report, including the need for ambitious quotas and sanctions for non-compliance; measures for reconciling family and professional life; and internal policies for preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality. Lastly, participants had called on the IPU to pursue its efforts for more gender-sensitive parliaments and to provide support to parliaments for conducting self-assessments and developing plans of action.

**(d) Multi-country seminar on "Parliaments and accountability  
for women's and children's health"**  
(CL/193/10(d)-R.1)

**Mr. A. Shahid (Bangladesh)** said that the multi-country seminar had been hosted by the Parliament of Bangladesh, a country that had received an MDG Award for its achievement in reducing child mortality. Highlighting the issues discussed and the conclusions drawn during the seminar, as detailed in document CL/193/10(d)-R.1, he added that participants had identified ways for parliaments to contribute to maternal and child health plans developed for their respective countries, such as through legal reforms, advocating for improved institutional arrangements and ensuring programme implementation. His Parliament would be pleased to host other similar events, which provided opportunities for the renewal of relationships and commitments.

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

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM**

**The Secretary General** announced that a quorum of 110 had been established, in accordance with Rule 34.2 of the Governing Council, on the basis of the participation of 219 delegations in the present sitting.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

## SECOND SITTING

Wednesday, 9 October 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 7 of the agenda (continued)

#### **DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2014** (CL/193/7-P.1)

**The President** said that, in the absence of comments, he took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft programme and budget for 2014, as set out in document CL/193/7-P.1.

**It was so decided.**

### Item 8 of the agenda

#### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IPU STRATEGY FOR 2012-2017** (CL/193/8-P.1)

**The President** informed the Council that the Executive Committee had conducted an in-depth discussion of the present item and related issues, including the all-important matter of the IPU gender mainstreaming policy, which fell under strategic objective 9 (Improve operational management, governance and internal oversight). With respect to the visual identity of the IPU, the Committee had decided in favour of adopting a modified colour version of the existing logo, which would consequently be usable in all languages. As Members would see when the modified logo was presented to them, it had an accompanying strapline reading "For democracy. For everyone", which was intended to communicate the IPU's values and aspirations to the world at large.

**The Secretary General** added that Members would have the opportunity at the 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly to contribute to the more comprehensive mid-term review of the IPU Strategy due to take place in 2014. With reference to strategic objective 9, he drew attention to a document on gender mainstreaming at the IPU, annexed to document CL/193/8-P.1, which had been developed over a two-year period by the Gender Partnership Group, with input from the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians and the geopolitical groups. The document outlined the IPU's general position on and commitment to that issue, in addition to the objectives to be achieved in pursuit of the overall goal and the plans for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

**The President** said he took it that the Council wished to approve and endorse the document on gender mainstreaming at the IPU.

**It was so decided.**

Item 9 of the agenda

**COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM**  
(CL/193/9-R.1)

**The Secretary General** drew attention to document CL/193/9-R.1, which contained a checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system between early April and the end of September 2013. Among other issues, it covered the IPU's efforts to provide a parliamentary perspective to the post-2015 development agenda; the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations; and specific activities relating to a multitude of United Nations bodies and organizations, such as the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organization.

In addition to those activities, the Executive Committee had discussed the matter of updating the Cooperation Agreement signed in 1996 between the United Nations and the IPU in order to reflect subsequent progress and developments, as recommended in United Nations General Assembly resolution 66/261. Having sought an independent legal opinion as to the options for best reflecting those developments in the proposed new agreement and for resolving difficulties relating to implementation of the current Agreement, the Executive Committee had decided to establish a sub-committee, comprising one representative of each geopolitical group from among its membership, to examine those options. The sub-committee would explore other options as well as seek further legal opinions, as necessary. It would make its recommendations by March 2014 at the latest, bearing in mind that the United Nations General Assembly was likely to revisit the issue of the new agreement in May 2014.

In concluding, he reiterated his encouragement for Members to seize the unique opportunity of the Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations in mid-November 2013 to provide input to the post-2015 development framework.

**The Council took note of the report on cooperation with the United Nations.**

**Special debate on the humanitarian impact of the Syrian crisis**

**The President** announced that, as part of the discussion under item 9, a special debate on the humanitarian impact of the Syrian crisis was to be conducted with the participation of a distinguished guest, Mr. António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in a panel also comprising Mr. Andi Anzhar Cakra Wijaya of Indonesia, President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, and Senator Samar Haj Hasan of Jordan. Drawing attention to document CL/193/11(d)-R.2, which contained a report of the mission conducted at the end of June 2013 by a delegation of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Law in order to assess the situation of Syrian refugees in Jordan, he invited Mr. Guterres to open the debate, to be followed by the contributions of Mr. Wijaya and Senator Haj Hasan.

**Mr. A. Guterres**, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said that the protracted Syrian crisis was not only highly tragic but also posed a dangerous threat to international peace and security. The current plight of the Syrian people was, moreover, exceptionally disheartening in the light of its long-standing and well-earned reputation of generosity and warmth in hosting refugee populations. The figures attested to the level of suffering: almost 2.2 million Syrian refugees were registered in neighbouring countries, with many more still unregistered, one third of the population had been displaced and one half was in need of humanitarian support.

The large outflow of Syrian refugees also had economic and security implications for host countries, in particular such small neighbours as Lebanon, where Syrians now accounted for one quarter of the population. He thus urged backing for the International Support Group for Lebanon, which had been recently formed to assist that country in addressing the multiple challenges it faced. The pressures were no less dramatic on the fragile economy in Jordan, where the number of Syrian refugees was much higher than the 600,000 and more who were registered. Jordan too featured among those requiring international support and solidarity for coping with the refugee impact, which further included Egypt, Kurdistan and Turkey. A strong and unanimous appeal for massive essential support had accordingly emerged from the High-level Segment on Syria convened during the previous week at the annual meeting of his agency's Executive Committee.

Humanitarian efforts would not resolve the core problem, however. A political solution was instead required, which demanded commitment and a willingness to overcome divisions in order to end the conflict before it was too late, bearing in mind that it had already spilled over into other areas, jeopardizing regional and global stability. The involvement of foreign nationals in the fighting on Syrian territory was also a growing concern.

Taking all those factors into consideration, the mobilization of humanitarian support for Syrian refugees and host countries was no longer simply a question of solidarity but increasingly one of enlightened self-interest.

**Mr. A.A. Cakra Wijaya (Indonesia)**, President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, highlighted the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the mission conducted by his Committee to assess the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan (CL/193/11(d)-R.2). He said that the magnitude of the human tragedy signalled by the enormous numbers of refugees was beyond words. The members of the mission had been struck by the resilience and dignity of the refugees it had met and by the impressive response of the Jordanian authorities. International solidarity and burden-sharing were vital to sustaining that response, particularly given the impact of the refugee influx on the Jordanian population and other host communities. Education and support were likewise vital to protecting and empowering the vulnerable women and children who constituted the majority of refugees and who must be equipped to contribute to their country's future reconstruction. Reaffirming the need for a political solution, he called on his fellow parliamentarians to take action in their home countries by pursuing that issue, in addition to championing the cause of the voiceless refugees and mobilizing support for the overburdened host communities.

**Ms. S. Haj Hasan (Jordan)** recalled the debate on the emergency item at the 128<sup>th</sup> Assembly, which had triggered the Committee's mission to her country. She stated that the crisis had again been singled out for special debate because the Syrian refugee tragedy was ever worsening and growing in complexity, with no solution in sight. Despite its own economic and other difficulties, Jordan had kept its borders open to Syrian refugees since the outset in 2011, working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to establish refugee camps offering the health, educational and other facilities equally available to refugees living outside the camps. A new camp was now being set up to cope with the continuing daily influx of refugees, the proportion of whom among the Jordanian population was predicted to double to 20 per cent over the coming year.

With its already limited resources, Jordan shouldered an enormous burden in providing essential services for Syrian refugees, which had thus far cost an estimated US\$ 1.95 billion. The socio-economic repercussions of hosting those refugees were hitting Jordanian communities, particularly in the north. The number of Syrian pupils in government schools had virtually doubled in the past year, for example, prompting a reintroduction of the shift system. The support received from external sources was much appreciated but inadequate for meeting

needs. Parliaments therefore had an important role to play in emulating Jordan's constant call for governments to assume their international humanitarian responsibilities in the face of the Syrian crisis, giving rise as it did to regional and global challenges that no one country or people could tackle single-handedly.

**The President** thanked the three speakers for their contributions and invited reactions from the floor.

**Mr. K. Mashhadieh (Syrian Arab Republic)** expressed gratitude to all those involved in hosting Syrian refugees and appreciation for the recognition of his country's role over history in protecting refugees on its territory, who had never been housed in camps and whose needs it had always provided at its own expense. It was now likewise assuming the burden of its own internally displaced persons. A political solution to the conflict was looking more hopeful, but it would take determined international efforts to halt the flood of armed terrorist groups across Syrian borders and end the takfiri fatwas affecting the Syrian people, who would also be greatly helped if the stringent economic sanctions imposed on the country were lifted. Precautions must be taken to prevent the inhuman exploitation of refugees, particularly women and children. Another problem was that over 4,000 Syrian schools were out of commission, having either been destroyed or taken over for use as shelters or military bases. He urged support for the countries hosting Syrian refugees and called for efforts to bring about a peaceful political solution to the crisis, which was the only way out.

**Mr. P. Moatlhodi (Botswana)**, agreeing that concerted action was imperative to saving lives, appealed for the mobilization of international funding to assist Syrian refugees in their misfortune and thanked Jordan and other host countries for continuing to deliver the ingredients for providing some comfort to those refugees.

**Ms. A.A. Al Qubaisi (United Arab Emirates)** said that her country had funded the construction of a camp for Syrian refugees in Jordan, to the tune of US\$ 10 million, as part of its ongoing commitment to its humanitarian mission of improving the lives and preserving the human dignity of hapless persons in need of support, irrespective of their nationality or religion. Currently accommodating 5,000 refugees, the camp would eventually have a 25,000-person capacity and include such essentials as a hospital and schools for ensuring the continuing education of refugee children with a view to their future. The international community, including the IPU, must play its part in providing support to beleaguered peoples and set an example of the commitment to humanitarian issues, particularly where refugees were concerned.

**Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia)** asked whether UNHCR ran any support programmes for women and children in conflict situations, who were often subjected to violence or used as weapons, and whether it provided special care for particularly vulnerable groups, such as pregnant women.

**Mr. G. Silva (Portugal)** said that he was proud to see a fellow countryman at the helm of UNHCR and paid particular tribute to Jordan for its humanitarian role in the crisis. His country would do its utmost to assist in finding an early political solution to the crisis.

**Ms. F. Dağci Ciglik (Turkey)** remarked that the latest developments in the Syrian Arab Republic, notably the use of chemical weapons by the regime, had introduced a new and horrific dimension to the humanitarian tragedy in that country, where the level of distress was alarming. The willingness and capacity of the regime to launch chemical attacks on civilians had potentially catastrophic implications. The figures for internally displaced persons and Syrian refugees spoke for themselves. Turkey alone was hosting some 600,000 refugees, one

third of them in camps, at a cost of almost US\$ 2 billion, an unsustainable burden that must be shared. A durable solution would be found only through identifying means of addressing the humanitarian crisis within the borders of the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Mr. S. Yang (Cambodia)** said that the plight and suffering of displaced persons and refugees resonated fully with the Cambodian people on account of its own history of fleeing to neighbouring countries in order to escape the Khmer Rouge killing sprees of the early 1970s. It had taken some two decades to implement the political changes that had ultimately halted the refugee outflow. He encouraged all countries across the globe to extend to the Syrian people the same help and support as had been provided to Cambodian refugees by their host countries, which had given them hope and safety.

**Mr. S. Alhuseini (Saudi Arabia)** reported that his country had provided US\$ 425 million to relieve the suffering of Syrian refugees, as well as assistance in kind, including housing, health and education facilities. The hope was that others too would shoulder their responsibilities in a similar show of solidarity. The increasing number of Syrian refugees was sparked by the fear and dread created as a result of the increasingly dangerous situation and the unleashing of chemical weapons in their country. Efforts must therefore be channelled into addressing the problem through both direct aid and other indirect measures.

**Mr. K. Mashhadieh (Syrian Arab Republic)** said that, gratifying as the outpouring of heartfelt sympathy over the tragedy of the Syrian people was, it should not be forgotten that controversy raged in the face of evidence and denials over who had been responsible for the use of chemical weapons in his country. Conversely, the arrest of terrorists at the borders in possession of such weapons had not sparked the same reaction. The Government was seeking to end cross-border infiltration by terrorists and interference with its sovereignty must likewise end. Arab humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people was in fact a duty, given not only its history of sheltering refugees but also its martyrdom at times to the nation.

**Mr. R. Danda (Angola)** joined in praising the excellent work being done in the face of the crisis and called on peace-loving nations to find ways of relieving the suffering of the Syrian people, with whom he expressed full solidarity as a national of a country where the people knew full well what it meant to be a refugee.

**Ms. A.A. Lemos (Brazil)**, concurring with the view that a political solution was the only way out of the crisis, said that her Government had contributed over US\$ 800,000 in aid and US\$ 1 billion to the Emergency Response Fund established by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. It was now also granting special visas on humanitarian grounds to Syrians seeking refuge in Brazil from the crisis.

**Ms. Z. Benarous (Algeria)** echoed the expressions of solidarity with the Syrian people, for whom the provision of international humanitarian assistance was crucial. Algeria was playing its part in supporting the efforts to relieve the suffering, including by taking in refugees. A peaceful political solution was the key, however, to ensuring that all refugees and displaced persons were able to return home. A long-lasting conflict would simply exacerbate the refugee situation to the point where it could no longer be controlled.

**Mr. R.H. Al-Meadadi (Qatar)** said that both the Government and civil society in his country were providing assistance to the Syrian people and refugees as a matter of national obligation and human duty. A radical political and humanitarian solution to the crisis must be found, however, without procrastination or delay. He therefore called on the IPU to adopt a resolution designed to hasten the achievement of that goal.

**Ms. F.Z. Naderi (Afghanistan)**, speaking from the perspective of someone whose country had for three decades experienced the impact of refugee communities, commented that the longer a conflict continued the more it destroyed the values of the nation. An immediate halt to the Syrian crisis was therefore essential, although it should be seen only as an initial stop-gap to a strategic solution that would enable the refugees to return home.

**Mr. S. Al-Rikabi (Iraq)** said that the Syrian refugee crisis had repercussions for neighbouring countries such as Iraq, which had taken in over 240,000 of those refugees and provided assistance amounting to over US\$ 85 million, despite its own difficult circumstances. The crisis continued to escalate in the absence of a radical political solution based on dialogue, which had always been advocated by Iraq and was now increasingly being urged at the international level in the realization that military action was not the way forward. He urged the IPU to press for such a solution, including at the upcoming Geneva-2 peace conference, where the damage inflicted on Syrians by the arms supplied to both sides in the fighting must also be brought home to the suppliers. The fact was that most of those arms were falling into the hands of terrorist groups who were murdering the Syrian people and the Iraqi people with them.

**Mr. G. Farina (Italy)**, referring to the recent shipwreck in which hundreds of Africans had perished off the Italian island of Lampedusa in their desperate search for a better future, said that Europe must not hide behind hypocritical statements of sorrow. It should instead initiate a dialogue aimed at averting such incidents in future and at avoiding the shame of some of the accusations levelled at it.

**Ms. A.M. Mari Machado (Cuba)**, condemning all forms of terrorism and deaths of innocent persons, said that the Cuban Parliament was closely monitoring the Syrian situation, which must not be exploited to serve certain interests. With the cooperation of the Syrian Government, United Nations agencies were working hard to alleviate the crisis through humanitarian assistance, which must be provided with respect for State sovereignty and in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. The Cuban Parliament was confident that the Syrian Government and its people would themselves achieve the ideal of a peaceful negotiated solution to the crisis, without outside interference.

**Mr. A. Guterres**, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, expressed appreciation for the important contributions made to the debate and reiterated that the Syrian Arab Republic had always been among the most generous of refugee hosts, with both the authorities and the people fully engaged in the task. The present suffering of the Syrian people was therefore especially depressing in the light of the solidarity they had always shown towards refugees and it was now incumbent on the international community to reciprocate that solidarity.

He confirmed that strong programmes were in place for protecting women and children in conflict areas from falling victim to such traumatic experiences as sexual violence, early marriage and prostitution. Enormous gaps nonetheless persisted and a programme to avoid the problem of a lost generation of Syrians had therefore been launched, with three main pillars of focus: education, psychosocial support and special protection measures.

While agreeing that there was none other than a political solution to the crisis, he pointed out that UNHCR paradoxically maintained a strictly non-political approach to its activities and adhered to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality in providing non-discriminatory support to all Syrian people, whether inside the country or beyond. The number of crises in today's world was multiplying at the same time as the capacity for their prevention and timely resolution was diminishing. It was therefore vital to invest in building that capacity in order to avoid outflows of refugees.

He appealed to parliamentarians to use their influence, first to ensure that their national borders remained open for access to refugees seeking protection and secondly to combat the xenophobia and racism to which refugees were particularly vulnerable. Lastly, he emphasized the need for solidarity and burden-sharing with countries hosting refugees. Contrary to perceptions, 80 per cent of refugees were hosted by developing countries, which frequently lacked resources, and the option preferred by the overwhelming majority of refugees was to return to their countries of origin. The international community must work on mobilizing the resources needed for host countries to fulfil their mission.

**The President** thanked the guests and other participants for their input to an interesting and topical debate.

Item 11 of the agenda

**ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES**

**(a) Coordinating Committee of Meeting of Women Parliamentarians**  
(CL/193/11(a)-R.1)

**Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda)**, Second Vice-President and Rapporteur of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, said that, as reflected in the report set out in document CL/193/11(a)-R.1, the Committee had discussed a range of issues during its meeting at the current session. They included the contribution of women to the deliberations of the Assembly, notably the three panel discussions, with an emphasis on related gender issues. It had also discussed means of improving its own deliberations and those of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, as well as how best to encourage men's participation in discussions of gender issues and guaranteeing women's input into the IPU's work. It had debated preparations for the Nineteenth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and matters relating to women in politics and women's caucuses. The Committee had been informed of preparations underway to elect a new IPU Secretary General and had received a briefing on the IPU's gender-related work, including the future activities detailed in the annex to the report. It had also singled out for congratulation the progress achieved in women's representation by such countries as Rwanda, where women now accounted for 64 per cent of parliamentarians.

**The Council took note of the Coordinating Committee's report.**

**(b) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**  
(CL/193/11(b)-R.1 to R.4)

**Ms. A. Clwyd (United Kingdom)**, Acting President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, presenting the Committee's report, said that during the present session, the Committee had held talks with 15 delegations and sources, including one, for the first time, through Skype. Such meetings were very important; they enhanced the Committee's understanding of the cases before it and enabled it to express its concerns and exchange views. She thanked the delegations for having given some of their time to the Committee.

In 2013, the Committee had worked hard to put in place a database to collect and share information about the cases it examined. At the current session, it had considered the situation of 180 parliamentarians, more than half of them from Africa, in 24 countries. Of the total number, 70 per cent were from the opposition and 12 per cent were women. While freedom of expression was a direct or indirect concern in each case, lack of due process in proceedings



against parliamentarians and arbitrary arrest and detention ranked first among the abuses reported to the Committee. The cases to be presented to the Council - some in detail and some in passing - were no different. Covered by the draft resolutions before the Council, those cases were as follows below.

### **BURUNDI**

The President of the Committee had been on an official visit to Bujumbura in June 2013 and the Committee fully endorsed the conclusions set forth in the report of his visit, which was before the Council in document CL/193/11(b)-R.1. It was a cause of particular alarm that Mr. Gérard Nkurunziza had now spent over five years in prison without judgment and that the Supreme Court, due to deliver its ruling one year and a half previously, had instead decided to reopen the case once again. The Committee wished to point out that justice delayed was justice denied. Those new delays were very disturbing and warranted Mr. Nkurunziza's immediate release.

The Committee regretted that it had not received any written observations from the authorities. It had unfortunately been unable to hear the Burundian delegation during the present session because their request for a hearing had reached it when the schedule of work was already full. Still, the Committee had held informal discussions with the delegation and hoped to receive its written observations on the mission report before the end of November 2013 so that they could be discussed at the next session.

**The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 20 parliamentarians.**

### **CAMEROON**

Mr. Ambassa Zang, a former member of the National Assembly, had been accused of misappropriating public funds during his time as Minister of Public Works. From the outset, the Committee had been concerned about the fairness of the criminal proceedings. The good news was that the matter was now pending before the Budgetary and Financial Discipline Council, meaning that Mr. Ambassa Zang could appoint a lawyer to represent him in his absence, given that he had obtained political asylum abroad. The Committee trusted that his right to defence would be fully respected. It would be monitoring the case closely.

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

### **CHAD**

At the beginning of May 2013, four members of the National Assembly of Chad had been arrested and charged, in violation of their parliamentary immunity. They had been denied access to their lawyers, families or a doctor for the first two weeks of their detention. The Committee, following a hearing with the delegation of Chad, was satisfied that the National Assembly had reacted strongly to the violation of the fundamental rights of its members and that it remained actively involved with a view to remedying the situation.

**Mr. M. Kadam (Chad)** noted that the draft resolution omitted to mention the cases of two other deputies; the first had been detained as a witness but since released and the second had been another subject of a government request, opposed by the National Assembly, to have his parliamentary immunity lifted. He also pointed out the redundancy of restating past

cases, such as that of Mr. Galo Nogothe Gatta, who was in fact present at the current Assembly. The Parliament of Chad was committed to working for the liberty of its members.

**Ms. A. Clwyd (United Kingdom)**, Acting President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, expressed her thanks for the information provided and said that the Committee would continue to monitor the situation closely and express any concerns it might have.

**The Council adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of five parliamentarians.**

### **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

The Committee was examining the cases of 34 former members of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It had conducted a mission to Kinshasa in June 2013 and the report of the delegation, contained in document CL/193/11(b)-R.2, was before the Council, together with the written observations of the Speaker of the National Assembly and various sources. After the mission, the Committee had accepted the case of Mr. Muhindo Nzangi, a deputy from North Kivu: after criticizing the Government's policy on the radio, he had been charged with offences against State security and, after an expedited trial, had received a three-year prison sentence.

The Committee was alarmed that the 34 individuals whose cases it was examining had all been expelled from the National Assembly and that certain members had been taken into custody and prosecuted after expressing political opinions different from those of the presidential majority. It regretted the lack of significant progress since the Committee's mission. The Committee continued to call on the authorities to work towards a settlement of the cases. Release on parole, pardons and amnesties had been among the available options mooted by the Head of State. The same measures had been recommended in the report from the recent national consultation exercise, presided over by the Senate and National Assembly.

**Mr. M.T. Ekombe (Democratic Republic of the Congo)** expressed a reservation on the draft resolution on the ground that some of its narrative was exaggerated. His delegation's request for a hearing with the Committee at the present session had not been granted and it therefore wished to be heard at the next session in order to provide additional information, including with respect to procedural difficulties relating to the trial of Mr. Eugène Diomi Ndongala, so that the Committee's resolution could instead be drafted on the basis of full information.

**Ms. A. Clwyd (United Kingdom)**, Acting President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, responded that the Committee would be pleased to hear the delegation at the next session; the requested hearing had not been possible at the present session.

**The Council adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 34 parliamentarians, taking note of the reservation expressed by the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.**

### **BAHRAIN**

The cases of Mr. Matar and Mr. Fairuz dated back two and a half years. At the start of the political turmoil in Bahrain they had been arrested and alleged ill-treated. The Committee saw no sign of an effective investigation into those claims. There was a second concern: Mr. Fairuz had been convicted for organizing political demonstrations. Having studied the

judgement, the Committee did not understand how his actions could be perceived as criminal. A third concern was the revocation of Mr. Fairuz's nationality on the grounds that he represented a security threat. The reasoning behind that drastic decision had never been communicated to Mr. Fairuz and yet he now found himself stateless. The parliamentary authorities had said from the outset that they wanted to help shed light on those matters and an on-site mission would be the perfect way to do that.

**Mr. J. Fakro (Bahrain)** said that his delegation fully rejected both the account of the cases and the draft resolution itself. Ever willing to provide information concerning any new developments, it had cooperated to the utmost with the Committee but now had cause for doubts about the political agenda and neutrality of some of its members. Its Acting President, for instance, supported the Bahraini opposition, organizing meetings for its benefit in the United Kingdom Parliament with the aim of prejudicing the democratic movement in Bahrain. The fact that she had cited her own parliamentary committee's findings on Bahrain in the discussions of an IPU committee was further evidence of her agenda, particularly as Bahrain had not featured in the Committee's work at the 128<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Quito and nothing in Bahrain had since changed. The President, Executive Committee and Secretariat of the IPU should seek to ascertain the credibility of Committee members and the absence of any hidden agenda so as to ensure that no adverse party was in a position to pass judgement.

Having long ago provided information requested by the Committee, his delegation had been astonished that a further request for detailed information from various legal authorities in Bahrain had been transmitted only six days before the present Assembly. Given the impossible deadline, which served only to corroborate the bad faith, his delegation had had no option but to inform the Committee that the information would be provided in due course. The fact was, however, that no former parliamentarians in Bahrain had been denied their right of legal recourse. Those who had alleged torture had lost their cases for lack of evidence but had chosen not to appeal. As to Mr. Fairuz, his nationality had been revoked after he had ceased to be a parliamentarian. For the Committee to raise that issue was therefore more evidence of its hidden agenda, especially as it had been supplied with the relevant court judgement stating the reasons for the decision, which Mr. Fairuz had not contested and yet the matter had now become a political issue at the global level.

Given the negative attitude exhibited in the draft resolution, his delegation now withdrew the offer it had made to prevail upon the Speaker of the Bahrain Parliament to reconsider his decision not to receive a delegation of the Committee, which had no business in Bahrain if it might include members who were not impartial. Bahrain not only applied the law but was also the only country in the world to have tasked an independent commission of inquiry with investigating events on its territory and making recommendations, which had been taken on board. He regretted to say that no further cooperation with the Committee was possible as long as it continued to include such members.

**Ms. A. Clwyd (United Kingdom)**, Acting President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, disputed the contention of the previous speaker concerning the meeting referred to at the United Kingdom Parliament, which he himself had attended. She retorted that to impugn her credibility was deeply unjust in that it likewise impugned the credibility of all members of the Committee. The Committee took its decisions on a collective basis and it was furthermore absurd to suggest that it had a vested interest in pursuing Bahrain in particular. She therefore urged support for the draft resolution, which clearly articulated the Committee's specific concerns with respect to the lack of any concrete steps by the Bahraini authorities to investigate the allegations of ill-treatment suffered by the two parliamentarians while in custody and the lack of respect for due process in stripping Mr. Fairuz of his nationality, most notably by failing to inform him of the reasons for doing so, which was a very serious matter.

**Mr. J. Fakro (Bahrain)** confirmed that he had indeed attended the parliamentary meeting in the United Kingdom as one of the five invited representatives of the Bahrain Government, but there had been an imbalance insofar as almost three times as many representatives of the Bahrain opposition had been permitted to attend. The only Committee member with doubtful credibility was the Acting President; the Internet was rife with indications of her views concerning the Bahrain Government, which called her impartiality into question. He reiterated his delegation's refusal to cooperate with the Committee as long as she remained a member.

**The President**, citing the IPU Statutes and Rules, said that IPU committees, including the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, worked independently as collective units and were not subject to the authority of or interference by the IPU President or the Executive Committee. Any objections to the substance of committee reports could be expressed and placed on record, as in the present instance.

**The Council adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Matar Ibrahim Matar and Mr. Jawad Fairuz Ghuloom, taking note of the reservation expressed by the delegation of Bahrain.**

#### MALDIVES

The Committee was very worried about the political crisis in the Maldives, which had come on the heels of the first round of the presidential elections in September 2013. Matters had reached a new turning point, as the Supreme Court on Monday had annulled the results of that first round.

The Committee was alarmed by reports that opposition members of parliament were being threatened, harassed, arrested and attacked. The parliament's authority was again being challenged and there was a danger that parliamentarians would end up in court in reprisal for the opinions they had expressed in parliament. A mission by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians could help address those issues.

**The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 24 parliamentarians.**

#### PAKISTAN

The Committee continued to follow the cases of two former members of the National Assembly of Pakistan. The first case concerned Mr. Fatyana. When his residence had been attacked in June 2012, the police, instead of protecting him and arresting the attackers, had arrested and charged him. While he had since been acquitted of those charges, his attackers had not yet been held to account, although criminal proceedings were pending against them. The Committee would continue to monitor those proceedings and it would also closely follow the trial of Mr. Syed Hamid Saeed Kazmi on charges of corruption.

**The Council unanimously adopted the two draft resolutions relating to, respectively, the case of Mr. Syed Hamid Saeed Kazmi and the case of Mr. Riaz Fatyana.**

#### PALESTINE / ISRAEL

Six parliamentarians elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council on the "Change and Reform" list remained in administrative detention in Israel. Three other parliamentarians were facing criminal proceedings. The Committee was attempting to understand the concrete facts behind the charges, as there could be parallels to past cases: following the 2006 election,

members of the Legislative Council had been convicted, for all intents and purposes, because of their political affiliation rather than specific criminal charges. Another tough question the Committee had concerned the practice of administrative detention, which often relied on classified evidence, raising questions about how meaningful due process was. It also made it difficult to challenge the decision depriving those people of liberty. The Committee was therefore happy to take up the invitation to attend one or more judicial reviews relating to the cases of Palestinian parliamentarians being held in administrative detention.

**Mr. B. Al-Salhi (Palestine)** commented that the illegality of the Israeli Occupying Power's detention of Palestinian parliamentarians should also be underlined.

**The Council unanimously adopted the three draft resolutions relating to, respectively, the case of Mr. Marwan Bargouti, the case of Mr. Ahmad Sa'adat and the case of 13 parliamentarians.**

### **SRI LANKA**

In July 2013, a Committee delegation had travelled to Sri Lanka and produced the report contained in document CL/193/11(b)-R.3. The Committee appreciated the continued commitment by the authorities to establish full accountability for the murders of four members of parliament between 2005 and 2008. In two of the cases, they appeared to be very close but for two others, the murders of Mr. Pararajasingham and Mr. Raviraj, the picture looked very different. The Committee encouraged the authorities to leave no stone unturned but to look for fresh evidence and carefully re-examine existing leads to bring the killers of those parliamentarians to justice. Speedy adoption of the witness protection bill could help. The Committee was also following closely the situation of Mr. Shritaran, who had been the victim of an assassination attempt in 2011 and who reported harassment on account of his parliamentary work.

**Mr. M. Samarasinghe (Sri Lanka)** said that his Parliament had been pleased to facilitate the mission conducted to his country, without restrictions, in June 2013, and to note that its observations concerning the factual errors and subjective conclusions contained in the mission report had been included in the final version. Expressing the hope that those observations would be taken into account, he underscored the gains achieved in the four years since the assassinations mentioned, which had taken place at the height of a war since won against a ruthless terrorist organization. The Tamil opposition party had polled over three quarters of votes in free and fair elections recently held in the former area of conflict and the new chief minister for that area had just been sworn in. His Government remained committed to protecting and nurturing its strength of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

Highlighting non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity as the core principles for the promotion and protection of human rights, he remarked with regret that, contrary to the impression given in the mission report that the Committee's delegation had engaged with representatives of the international community during its visit to Sri Lanka, it had in fact met only selected groups. He therefore urged the Committee to adopt the practice of seeking cross-regional and cross-border viewpoints during such missions in the interest of producing reports that complied with those principles. His delegation would continue supporting and working with the Committee in its important work, notably with respect to identifying and bringing to justice the culprits in the two assassination cases that had not yet been resolved.

**The Council adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of seven parliamentarians.**

## TURKEY

The Committee had before it the case of the prosecution of nine Turkish parliamentarians, along with many other suspects, on the charge of alleged membership of terrorist organizations. All but one remained in custody and were prevented from exercising the mandate entrusted to them by their constituents. The sources were concerned about the fairness of the proceedings, which had led to the sentencing, on 5 August 2013, of Mr. Haberal and Mr. Balbay to imprisonment for terms of 12.5 years and 34 years and 8 months, respectively. Mr. Haberal had since been released for time served and sworn in as a member of parliament.

In the light of the complexity of the cases under examination, the Committee had wanted to go to Turkey, an idea agreed to by the Turkish parliamentary authorities at the Committee's session in Quebec in 2012. The Committee had made three attempts to conduct the visit, but each time the Turkish authorities had considered the proposed dates to be unsuitable due to the parliament's workload and concerns that the visit might influence ongoing judicial processes. The Committee regretted that state of affairs and trusted that the Turkish authorities would do their utmost to ensure that the mission could soon take place.

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

## BELARUS

In the case of Mr. Victor Gonchar, who had now been missing for over 12 years, the Committee regretted that the authorities had provided no response to its request and reiterated its wish to conduct a visit to Belarus.

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

## COLOMBIA

The Committee presented to the Council two cases in Colombia, one of which was new. The issue in both cases was respect for due process in criminal proceedings against members of parliament.

**The Council unanimously adopted the two draft resolutions relating to, respectively, the case of Mr. Álvaro Araújo Castro and the case of Ms. Piedad del Socorro Zuccardi de García.**

## CAMBODIA

The Committee proposed to close further examination of the case of Sam Rainsy, as he had been pardoned in July 2013.

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

## MADAGASCAR

The Committee continued to follow the situation of 12 parliamentarians who had been charged when the Parliament had been unconstitutionally dissolved in March 2009. The Committee noted that one of those parliamentarians had been granted amnesty and that others had been able to register for the forthcoming legislative elections.

**The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 12 parliamentarians.**

## MONGOLIA

In Mongolia, the Committee was disappointed that, 15 years after Mr. Zorig Sanjasuuren had been brutally murdered, the culprits had not yet been identified, despite uninterrupted investigations.

**The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Zorig Sanjasuuren.**

## ICELAND

**Ms. B. Jonsdottir (Iceland)**, speaking about her case at the invitation of the President, outlined her experiences as described in the resolution and said that the adverse outcome of the legal action by the United States authorities to compel Twitter to reveal information about her account had implications for the rights of all parliamentarians and other individuals to freedom of expression and privacy. She therefore urged the IPU and its Members to work on securing those basic rights in all online and offline contexts, especially in the light of the revelations by Edward Snowden, which had confirmed the extent to which privacy was now unprotected. To include the word "digital" before "privacy" in Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would be a first step towards the development of new protection standards. Special efforts should also be directed at ensuring that the governments most involved in privacy violations conducted themselves in an honest fashion.

**The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Ms. Birgitta Jonsdottir.**

## ERITREA

**Ms. T. Yohannes**, sister-in-law of Eritrean parliamentarian and prisoner of conscience Petros Solomon, likewise addressing the Council at the invitation of the President, spoke of the injustice in Eritrea that drove so many of its citizens to flee. In their bid to escape, some fell victim to human traffickers, some drowned and others were captured. As to the 11 parliamentarians whose cases had been taken up by the Committee, their whereabouts and health status had remained unknown since their incarceration in September 2001. Describing the heart-breaking situation of two of the children of those parliamentarians, including her own niece, as they grew up with both parents held in incommunicado detention, she said that the Eritrean Government committed abuses in defiance of the rule of law and the human rights safeguards enshrined in the country's Constitution. What must be done to secure justice for Eritrean prisoners of conscience and to end their suffering and that of their children?

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

**Mr. K. Sittheamorn (Thailand)**, referring to a resolution relating to a case in Thailand that, albeit formulated on the basis of incomplete, inaccurate and distorted information, had been adopted at the Council's previous session, asked what the Committee's position on the case in question now was in the light of the findings of its subsequent investigation on the ground in Thailand and the additional information it had received from various stakeholders and the Thai delegation.

**Ms. A. Clwyd (United Kingdom)**, Acting President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, replied that the Committee had only very recently received the additional information and would therefore reserve its comments until after it had examined that information at its next meeting.

**The Council took note of the Committee's reports.**

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

**(i) Election of one titular and four substitute members**  
(CL/193/11(c)-P.1 to P.4)

**The President** said that four candidatures for membership of the Committee had been submitted: that of Mr. H. Franken (Netherlands) for the post of titular member and those of Ms. C. Guittet (France), Mr. G. Farina (Italy) and Mr. M. Sheerit (Israel) for posts as substitute members. He took it that the Council wished to elect those candidates for the posts.

**It was so decided.**

**(ii) Report of the Committee**  
(CL/193/11(c)-R.1)

**Lord Judd (United Kingdom)**, President of the Committee on Middle East Questions, presenting the Committee's report contained in document CL/193/11(c)-R.1, to which was also annexed a report of his visit to the region in June 2013, expressed his firm appreciation for the engagement in the Committee's work by the Secretary General and his colleagues, both past and present, and for the commitment, tolerance and understanding of Committee members in the face of constantly fluctuating arrangements. Commenting that the renewed peace process between Israel and Palestine, not to mention events in the Syrian Arab Republic and Egypt, inevitably had a bearing on the Committee's actions, he highlighted matters covered in the report, such as the insistence of Israeli and Palestinian leaders on the important role that the IPU and the Committee could play in fostering a positive negotiating environment; the organization of round-table discussions on topics of common concern and interest to the Israeli and Palestinian people, such as women- and youth-related issues and water; and the constructive steps taken towards ensuring that the representatives of both peoples in that context included young persons and politicians, especially women.

In order to discharge its functions effectively and focus on its tasks, the Committee should ideally meet at times other than during IPU assemblies and must also be assured of adequate financial and human resources, including in support of the new round-table discussions. In short, it was vital to carry forward the Committee's work with goodwill and full commitment so as to achieve progress, however slow that progress might be.

**Mr. A. Al-Ahmad (Palestine)** pointed out that the report on the visit to the region by the President of the Committee failed to mention his meeting with a delegation from the Palestinian Legislative Council, which had provided support in his preparations for meeting



President Abbas. Nor did the report on the Committee's activities indicate the fact that its recent meetings had been almost exclusively devoted to a discussion of measures for promoting an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, securing the release of Palestinian parliamentarians detained in Israeli prisons and embarking on the road to peace. That discussion was a much more crucial matter of concern than round-table topics and must be reflected in the report.

**Ms. H. Hamran (Indonesia)**, supporting that view, said that the report should be redrafted in order to rectify the omissions and ensure that it presented a balanced view of the Committee's discussions.

**Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia)** commended the report; it aptly reflected the discussions that had taken place within the Committee, of which she was a member.

**Mr. A. Al-Ahmad (Palestine)** reiterated his earlier points, adding that his delegation would reject the report unless it was revised to reflect the major focus of the Committee's discussions.

**The Secretary General** said that observations made concerning the report would instead be reflected in the summary record of the Council meeting.

**The Council took note of the Committee's report.**

Item 16 of the agenda

**ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

(CL/193/16-P.1 to P.5)

**The President** announced that four persons were to be elected to replace those members whose terms ended in October 2013, namely: Mr. K. Chshmaritan (Armenia), Mr. Nhem Thavy (Cambodia), Mr. K. Örnfjäder (Sweden) and Mr. P.-F. Veillon (Switzerland), and one person to replace Mr. F. Kundi (Pakistan), who was no longer a member of parliament and whose term was due to end in October 2015. Candidatures had been received from Mr. V. Senko (Belarus), Mr. K. Dijkhoff (Netherlands), Mr. M.R. Rabbani (Pakistan), Mr. P. Tanbanjong (Thailand) and Mr. R. Walter (United Kingdom). He took it that the Council wished to elect those five proposed candidates for membership of the Committee.

**It was so decided.**

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

### THIRD SITTING

Wednesday, 9 October 2013

The meeting was called to order at 2.40 p.m., with the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Abdelwahad Radi (Morocco), in the Chair.

Item 9 of the agenda  
(continued)

#### COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

**The President**, recalling the IPU's active engagement in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process as part of its collaboration with the United Nations Human Rights Council, said that he was honoured to welcome Ms. Navanethem Pillai, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to the session and to invite her to address the Council.

**Ms. N. Pillai**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that the parliamentarians gathered in force at the 129<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly embodied the fundamental right of every human being to participate in the conduct of public affairs, representing and acting upon as they did the sovereign decision of their peoples. As democratically elected bodies, parliaments were key actors in framing and enacting norms that contributed to the promotion, protection and respect of human rights, as well as in shaping and translating into action legislation that directly or indirectly affected the conditions and implementation of human rights.

Currently celebrating its twentieth anniversary, her Office had been speaking out against human rights violations worldwide since its establishment in the wake of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 1993, which had joined the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 as a landmark document crystallizing the principle of the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of human rights and firmly committing States to the promotion and protection of human rights for all people, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems. Progress achieved in the advancement of human rights during the past two decades included the creation of indispensable human rights instruments and mechanisms for promoting and protecting the most vulnerable in society and the setting of essential standards, which continued to expand significantly, as did the human rights treaty system served by her Office. Her recommendations for strengthening that system in the light of such growth were in fact currently under consideration by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The Human Rights Council had taken multi-faceted action to address a wide range of human rights situations ever since its establishment in 2006 and it had more recently proved itself capable of responding to emerging human rights crises. Its unique and often powerful universal periodic review process furthermore served to remind all States parties to human rights treaties of their inescapable responsibility to fulfil all human rights and fundamental freedoms. On the basis of uniform criteria, all 193 Member States of the United Nations had already been equally scrutinized under the first cycle of that process, which attested to the true universality of the review and additionally provided an opportunity for frank and constructive self-reflection and dialogue among different actors, including civil society. It likewise laid the foundation for the sustainable information collection and dissemination so essential to ensuring the implementation of human rights obligations at the national level and cooperation at the international level. The mandate of her Office was complemented by the 38 special

procedures mandates under which 72 independent experts examined, monitored and reported on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective that might otherwise go unheard. Strategies and measures had been developed to protect civil society actors, particularly at the field level, bearing in mind their important role in boosting the human rights system, while through its field presence in 59 countries, her Office organized technical assistance, training courses and campaigns to raise human rights awareness and monitor compliance with human rights obligations.

None of those milestones of progress could have been achieved, however, without the support of all relevant stakeholders and such partners as the IPU. Parliamentarians had been actively involved with the treaty body system and numerous countries had already responded to the call by some treaty body committees for the inclusion of parliamentarians in State party delegations. She highlighted the benefits of the newly established Working Group of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the IPU and further recalled the address made to the recent high-level segment of the Human Rights Council by the IPU Secretary General, in which he had stressed the importance of strengthening ties between human rights, the rule of law and development. At the Council's May session, an interactive panel discussion had also been organized in conjunction with the IPU on strengthening the parliamentary role in the work of the Human Rights Council and the UPR process. Her Office additionally collaborated with the IPU in running seminars and training courses on that role, which was utterly vital to the implementation of human rights recommendations, and in producing and updating joint publications on various human rights topics. In sharing her Office's active, ongoing and genuine commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, the IPU and its Members had proven through their actions to be genuine advocates and valuable partners in advancing human rights worldwide. Expressing her gratitude on that score, she gave reassurances of her Office's full support for those actions.

**Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia)** noted that parliamentary oversight of reports to be submitted to such human rights treaty bodies as CEDAW must be recognized as a crucial part of the reporting process. There was indeed much positive interaction between the IPU and CEDAW, which utilized materials and tools developed by the IPU in order to assist and gauge the accuracy of those vital reports. She looked forward to future cooperation between the two bodies, which they were already discussing in the interest of advancing human rights across the globe for women in particular.

**Mr. J. Horváth (Hungary)** commented that the IPU could afford to indulge in congratulating itself on the success of its parliamentary diplomacy, including in human rights matters. Those successes must be communicated to voters at home in order to convey the message that their place in the global community was secured as a result of the unique gains achievable through parliaments.

**Ms. D. Dlakude (South Africa)** wished to know how parliaments could best assist in strengthening international human rights treaties and the reporting process.

**Ms. N. Pillai**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, reacting to the observations made, affirmed the need to direct attention and focus to parliamentarians, particularly those in opposition. Concerning the treaty body system, the timely consideration of State party reports was constrained by lack of resources and the increased volume of work generated by new treaty ratifications. She had therefore prepared a report on strengthening the human rights treaty body system, which had been taken up by the UN General Assembly, as already mentioned, with a view to the adoption of a resolution on the subject. Assistance from parliaments in promoting that outcome would be very welcome.

**Mr. I. Salama**, Director, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, added that Ms. Pillai's report, which would be communicated to the IPU Secretariat for the benefit of IPU Members, specifically referred to the role of parliaments in monitoring and assessing the level of domestic implementation of treaty body recommendations and decisions. In the interest of strengthening that role and the entire treaty body system, he too urged parliamentarians to act swiftly to ensure the support of their national governments for the draft resolution currently before the General Assembly. Treaty body experts had expressed their satisfaction with the draft, which, if adopted, promised to further consolidate the relationship between parliamentarians and treaty bodies.

**The President** expressed appreciation to Ms. Pillai for taking precious time out of her busy schedule to participate in the session.

Item 11 of the agenda  
(continued)

**ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES**

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

**(i) Election of one substitute member**

**The President** proposed that the election be postponed until the next session of the Council, as no candidatures had been received for the post.

**It was so decided.**

**(ii) Reports of the Committee**  
(CL/193/11(d)-R.1 and R.2)

**Mr. A.A. Cakra Wijaya (Indonesia)**, President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, presenting the report of the Committee's recent meeting contained in document CL/193/11(d)-R.1, said that participants had discussed refugee protection and urged individual and collective action to address the human tragedy created by the Syrian crisis, including by following up on the recommendations set out in the report of the Committee's mission to Jordan (document CL/193/11(d)-R.2), which had been conducted in June 2013 to assess the impact of that crisis. The Committee had also discussed internal displacement, with particular reference to the new handbook for parliamentarians on the subject, and the current situation with regard to statelessness. It had additionally been briefed by the International Committee of the Red Cross on the latest developments in international humanitarian law. Expressing the hope of continuing support for the Committee's activities, he suggested that the IPU could assist in promoting respect for international humanitarian law by encouraging dialogue for the exchange of best practices among States and regions. Lastly, the Committee had endorsed the draft Rules of the Committee, annexed to its report, which were now before the Council for consideration.

**The President** said he took it that the Council wished to approve the draft Rules of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law.

**It was so decided.**

**The Council took note of the Committee's reports.**

**(e) Gender Partnership Group**  
(CL/193/11(e)-R.1)

**Mr. D.H. Oliver (Canada)**, Rapporteur of the Gender Partnership Group, introducing the Group's report contained in document CL/193/11(e)-R.1, said that the participation of women in the present Assembly, which amounted to a proportion of 31.3 per cent, was slightly less than at the previous Assembly. With a view to improved women's participation in IPU bodies, which remained constant at about 30 per cent, the Group urged the submission of women's candidatures for vacant positions in those bodies. It also looked forward to adoption of the proposed amendment to the Rules of the Standing Committee Bureaux relating to membership in order to provide for gender parity. For its part, it planned to work swiftly on drawing up an action plan for implementation of the document it had produced on gender mainstreaming at the IPU, annexed to document CL/193/8-P.1 and adopted by the Council at its first sitting. It had noted the interesting development whereby the number of Arab parliaments with no women members had now fallen from four to one and was hopeful of a similar reduction in the case of Pacific Island States, where quota measures had recently been introduced. It was likewise hopeful that the welcome progress, reported during a stimulating dialogue session with the Saudi delegation, concerning the many women now holding leadership positions in Saudi Arabia, including in parliament, was a harbinger of further change in the region. In closing, he endorsed and recommended pursuit of the fruitful cooperation already under way between the IPU and CEDAW, which attached great importance to involving parliaments in its work and was highly appreciative of IPU's gender-related activities.

**The Council took note of the Committee's report.**

**(f) Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU**  
(CL/193/11(f)-R.1)

**Mr. K. Dijkhoff (Netherlands)**, Chairperson of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU, outlining the discussions described in the Forum's report contained in document CL/193/11(f)-R.1, said that the 50 participants at the Forum's meeting held the previous day had finalized the draft Rules and Working Modalities of the Forum, which would be submitted for adoption at the 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Following an animated debate, they had also voted by a small margin in favour of setting an age limit of 45 years for membership of the Forum and its Board, a decision to be approved likewise at the Council's next session. Lastly, the Forum had recommended that its future meetings be scheduled on the first day of the Assembly in the interest of enabling it to provide a youth perspective to the IPU's work, which had regrettably been precluded at the current Assembly by the timing of its meeting.

**The Council took note of the Forum's report.**

Item 12 of the agenda

**130<sup>th</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY**  
(CL/193/12-P.1)

**The President**, recalling the decision taken at the Council's previous session to accept the kind invitation of the Parliament of Azerbaijan to host the 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly, announced that the Government of Azerbaijan had unfortunately been unable to provide the required guarantees of access for all registered participants. The Executive Committee had therefore unanimously concluded with regret that the 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly could not be held in Baku and must instead take place in Geneva on dates determined on the basis of the availability of the International Conference Centre in Geneva, namely 17 to 20 March 2014. He took it that the Council wished to confirm that decision.

**It was so decided.**

**The Secretary General**, referring to the list of observers to the 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly set out in document CL/193/12-P.1, pointed out that it also included the names of three organizations invited to follow the work of that Assembly in the light of its agenda: Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND); the World Future Council (WFC); and the Association for the Prevention of Torture (PTF).

**The President** said he took it that the Council wished to approve the list of observers.

**It was so decided.**

Item 13 of the agenda

**FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS**

(CL/193/13-P.1)

**(a) Statutory meetings**

**The Secretary General**, noting that the Council had already approved the venues and dates for the 130<sup>th</sup> and 132<sup>nd</sup> Assemblies listed in document CL/193/13-P.1, said that the Executive Committee encouraged approval of the venue and dates also listed for the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly, namely Geneva from 13 to 16 October 2014. Notwithstanding that encouragement, however, it had additionally suggested that offers for hosting that Assembly could perhaps be entertained in order to break the run of three consecutive Assemblies in Geneva that would otherwise occur. In the event that any such offers were received from potential future hosts, alternative venues for the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly might subsequently be proposed.

**The President** said he took it that the Council, on that understanding, wished to approve Geneva as the venue for the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly on the proposed dates.

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

(CL/193/13(b)-P.1)

**The Secretary General** said that, as indicated in the list set out in document CL/193/13-P.1, the specialized and other meetings for which approval was sought were either to be funded from external sources, with no financial implications for the IPU, or accounted for in the regular budget.

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

**It was so decided.**

**The President** highlighted in addition a request, detailed in document CL/193/13(b)-P.1, from a long-standing partner, the Centre for Legislative Studies at the University of Hull, for co-sponsorship of the Eleventh Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians, to be held in July 2014. Given that the request had no financial implications for the IPU, he took it that the Council wished to approve the request, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

**It was so decided.**

Item 14 of the agenda

**AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES AND RULES**

(CL/193/14-P.1 to P.3)

**The President** recalled that the aggregate table of amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules deriving from the Governing Council decision CL/192/8(b)-P.1, now annexed to document CL/193/14-P.1, had been disseminated in June 2013. Sub-amendments received in response within the deadline, some of which had since been withdrawn, pertained to the Rules of the Standing Committees and were set out in document CL/193/14-P.2, together with the original amendments. Before inviting the Secretary General to present the recommendations of the Executive Committee concerning those amendments and sub-amendments, he said with reference to the amendments to the Statutes, set out in document CL/193/14-P.3, that no sub-amendments had been received. He therefore took it that the Council wished to give final approval to those particular amendments for consideration by the Assembly.

**It was so decided.**

**The Secretary General**, in explaining the proposed amendments and sub-amendments to the Rules of the Standing Committees, as set out in document CL/193/14-P.2 and a document that had been circulated concerning a revised proposal for the amendment of Rule 7, informed the Council that the Executive Committee had endorsed all of those amendments and sub-amendments, with three exceptions: sub-amendment 1 to new Rule 7.1ter; the sub-amendment to new Rule 7.1quater; and the first sub-amendment to new Rule 9bis.2.

**The President** said that he took it that the Council wished to give final approval to the proposed amendments and sub-amendments, in accordance with the recommendations of the Executive Committee, for consideration by the Assembly.

**It was so decided.**

Item 15 of the agenda

**APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE 2014 ACCOUNTS**

(CL/193/15-P.1)

**The President** announced the candidature of Mr. K. Örnfjäder of Sweden for the post of Internal Auditor for the 2014 accounts and said he took it that the Council wished to approve the candidate's appointment to the post.

**It was so decided.**

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.