SUMMARY RECORDS

ON THE PANEL DISCUSSION HELD DURING THE 125th ASSEMBLY IN BERN (OCTOBER 2011)

on the subject item

"Promoting and practising good governance as a means of advancing peace and security: Drawing lessons from recent events in the Middle East and North Africa"

Chosen for debate by the First Standing Committee
(*Peace and International Security)*

during the 126th Assembly in April 2012 in Kampala (Uganda)

**Promoting and practising good governance as a means of
advancing peace and security: Drawing lessons from recent events
in the Middle East and North Africa**

<u>Item 3(a) of the agenda</u>

*Panel discussion on the subject chosen for debate by the First Standing Committee on Peace
and International Security during the 126th Assembly in April 2012*

Sitting of Tuesday, 18 October
(Afternoon)

*The meeting was called to order at 2.40 p.m. with the President of the First Standing
Committee, Mr. S.H. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), in the Chair.*

The MODERATOR welcomed the participants to the panel discussion on an issue of
particular relevance and urgency for the Middle East and North Africa, and indeed the world.
He explained that, based on their discussions, the co-Rapporteurs would subsequently merge
their two draft reports into one final draft report and produce a draft resolution, which would
be discussed by the First Standing Committee during the 126th IPU Assembly in April 2012.

Mr. M. GYÖNGYÖSI (Hungary), *co-Rapporteur*, said that the uprisings and profound
changes in the Middle East and North Africa had signalled a new order, with countries
redefining themselves and restoring self-esteem and a sense of community. Transitional periods
were always difficult, with questions arising on how to proceed with and establish systems of
good governance, which would advance peace and security and bring about economic
prosperity and a new political elite.

There were many references to good governance in development documentation. It was
used as a broad concept used to describe how public institutions should manage public affairs
and resources to guarantee human rights in society. Definitions of good governance could
generally be categorized in one of two groups: the first defining good governance from the
perspective of economic development, with a focus on accountability, control, addressing
corruption, and resource management efficiency; the second defining it from an institutional
and bureaucratic perspective, with a focus on participation, transparency and openness. What
all definitions had in common, however, was a reference to good governance as responsive
governance, underscoring the rule of law, an independent judiciary, the promotion of
development, efficient delivery of services and free and fair elections.

Nevertheless, some critics had claimed that those definitions were based on western,
liberal, democratic models of good governance and did not take account of social, historical or
cultural differences between nations. The IPU itself had, at its 124th Assembly, affirmed the
right of peoples and countries to determine their own political future and stated that
democracy should reflect the diversity of countries' histories and cultures.

Regarding the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, it was hard to generalize the
common causes, but economic and social disaffection among people, in particular youth, was
certainly a significant factor. The demonstrators had initially demanded economic reform,
more jobs and an end to corruption. Those came in response to the global financial crisis,
resulting in considerable reductions in subsidies for food, fuel and electricity. Other factors
included oppressive authoritarian regimes in some countries, leading to demands for
constitutional reform, an end to emergency laws, and measures to redress social inequalities.

In drawing lessons from the uprisings, governments needed to identify the socio-economic factors and lower the risk of social tension in the future by redistributing wealth across society, creating more jobs and alleviating poverty. Western societies and models of democracy had lost their credibility in the eyes of the Arab world, largely as a result of interference in the internal affairs of a number of countries in the region. Instead, other models, such as of the one adopted by Turkey, were viewed as good examples of liberal but Islamic democracies that Arab countries could replicate.

Mr. J.J. MWIIMBU (Zambia), *co-Rapporteur*, said that promoting and practising good governance entailed implementing a solid legal framework for institutions and procedures, upholding the Constitution, organizing free and fair elections and respecting their results.

A number of institutions had set their own definitions of good governance, but all made reference to the process by which power was exercised. The World Bank, for example, in its definition, identified three distinct aspects of governance: type of political regime; how authority was exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development; and the government's capacity to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions. Good governance could be understood as responsive governance, comprising certain key characteristics, including accountability and transparency, broad popular participation in political processes, a fair and efficient system of justice and enforcement of the rule of law.

A number of factors had led to the protests that had taken place in the Middle East and North Africa, including human rights violations, dictatorships, government corruption, economic decline, unemployment, poverty, and structural demographic elements, such as a high percentage of educated but unemployed and disenchanted young people.

A number of lessons on democracy and freedom could be drawn from those events, including the need for reform and for democratic governments that responded to the will of the people and had their foundations in respect for human rights and the rule of law. Governments in that region needed to address urgently issues of poverty, corruption and lack of access to essential services, including health. They also needed to provide basic employment opportunities to all citizens and safeguard freedom of expression and tolerance in society. Such changes would require extensive reforms of constitutions, electoral and judicial systems, and the media, while ensuring that the place of women in all aspects of political life was enhanced considerably.

Mr. M. EL GALAD, *Editor-in-Chief of the Egyptian daily newspaper Al-Masry Al-Youm*, recalled the resolution adopted at IPU's 124th Assembly on strengthening democratic reform in emerging democracies, including in North Africa and the Middle East, and underscored the particular need for all parties to refrain from violence and ensure that human rights were respected and for governments to respect the right to peaceful self-determination of peoples, as in paragraphs 3 and 4 of that resolution.

The Arab Spring had been momentous but there were still challenges ahead, including the promotion of good governance, a concept that many regimes had tried to ignore as they had with the people's demands for liberty and reform. The Egyptian people had never experienced good governance in its true sense. It was instead a term used by the government to mask its corruption and mislead citizens and international community. Accountability and oversight mechanisms had been implemented only to ensure that Egypt was looked upon favourably by the rest of the world. While the regime had promoted human rights publicly, it continued to undermine the dignity of its citizens; discrimination was wide-spread and there was a lack of equality. Despite steady economic growth in recent years, the socio-economic situation of the vast majority of the population had steadily worsened, with most of growth and wealth going to a few. Before the uprisings, the political situation had been deadlocked: the regime had had

the monopoly of power and control of all State security apparatuses, emergency laws meant that 17,000 citizens had been imprisoned without trial and political prisoners had numbered about 25,000. The political situation came to a head during 2010 parliamentary elections, when fraudulent practices saw the ruling party win 97 per cent of seats and all opposition excluded.

Private media outlets had only been allowed in Egypt within the last decade and, initially, could only be established under State supervision. However, newspapers and television channels had captured people's interest and expanded. The regime outwardly promoted freedom of expression; but in reality a considerable number of persons in independent media had been jailed, fined, or had been the subjects of smear campaigns by the State.

There was a key difference between protests in democratic and undemocratic States: in the former, protests generally led to developments in the regime and consideration of protesters' views, while in the latter, regimes often ignored or failed to respond to protesters' requests, often leading to a deepening crisis.

In recent years, movements for change in Egypt had been established by different groups in society. During the uprisings, the world had witnessed the greatest attempt yet by people to seek democracy, freedom and justice.

The continued outbreaks of violence or conflict in Egypt were still worrying, but they were temporary; the changes that were needed would certainly come. Those who had broken away from the norm and demanded reform would continue to work to challenge those who wanted Egypt to remain as it had been previously. The Egyptian journalists who had acted in support of the uprisings and had enabled the people's voices to be heard would continue to support change and ensure that those who had lost their lives for the sake of democracy and liberty had not done so needlessly.

Ms. S. SEKKENES, *Senior Advisor, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*, said that within the United Nations system, UNDP was the leading agency working on governance issues. Its network of regional and country offices made it well-positioned to work both critically and constructively with governments and civil society to promote good governance and democratic values. UNDP had accumulated much experience and expertise across a number of sectors, which had informed the way it defined good governance. UNDP prioritized citizen participation to enhance State accountability, and helped to fund NGOs in terms of service delivery and civic engagement. Efficient electoral processes were also crucial and UNDP provided much assistance to those institutions. The organization recognized the important role played by parliaments in advancing good governance, democracy and development and was seeking to further its engagement with parliamentary institutions in many countries to support legislative, representative and oversight capacities. Local governance was another key area in which UNDP had invested heavily. It helped to improve service delivery and advance democracy, development and peace through dialogue, the promotion of trust and conflict prevention. Another core element of good governance was the rule of law and access to justice. UNDP supported many national programmes for the legal empowerment of poor and marginalized groups, in particular women.

UNDP's had invested in a range of public administration reforms to enhance governance, including support for advancing democracy and pro-poor reforms. While it had not been possible to take preventive measures in the Middle East and North Africa, one of the major lessons learned from those events was that any recovery measures had to incorporate preventive strategies to build on the experience and avoid a similar crisis in States or communities in the future.

Successful regional transition would take time; the experiences of other countries showed that even with several years of post-reform support and recovery, the fragility caused by a legacy of conflict remained the greatest threat to development. Long-term planning and management of expectations was therefore essential if the positive impact of change was to be sustained. Peace accords and post-conflict periods often provided opportunities to establish progressive political, social and economic policies and change if the process was transparent.

Following any uprising and public expression of discontent and grievances with governments, interventions had to be context-specific. Engagement had to be grounded in local engagement and full consideration taken of local circumstances, otherwise efforts to enable rapid democratic transition in fragile societies would likely fail. Any framework for transition needed to be responsive, inclusive and resilient.

Ms. K. JABRE, *Manager of the IPU Gender Partnership Programme,* said that democracy and good governance both implied appropriate management of powers and distribution of wealth, as well as respect for the needs and rights of all segments of society. They also required participation, transparency, equity and accountability. Democratic parliaments were central to good governance, i.e. parliaments that were representative, accessible to the public, accountable for their performance in office, and effective in carrying out their core functions.

Gender equity was essential to democracy and good governance. In recent years, much progress had been made in the level of women's political participation around the world. Since 1995, the number of woman parliamentarians had risen globally from 11.3 per cent to 19.3 per cent; however, there were huge gaps between regions, with the Nordic countries achieving near parity, while Arab countries still had an average of 11 per cent. Of the countries that had achieved at least 30 per cent women's representation, many had undergone recent democratic transition and reform and had used the opportunity to advance gender equity and women's political participation, including through constitutional reform. Experience had shown that if inequities were not addressed during periods of transition, democratic reform processes would not be sustained.

As a result of the Arab Spring, three key steps should be taken regarding women and gender equity. The first was to recognize the important role that women had played in the protests and in revolutionary movements. They had taken to the streets on an equal footing with men and had been the most frequent users of social networks and media to express their concerns, transmit messages and rally support. Women had gained clear visibility in terms of their contribution to change and progress in the country. In recognition of their importance, the second step was to consolidate the role of women during the transition phase. That was already proving to be a key challenge in Tunisia and Egypt in particular, where the first bodies established to discuss constitutional and electoral reform comprised no women. The representation of women in their transitional governments was also weak, and needed to be addressed as a priority. The final step was to establish a legal framework that was conducive to equality, and electoral laws that promoted women's participation and representation. Tunisia had already instituted good practices through electoral laws that provided for parity of gender representation on electoral lists and sanctions for parties that did not respect that parity.

There were clear challenges ahead, but some positive measures had already been taken throughout the region: Saudi Arabia had confirmed women's participation in its next municipal elections, Oman had seen its first woman elected to parliament, discussions were taking place in Lebanon on an electoral law that would set a 30 per cent quota for women, while in Morocco, the Constitution had been amended to ensure gender equity and respect for women's rights.

Debate

Mr. F. EL-FAYEZ (Jordan) said that while he agreed that countries in the Middle East and North Africa should introduce a number of the essential elements of a truly democratic society, he believed that the two draft reports had made too many generalizations about the causes of the uprisings and the current situation in the countries of the region, including the Gulf States, which enjoyed both political and economic stability. Each country had its own political system, culture and processes for political and economic reform, which had already begun in a number of countries prior to the uprisings.

Those generalizations included the reference made in the draft report submitted by the Zambian co-Rapporteur to a number of countries, including Jordan, where large underclasses or repressed ethnic or religious groups were gaining freedom; in reality, however, there was no such underclass or repression in Jordan. The country had a constitutional and parliamentary democracy and a society that was tolerant of people regardless of their ethnic or religious background. The second draft report, submitted by the Hungarian co-Rapporteur, also included Jordan in the list of countries where revolts had taken place, but all demonstrations in Jordan had been peaceful and no injuries had been reported. Jordan hoped that the co-Rapporteurs would ensure that all such generalizations were removed when the draft report was finalized.

There was no doubt that democratic reforms would take time to develop across the region, as had also been the case in Europe and the West, where democracy had developed from a feudal system through the industrial revolution and the emergence of a strong and political middle class. The Arab world had its own challenges, which would need to be addressed; that would take time.

Mr. A. LARIJANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that good governance had been a primary concern of political philosophy for centuries, with many great thinkers, in particular those from the Islamic world, placing the need for justice at the heart of good governance. From an Islamic perspective, good governance and justice encompassed ensuring the necessary conditions for all members of society to realize their talents, whether scientific, artistic, political or moral. Democracy was needed so that freedom of expression could be promoted and those talents could flourish.

At the global level, the root cause of conflict, war and instability was a disregard for justice. Many of the world's powers used double standards in their policies and actions towards other countries, supporting those that served their own interests but acting unjustly towards others, thus hampering their development and security. Many of the corrupt dictatorships in the Arab world had enjoyed considerable support from western powers; the strong relationship between Egypt and the United States of America was well-known, for example. However, such dependency on western powers had helped to trigger the grass-roots movements in those countries, which protested against western support for the long and undemocratic rule of many regimes. In recent decades, the people of many countries, including those in the Middle East and North Africa, had sought to fight oppression and promote justice, democracy and development. The international community should welcome those efforts and ensure that all demands for reform and the needs of all people were appropriately met.

Mr. N. ANASTASIADES (Cyprus) said that many years of internal oppression, poor management of public resources, and distant executive authorities had paved the way for the general feelings of frustration in Egypt, Tunisia and Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the subsequent mass revolts in those and other countries in the region. Democratic transition, while never easy, was the most viable means of achieving lasting peace and security. Dismantling the

structures of former regimes across the Middle East and North Africa would require determination, courage and competence. The international community needed to provide support, not by imposing other models of democracy, but by assisting civil society and respecting the political choices of the people in that region. Steps needed to be taken by the newly established authorities to stimulate the economy and provide employment opportunities while also curbing corruption and investigating abuses of power. Respect for fundamental political freedoms, including the freedom of assembly and expression, was also essential to the reform process.

Mrs. M.A. CRISTI (Chile) said that not only the countries in the Middle East and North Africa, but the whole international community could draw lessons from the recent events in that region. There were many reasons for the demonstrations, including a lack of social equality, opportunities, employment, and access to health, education or other social benefits. Many people had protested against dictatorial regimes and the populism and intolerance that were widespread in some countries.

The injustices in the region needed to be addressed and resolved as a matter of urgency, but it was clear that the necessary processes for change had not yet been fully developed and there were still a number of challenges to be faced in many countries. Despite the peaceful protests, there were some who capitalized on the opportunity to incite violence and vandalism and obstruct police forces in their efforts to maintain peace, security and order. Such violence hampered the majority efforts, who sought change and development, and the competent authorities therefore needed to act quickly to redevelop social structures, provide balance and justice in society, and the necessary opportunities for education and employment, as well as promote tolerance, respect, freedom and accountability.

Good governance needed to entail strengthened democratic mechanisms, through decentralization and modernization and ensure that the needs of citizens were placed at the centre of policies. The regional transitional governments would need to overcome issues of corruption and poor distribution of wealth. They needed to secure better social opportunities for all as a matter of priority and to ensure the advancement of peace and security.

Mr. P. HAŞOTTI (Romania) said that the Arab Spring was evidence of the universal desire for open societies, political freedom, social justice and transparent and accountable governance. The Middle East and North Africa now needed to focus on advancing human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as well as economic recovery and growth. To that end, the IPU and its Member Parliaments should be ready to support electoral processes and new parliamentary bodies in the region to help ensure stability.

The co-Rapporteurs had rightly drawn on past experiences of democratic transition in Central and Eastern European countries, which could offer valuable lessons to the Arab world as new democratic systems were established. One lesson was that no single model of democracy could be applied to all countries; each had its own unique situation and characteristics and transition processes needed to take those into consideration.

Mr. A. BENSALAH (Algeria) welcomed the co-Rapporteurs' draft reports on such an important issue but said that there were certain areas of contention in the reports on terminology or generalizations of the situation in the Middle East and North Africa. He hoped that the areas in question would be revised appropriately before the finalized report was made available.

In Algeria, the process of reform had been ongoing for a long time, but the pace of them had accelerated recently. The recommendations made by the co-Rapporteur from Hungary regarding good governance were already at the heart of the government's actions in Algeria, where consultations with political parties, prominent national figures and consultants

had led to a document outlining the reforms that were needed and would be introduced into the legislative system. Among the planned reforms was the enhancement of women's political participation, with a proposal for a quota of 33 per cent women's representation.

Algeria fully supported the aspirations of the people in the region but cautioned that reforms needed to take account of the national interests, culture and history of each country.

Ms. P. CARDOSO (Portugal) said that as a result of the financial crisis, Portugal had needed to reform its economic and social policies and make efforts to balance its national finances. Her country's experience served as an example to newly established democracies of the need for effective economic and social policies that served the interests of citizens. It also served to underscore that, while Portugal had long implemented the principles of good governance, it was not always sufficient to prevent periods of crisis. One lesson for the countries in the Middle East and North Africa was that while there could certainly be no democracy without good governance, establishing good governance principles might not, on its own, be sufficient to ensure peace and security.

Mr. B. GAULE (Zimbabwe) said that it was important to understand the relationship between good governance, peace and security. Where there were failures in governance, conflict was inevitable and peace and stability usually absent. Conflict occurred where policies and politics violated the tenets of good governance, where corruption, unequal distribution of wealth and resources were present and where there was little or no public participation in political processes.

The events in the Arab world marked a momentous development in global politics, from which clear lessons could be drawn. The region had scored high in terms of economic development, but such development was far removed from governance issues and the recent events represented the consequences of the absence of good governance. The uprisings had revealed how poor governance could erode stability over time and, at a time when increased use of technology had created an interconnected world, the lesson for the whole international community was that good governance needed to be at the core of all political systems and power must be exercised with responsibility and compassion.

Mr. A. AL-OMAIR (Kuwait) said that achieving peace and security was a basic requirement for all societies; in the context of the situation in the Middle East and North Africa, however, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict required close attention. To achieve peace and security in that region, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories needed to end, as did the violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people.

He welcomed the draft reports, but said that more emphasis should be placed on positive actions that had already been taken by countries in the region. Kuwait was due to implement a new system for enhanced distribution of wealth and other actions for reform had also been taken by Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

Ms. N. MAZAI (Belarus) said that good governance was usually a matter of national concern, but the impact of recent events showed that good governance also had an international scope, and its absence represented a serious risk to global peace and security.

She agreed with previous speakers that, while the entire international community should aspire to good governance, there was no universal model of it. It should take account of the conditions of each country, including historical, social and cultural specificities. It was essential for all peoples to have the right to determine their political future and an appropriate route towards development.

Certain countries would no doubt obstruct measures to establish international good governance mechanisms and, while they could not be forced to take such measures, they should be subject to certain sanctions, in accordance with international law.

Mr. K.R. KHAN (India) said that peace and security had been a matter of international concern for centuries; good governance and security were closely linked and if the first was established and promoted, it would no doubt lead to the second. Poor governance threatened peace and security in societies and also upset regional and international dynamics. The failures of existing governance structures in the Middle East and North Africa had given rise to concerns over democratic degeneration in that region and the impact it would have on the rest of the world. The events had underscored the gap between the expectations of the people and the ability of government institutions to fulfil them, leading to frustration and political instability. Strategic action was now needed from all stakeholders to promote a culture of democracy and good governance that could respond to the needs of the people. All of the attributes of good governance that had been described in the draft reports needed to be practised concurrently to ensure an enabling environment for public institutions and for people's political participation. With all stakeholders working to that end, good governance could reconcile divergent views on issues of public interest and advance peace and security by reducing the threat of conflict in society.

All countries could draw lessons from the recent events in the Arab world; governments should heed the warning that, without political participation, inclusiveness and social equality, the objectives of political stability and economic prosperity would not be realized. Accountability of political leadership was required, as without it no meaningful trust could be built between governments and the people. To avoid governance failures similar to those seen in the Middle East and North Africa, governments and elected representatives needed to ensure freedom of expression and establish necessary legislative and institutional reforms to facilitate democratic and good governance processes.

Mr. E. DOMBO (Uganda) said that profound changes in the Middle East and North Africa had underscored the challenges of promoting and practising good governance as a means of advancing peace and security. All stakeholders needed to adhere to the principles of good governance and democracy in order to bring about political, economic and social development. They also had to ensure that policies to promote peace and security were practical and effective and sought the proper management of national economic and social resources.

Reform needed to be relevant to all people across society and parliamentarians had responsibility to oversee appropriate systems of checks and balances. The executive, the judiciary and the parliament should collaborate to eliminate corruption and ensure that the needs of the State were met, including through the equal distribution of resources and reducing poverty.

Mr. S. HADDAD (Syrian Arab Republic) said that he would have preferred the title of the panel discussion to be more inclusive, as the issues being discussed were relevant to many States and not only those in the Middle East and North Africa. He stressed that much of the instability in the region was a result of the absence of effective and lasting solutions to the lack of peace that had been brought about by factors including the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the displacement of several million Iraqi refugees in Syria.

Syria recognized its own need for reform and to respond to the demands of its population, but reforms was being hampered by considerable external pressures. The demands of foreign States were very different to the demands of the Syrian people: that was leading to discord and disrupting the country's stability. Syria had a responsibility to protect its citizens and was

endeavouring to achieve reform through national dialogue and unity, while safeguarding its independence and sovereignty. Some measures had already been implemented, including laws on political parties, the media and elections.

Mr. A. WIRIYACHAI (Thailand) said that his country had experienced the hardships of political crisis following a coup d'état in 2006. However, the most recent general elections had seen a landslide victory for the now ruling party and the formation of a government under Thailand's first woman prime minister. The government had set as an urgent priority the formulation of a policy on reconciliation, based on justice and the principles of good governance. Long-term collective efforts would see a reduction in social gaps and lead the country towards sustainable democracy and prosperity.

He requested that the reference made to Thailand in the draft report submitted by the Zambian co-Rapporteur be removed, as it did not seem appropriate given that the report was supposed to focus on recent events in the Middle East and North Africa.

Mr. P.-F. VEILLON (Switzerland) requested that two aspects of the draft reports be developed further before a resolution was formulated and discussed at the next IPU Assembly. The first was that recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa had arisen out of the current economic and social situations in countries of the region. It was essential to note that there was clear economic and social disillusionment among many populations, in particular young people. There were challenges to be faced; good governance entailed more than just the promotion of democracy and reform of political institutions. It also comprised a fairer distribution of and access to wealth, eliminating corruption, and ensuring better living standards, including access to health care and education. In developing the resolution, consideration should be given to the strategies and conditions for promoting reform and improving social and economic situations.

The second aspect was the acknowledgement that transition to a democracy would take time. The experience of Central and Eastern European countries had shown that building and adapting to democratic systems was a long process, and yet in a globalized and technological age, countries should be cautioned against long and drawn-out processes, which would serve to further frustrate the general population, in particular young people.

Mr. R. MIGLIORI (Italy) said that as parliamentarians, it was less important to understand why the recent events in the Middle East and North African had occurred than how to ensure that the situation in the region did not relapse into its previous status. The European Union (EU) had contributed considerably to improving living standards in many of those countries, which had been a key factor in the creation of a middle class and the push for democratic revolutions. It was clear, however, that in coming transitional periods, the EU and other actors should not seek to impose a distinct model of democracy but rather to instil the principle of fundamental human rights. Individual countries needed to choose their own political, social and economic models.

Mr. M.R. RABBANI (Pakistan) said that the focus on good governance in the international context was not helpful; primarily, good governance pertained to the internal affairs of a country and, as such, matters of peace and security should be discussed by IPU Member Parliaments in the national context. His delegation had reservations over the definitions of good governance proposed by institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), precisely because of their international focus. Good governance should always be developed at the national level according to each country's own political, cultural and historical situation.

Pakistan had recently undergone a period of transition from a military dictatorship and had implemented wide constitutional reforms, which allowed for devolution, enhanced transparency and reduced discretionary powers.

There were clear lessons that could be learned from the Arab Spring, including the need to withdraw all support for dictatorships, to halt human rights violations, to oppose torture as an instrument of State policy and to prohibit all attempts to censor the media. His country had concerns over whether the Arab Spring had been politicized by the West in order to pursue its own international political agenda, not least because the same level of attention had not been given in the past to the struggle faced by the Palestinian people.

The MODERATOR clarified that the title of the item under discussion by the Committee had been approved by all Members at the 124th Assembly, and particular emphasis had been given to good governance in light of the events in the Middle East and North Africa.

Mr. S.H. HAMOUDI (Iraq) said that some confusion could arise from linking discussions on good governance, which was a broad topic, to the lessons that could be learned from the Arab Spring. Good governance should not only be viewed in the context of recent experiences in the Middle East and North Africa. Likewise, the Arab Spring should not be analysed only from a good governance perspective; the causes of those events were broader than issues of poverty or administrative or financial corruption alone.

Iraq agreed with the co-Rapporteur from Hungary that the particularities of each country needed to be recognized, with people choosing their own path to democracy and political participation based on their national situation. Based on its own evaluation of the Arab Spring, the Iraqi Parliament had stressed the need for credible elections and the peaceful transition of power. It also sought to support governments in their bid to provide essential services to their populations, including health care, power and water. Iraq was opposed to any external military intervention to change regimes, as this would cause more problems and could lead to undesirable results. Based on its own experiences, Iraq encouraged dialogue between the people and ruling authorities in order to achieve systems that were effective and responded to the needs of the people.

Mr. J.F. TUTA (Angola) said that good governance should encompass measures that ensured a balance of political power between governments, leaders and decision-makers. Peace and security should be the objective of all political action and he called upon parliamentarians to work to safeguard that peace and security through the promotion of appropriate constitutional processes and legislation.

Angola had moved to promote good governance in its National Assembly through its first Constitution, approved in 2010. Through it, the country aimed to provide political stability, economic growth, employment opportunities, wealth creation and the eradication of poverty and to promote national cohesion and citizen engagement in political processes.

Mr. S. MOKGALAPA (South Africa) said that the first lesson to be drawn from the events in the Middle East and North Africa was that there was no longer a place for dictatorships and authoritarian rule in the world. Second was the important roles played by civil society and youth in driving change, while the third was the need for all countries to address issues of unemployment and corruption and to promote the rule of law, human rights, economic development and responsive governance. A final lesson that could be drawn was that public participation in political activities must be encouraged in order to promote the principles of democracy and human rights and to ensure that legislative processes were transparent and appropriate oversight and accountability mechanisms were in place.

Trust needed to be built between the governing authorities and the people, and all governments needed to be responsive and have adequate systems of checks and balances. Partnerships with civil society were critical to addressing local issues and eliminating corruption.

Mr. WU XIAOHUA (China) said that the international community needed to abide by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States with regard to the current situation in the Middle East and North Africa. There, issues of democratic reform must be handled by countries independently and the wishes of the people needed to be respected. China wished to use its political experience to support those countries by promoting dialogue as a means of restoring stability.

China hoped that the countries in question would comply with the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and other relevant sources of international law. China also hoped that they would allow the UN Security Council to provide support in safeguarding peace and security and carrying out post-conflict reconstruction. A number of intertwined issues had been raised during the Arab Spring; the United Nations and other organizations must play a key role in promoting mediation and negotiation, creating conditions for securing peace and stability, and that it was imperative that such action took account of each country's social and cultural background.

Mr. F.M. MAALIM (Kenya) said that many of the problems of despotism, dictatorships and human rights violations around the world had their roots in the colonialism of the past and the occupation of many countries by dominant world powers for many years. The West did not practise what it preached; on the one hand it promoted the need for human rights for all people under dictatorships, while on the other, it actively supported those regimes through high levels of international aid. In addition, the developed world used up vast proportions of the natural resources in the developing world and dominated global trade, which meant that many countries did not have the ability or the resources to alleviate poverty or promote economic development.

Countries needed to choose their own paths to democracy, and establish such systems in accordance with their own national contexts, and not the models promoted by the developed world. External intervention often perpetuated problems of corruption, particularly through the sale of arms to developing countries, which also gave rise to violence and conflict.

Countries in the West needed to ensure that they promoted human rights equally in all countries, and did not favour some over others according to their own international political interests. Instead of funding interventions in Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, resources should be diverted to other countries such as Somalia or Palestine, which had both faced huge challenges to development, democracy and good governance for many years.

There was an urgent need for an independent body or mechanism to formulate policies based on the open-minded and objective views that many parliamentarians shared and to ensure that all countries in the developing world were treated equally by the developed world.

Mr. A. AL-AHMAD (Palestine) said that the draft reports were not sufficiently precise and some parts would need to be revised to avoid generalizations or a lack of objectivity.

Palestine also had concerns over the way the events of the Arab Spring were reported in the media and how other countries had reacted to the uprisings, particularly with regard to Egypt, where allies of that regime turned their backs immediately in support of the protesters and change. It caused many to question those countries' views on the Arab Spring and their motives for redirecting their support so quickly. He agreed with other speakers that democracy could not be exported from one nation to another, as each country has its own specificities, traditions and culture and no single model could be applied universally.

He did not believe that good governance, peace and transparency could be achieved in the region while the Israeli occupation of his country continued. Palestinian youth movements, similar to those seen during the Arab Spring, had never received the same levels of attention by the media or other countries, which viewed Israel as a stable democracy. However, for as long as it continued to occupy Palestine, he underscored that Israel could not be viewed as a practising democracy, and called for urgent international attention and action to end the occupation and the ensuing human rights violations.

Mr. S. FADEL (Saudi Arabia) said that the draft reports did not provide accurate information about the situation in some countries of the region, namely Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Bahrain and Kuwait, which led to misconceptions and tarnished the reputations of those countries. He called for complete objectivity in the reports with regard to the events described and for the sections in question to be amended accordingly. In particular, the reference to Saudi Arabia carrying out a military invasion of Bahrain was inaccurate; the movement of forces was in line with an agreement between countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and sought to protect Bahrain from foreign intervention and the deepening of any ethnic differences between Muslims in the country.

Ms. M. VAN EETVELDE (Belgium) said that certain elements of the draft reports should be developed further before a resolution was formulated and submitted the 126th Assembly. First was the role of women in the events in the Middle East and North Africa and more emphasis should be placed on the part that they should play in the establishment of new political systems and in drafting new policies and constitutions.

Second was the link between good governance and national and international security. A direct result of good governance was a decrease in societal violence; internationally that meant decreased conflict and war.

Lastly, the reports needed to stress that democracy was not guaranteed through regular, free and fair elections alone; States also needed to ensure human rights. Uprisings and demonstrations in Egypt involving Coptic Christians had shown the consequences of restricting human rights and people's freedom of expression and of religion.

Ms. S. BOYCE (Australia) said that her country had responded with prompt and targeted assistance to countries involved in the Arab Spring, particularly for agricultural productions, food security and electoral assistance.

Before the draft resolution was discussed at the next Assembly, she requested that the notion of practising good governance as a means of advancing peace and security be separated from discussions on the recent events in the Arab world. Instead, those events should be viewed as a reference point for best practices.

Greater attention should be given to citizen input into good governance at all levels, including in how to establish democracies according to national contexts. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), informing, consulting and engaging citizens were core elements of good governance and the means to promote openness. Good governance must be measured and she proposed that the eight attributes mentioned by the co-Rapporteur from Zambia be used as the basis for developing a tool to assist countries in establishing good governance systems.

Mr. N. EVANS (United Kingdom) said that no government was greater than its people and the international community should not underestimate the bravery of those who had taken to the streets to demonstrate against undemocratic or despotic governments. The price paid by those who had died in the uprisings should never be forgotten. No government could instil good governance and listen to its people while simultaneously intimidating, threatening, imprisoning or killing for opposing the ruling authorities and demanding change and reform.

Mr. A. RICHE (Haiti, Observer) said that distinctions needed to be made between the situations of the various countries involved in the Arab Spring, as the events in Egypt and Tunisia had been very different to those in Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

It was essential that the right support be given to countries as they sought to lay the foundations of democracy. Fundamental human rights had to be respected by all nations, with the same rights and obligations applying to all, if good governance was to be achieved. That fight for human rights should not be one-sided but taken up by all stakeholders through dialogue so as to find multilateral solutions to meet the fundamental needs of the people. Too often in recent times the international community had paid little or no attention to other difficult situations around the world, including the one in Somalia. Instead, it needed to ensure that human rights were promoted and applied equally in all countries, regardless of national interests, so that the fundamental needs of all people could be met.

Mr. S. ABDULRAHMAN (Bahrain) said that the draft reports did not accurately depict the current situation in Bahrain, a country that had for many years before the Arab Spring sought the supremacy of the law, tolerance, and freedom of expression and religion. The reports did not reference their sources and no methodology had been provided on how they had been researched and structured. He called on the co-Rapporteurs to remove any inappropriate or misleading language regarding Bahrain, including distinctions drawn between Shiite and Sunni groups, as Bahrain did not categorize its citizens on the basis of their ethnic group but on their allegiance to the country. Citizenship and human rights were fully enshrined in Bahrain's Constitution.

Additional errors were contained in the report regarding the movement of Saudi Arabian troops to Bahrain; under Gulf Cooperation Council agreements, member countries assisted each another when the stability of a member was at risk or when external threats were present. It was in that context that Saudi Arabia had sent forces to assist Bahrain and the report should be reviewed accordingly.

Bahrain had recently initiated a number of other reforms, which should also be mentioned in the draft reports.

Mrs. J. RIVERA (El Salvador) said that the draft reports seemed to address good governance from a negative perspective, in terms of how lessons could be learned from the Middle East and North Africa and those countries' failure to institute good governance and to secure peace and security. Instead the reports should adopt a positive outlook on how lessons could be learned from success stories around the world.

The reports should also pay greater attention to the role of the media and social networks in the uprisings, which were used extensively throughout the region, despite the different national interests and reasons for protesting.

The youth had taken to the streets because of a lack of socio-economic opportunities; if they failed to materialize, many other parts of the world could witness similar demonstrations, including by women, who continued to fight for enhanced political participation and employment in many regions.

Mr. F. MURADOV (Azerbaijan) said that from experience, his country understood well the importance of independence, reform and stable economic development. The lack of such development across the Middle East and North Africa had sparked the protests by young people, those who were educated but could not find employment, or those who were employed but had no political, social or other satisfaction. Those factors needed to be taken into account when the draft reports were revised. Those countries would face difficult periods as they sought transition and democratic reforms; he urged the IPU and other international organizations to provide support to them as reform implementation began.

Mr. A. GARCÍA (Mexico) called for the co-Rapporteurs to develop further their analyses of the role of the media, the Internet and social networks in the events under discussion and of the extent to which they were not only tools for change but also for good governance. The co-Rapporteurs should focus more on the need to respond to the cultural situations of each country, and on the need to avoid imposing a single model of democracy or good governance that did not take into consideration those national contexts.

The role of political parties was central to good governance; it was essential that all were part of wider national governance systems so as to respond to various situations that each country faced.

There were other issues such as human or drug trafficking that also posed a serious threat to good governance in countries, as they threatened stability and security.

Mr. B. SIBALATANI (Namibia) said that non-partisan law enforcement and respect for basic human rights were central to good governance, peace and security. The events in the Middle East and North Africa had seen too much intervention from foreign governments, who sought to support the protestors and advance their own regional foreign policies. The influence of those powerful governments on militarily weak nations was worrying and had the potential to fuel further conflict or civil war in those countries.

Ms. C. BOURRAGUE (France) said that the statements made by some delegates on the actions of western powers regarding the events of the Arab Spring did not represent an accurate analysis of the situation. She regretted the lack of reference in the draft reports to the various North-South cooperation projects that had been established to help countries in the Middle East and North Africa, in particular the Deauville Partnership to help Arab countries in their transition to free and democratic societies.

The analysis of the events in question had not referred to the issue of human rights violations by authoritarian regimes in response to opposition movements. In the revised draft report, the co-Rapporteurs should include the responsibility of the international community, and the UN Security Council in particular, to help protect populations when States were incapable or unwilling to adequately protect their citizens.

Mr. V. ORTEGA (Philippines) said that a recent survey conducted in his country showed that people expected national government to be responsible for good governance, peace, security and economic development. To that end, parliaments needed to pass laws that improved accountability, transparency and freedom of information. They also needed to take decentralization measures to enhance the political participation of both men and women and improve infrastructure and delivery of services. All countries needed to promote environments where national and local governments could work together effectively to address issues and advance peace and security.

Mr. A. SEMMARI (Transitional Arab Parliament) said that the objective of the Transitional Arab Parliament was to widen public participation in government, economic and social institutions and advance good governance.

There were a number of reasons why dictatorships had been allowed to thrive in the Middle East and North Africa, which included Western support for authoritarian regimes so as to protect their interests; issues of wealth distribution and depleting wealth in the region; and attempts to counter reforms through western-dictated policies or principles.

Arab solidarity had existed for a long time before the Arab Spring, as had initiatives for good governance and the promotion of human rights and political participation. He echoed the requests of other speakers to amend the draft reports and remove misleading information on the events that had occurred in some countries.

Ms. I. NG (Singapore) said that what was new and noteworthy about the Arab Spring in comparison to similar events in the past was the speed and intensity with which the protest had spread, due to the growing use and influence of social media. Through wide information dissemination on social media platforms, no revolution today could be hidden from global view, a fact that needed to be realized by governments of oppressive regimes. The role of such social media would need to be studied more closely in future as governments assessed how to respond to political debates.

While the co-Rapporteurs had identified key attributes of good governance, it should be recognized that there were no easy or universal solutions. Democracy was certainly an important factor of good governance, but it was by no means a solution to or prerequisite of good governance; there were a number of democracies around the world that were not necessarily models of good governance.

Free and fair elections did not guarantee good leaders who ensured that people's concerns were met, and countries therefore needed to focus on how to involve their best and brightest people in politics to help lead in the future

Mr. M.A. AL SULAITI (Qatar) said that he had some reservations on the draft reports. In particular, the reports contained information on Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait that was misleading and inappropriate and served to damage the reputations of those countries. The draft reports needed to ensure that events were viewed in the context of the overall movement in the region towards democracy.

Mr. R.D. VIVAS (Venezuela) said that, in addition to the Arab Spring, the draft reports should also contain reference to the protests that were taking place in Europe and the United States against capitalism and economic uncertainties. The finalized version of the report would benefit from describing those events and some of the ways in which developed countries also smothered self-determination among the people and contravened international human rights laws on occasion. An analysis of good governance could not be comprehensive if it did not take account of protests and social movements in the rest of world, in addition to those in the Middle East and North Africa.

Ms. K. EZZOUMI (Morocco) said that both draft reports had unfortunately been too general in nature and had not considered individual national situations. It was important that parliamentarians sought to shed light on the different circumstances of different countries and regions so that they could support all countries in establishing democratic systems that were appropriate to national needs.

Morocco had amended its constitution in 2010 and had implemented a number of reforms, but those efforts were not mentioned in the reports. He requested that the finalized report include appropriate references to the different situations of each country and the actions taken towards democratic reform.

Mr. J.J. MWIIMBU (Zambia), *co-Rapporteur*, welcomed all of the comments that had been made by delegates; he said that the suggestions that some had mentioned would be integrated into the final draft report to be submitted to the 126th Assembly in Kampala.

Mr. M. GYÖNGYÖSI (Hungary), *co-Rapporteur*, said that the final draft of the report would take into consideration more recent events that had taken place after the current draft had been submitted, including the Occupy Movement in the United States and other events mentioned.

Mr. M. EL GALAD, *Editor-in-Chief of the Egyptian daily newspaper Al-Masry Al-Youm*, said that a better future for the Arab world was now possible, particularly as young people and a new political generation were committed to finding peaceful means for democratic evolution.

Egyptian Parliamentary elections would be held in coming months which would help launch the political reform and transition process, not only in Egypt, but hopefully across the entire region.

Independent world Arab media would continue to have a significant role as the reform process began; Western media needed to ensure that it reported facts and events accurately with a sound understanding of the region's values and culture. That would help to ensure the continued support for the reforms by all stakeholders.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

Owing to time constraints, the following delegates did not deliver their statements orally but agreed to submit them in writing for inclusion in the summary record of the meeting:

Ms. V. PARKANOVÁ (Czech Republic): With the fall of communist regimes and the end of the Cold War, it was hoped that the double standards of judging authoritarian regimes based on whether they were on friendly terms with the communist bloc or with the West had ended. However, the foreign policy of supporting "friendly dictatorships" has survived. Instead of supporting its own values, the West counted on stability guaranteed by corrupt tyrants. That was most probably because the West believed that the Arab world was beyond hope and change.

However, the Arab Spring had proved that nothing lasted forever. The Middle East and North Africa had risen up against dictators and many western countries were faced with a dilemma: how to signal support for people who revolted against political oppression, corruption, social inequality and a distant political elite while appearing not to abandon their traditional allies. The clash of idealism and pragmatism within the foreign policy therefore led to confusion and an inability to deal with current developments.

Undoubtedly the events of the Jasmine Revolution did not mean an automatic victory for democracy, the rule of law and human rights in the way they were understood by western civilizations. Indeed, in Tunisia, modernity met with traditional ways of life, and universality and openness with strict religious rules and demands. Instead of a prosperous life, to which most people aspired, the changes in society could trigger further social turbulence, periods of instability and uncertainty and an overall degradation of already poor living standards.

The international community must shift from supporting friendly dictatorships to supporting good governance strategies. The West should refrain from exporting and imposing its values; countries should be encouraged to seek their own paths. That was the lesson the West should learn from the Arab Spring.

Mr. K. TEKELEBERHAN (Ethiopia): Economic empowerment and equal opportunities were critical for advancing peace and security and economic growth. Peace and security could be sustained through democracy and good governance.

Governments should work towards fulfilling citizen demands for accountable and transparent governance systems. Access to economic and political resources should be guaranteed to all members of society. Freedom of expression and the right to political participation should be respected; all members of society should have an equal opportunity to participate in their country's political and economic affairs without discrimination.

Ethiopia had made major strides since starting a new path to democracy, peace and development. It had adopted a federal system based on principles of self-determination, pluralistic democracy, respect for fundamental freedoms and rights, and the rule of law.

The federal constitutional system has enabled Ethiopia to promote unity in diversity by guaranteeing the right of people to self-administration and recognizing their cultural, historical and linguistic heritages. The success implementation of a decentralized federal administration

saw decisions affecting the lives of communities being taken by their own elected representatives, including at the lowest levels of administration. That participatory political decision-making process had ensured equal access to various social services, including education and health.

The central lesson from recent events in the Middle East and North Africa was that the right to political participation and economic opportunities should be respected. Parliamentarians had a particular responsibility to learn from history and set a framework for prosperity and peace.

Mr. A. YAPUTRA (Indonesia): Good governance was an indicator of democracy and closely related to how power was exercised. It was, among other things, transparent, accountable, participatory, effective and efficient, as well as responsive.

Political upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa had shown that failure of governments to implement tenets of good governance could lead to political imbalance and social instability.

Such upheavals were caused by factors such as socio-economic instability, or political motivation to end a regime. In 1997–1998, Indonesia experienced what many countries in the Middle East and North Africa were facing today. Following an economic recession, the Indonesian people had demanded an end to authoritarian regime. The amended Indonesian Constitution now provided for clear separation of powers and other strong State institutions.

Good governance could be used as a means of advancing peace and security. Through the promotion of transparency, accountability, responsibility and the rule of law, the social, economic and political barriers that threaten peace and security could be removed.

The Indonesian Parliament had enacted laws on public information, freedom of the press and the eradication of corruption. At the global level, Indonesia had ratified the UN Convention against Corruption and had recently joined with other countries in an open government partnership to promote good governance.

Mr. C. WEERAKKODY (Sri Lanka): Since its inception in 1889, the IPU had made a significant contribution towards promoting good governance worldwide. The large number of parliamentarians and delegates at this Assembly was a reflection of the importance and recognition accorded to the functions of worldwide parliaments and parliamentarians.

Former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, stated that good governance was perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development and a key element of ensuring peace, stability and security. That statement was perhaps more true today than when it was articulated in the late 1990s.

The concept of good governance was as old as civilization. Key attributes were participation, predictability, responsiveness, the rule of law, equity, strategic vision and leadership. Good governance was critical to any form of government and should not be neglected.

There was an indisputable correlation between good governance and peace and security. The former also led to economic, social and political advancement and empowerment, thus diminishing the likelihood of instability.

The world had witnessed regime changes in Tunisia and Egypt, but instability and internal strife continued in Bahrain, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Those events showed the monumental evolution in the political tapestry of the region. Good governance should be applied to the entire international community.