


PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

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<b>13<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT</b> <b>(SECOND SESSION)</b>	

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**REPORT OF THE 146<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-  
PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU) AND RELATED MEETINGS  
HELD IN MANAMA, KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN  
11<sup>TH</sup> TO 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2023**

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Clerks Chambers,  
Parliament Buildings,  
**NAIROBI.**  
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## PREFACE

### Honourable Speaker,

1. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the world organization of Parliaments, is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue, co-operation and action. The Union advances democracy and assists Parliaments and parliamentarians throughout the world to fulfill their mandates. The Assembly is made up of 179 member parliaments. The IPU facilitates parliamentary debate, dialogue and cooperation and also promotes and defends democracy and the rule of law while assisting Parliaments in coping with growing international agenda relevant to their duties.
2. The IPU Assembly is the principle statutory body that expresses the views of the Inter Parliamentary Union on political issues. It brings together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations for parliamentary and governmental action. The Assembly meets twice a year and is held each time in a different country, providing participants with an opportunity to see various national realities.
3. The 146<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly and related meetings took place from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2023, in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain. The theme of this year's general debate was '**Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: fighting intolerance**' .
4. The 146<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly inaugural ceremony took place at the Exhibition World Bahrain, Manama, on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 at 7.00 pm., with His Excellency Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister of Bahrain; Mr. Duarte Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union; Mr. Martin Chungong Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union; Mr. Ahmed bin Salman Al-Musalam, Speaker of the Council of Representatives; Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, former President of the United Nations General Assembly; and Ms. Franca Ma-Ih Sulem Yong, President of Afrogiveness Movement and Positive Youths Africa (PYA) in attendance.
5. H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister of Bahrain, speaking on behalf of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, welcomed delegates and wished them a pleasant stay in Bahrain. He averred that the theme of the Assembly, **Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance**, had been chosen to reflect the history of Bahrain as a meeting place of cultures living together in harmony. Further,

he stated that in world was facing multiple crises of hatred, enmity, war, terrorism, natural disasters, climate change, and threats to water and food leaders and parliamentarians needed to work in partnership towards a more just, equitable and secure world.

6. The Deputy Prime Minister also stated that Parliamentary diplomacy was a cornerstone of that cooperation, allowing parliamentarians to exchange experiences and work together to find more effective solutions to shared challenges. Two fundamental considerations of parliamentary diplomacy were respect for human rights, freedom and dignity, alongside respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the principle of non-intervention.
7. The Deputy Prime Minister indicated that Bahrain was a vibrant democracy, with a voter turnout of 73% in its most recent parliamentary elections, and was fully committed to human rights and the freedom of its citizens and residents. He looked forward to the Assembly reaching a consensus on the many issues on its agenda and invited delegates to spend some time discovering the reality of Bahrain.
8. Mr. Ahmed Bin Salman Almusalam, Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain, said that parliamentary diplomacy could be used to find innovative solutions to the issues the world was facing. He stated that Bahrain had been a democracy for over 100 years and was home to people of many different beliefs, cultures and ethnicities, who were nonetheless united in support of the ideals of tolerance, peace, love and coexistence. Bahrain was also a champion of interreligious dialogue and peace. The Assembly would offer the delegates present in Manama the opportunity to highlight best practices from their own parliaments, agree on collective commitments to human values, expand their horizons and join together to raise the voices of parliaments in favour of coexistence, tolerance and peace in the best interests of all humankind.
9. Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly, welcomed delegates to the land of tolerance, peace and diversity. She stated that Bahrain was home to many migrants and had extensive legislation to ensure protection of their freedoms. Bahrain's commitment to peace, love, coexistence and tolerance had been evidenced by the visit of Pope Francis to the country in November 2022. The world was facing many intertwined conflicts and crises. The recent earthquakes in the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye were mirrored by man-made "earthquakes"

stemming from coups d'état and conflict and, combined, had resulted in the displacement of millions of people. Working together, parliaments could raise the voices of the people they represent, demonstrate tolerance and peaceful coexistence, and find workable solutions to conflict. Security was the main need of humanity, and the salvation of the world lay in working towards a new culture of tolerance, hope and justice. The Assembly could be a window to that new world if delegates first acknowledged that peace was cheaper than war, and tolerance was cheaper than hatred.

10. In a video message, Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said that the Assembly was taking place at a time of many interconnected challenges. Hate speech, persecution, xenophobia and racism were on the rise and feeding off one another. The international community could address them only by joining forces, recognizing diversity, investing in social inclusion and confronting mis- and disinformation online. Parliamentarians could play a pivotal role by translating people's hopes for a fairer and more equitable society into actions, both nationally and internationally.
11. Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, invited delegates to observe a minute's silence in memory of those who had lost their lives in recent disasters and ongoing conflict. He thanked the National Assembly of Bahrain for hosting the Assembly and acknowledged the instrumental role of His Majesty the King in bringing the Assembly to fruition. He noted that the 1200 delegates from 130 Member Parliaments attending the Assembly covered the diversity of the human race in terms of culture, religion, background and political affiliation. It was particularly noteworthy that a delegation from Israel was present, which would not have been possible until very recently. Democracy should always be considered an aspiration, not a finite product. Bahrain had shown considerable progress towards becoming a fully democratic nation, especially in terms of inclusiveness and gender equality, but more could always be done. The theme of the Assembly closely echoed the IPU's vision for a world where every voice counted, and it was the responsibility of parliamentarians to respond to the expectations of all. He believed that parliamentary diplomacy, as espoused by the founders of the IPU, would be on proud display during the Assembly and that progress would be made on the many common goals of humanity.

**Honourable Speaker,**

12. During the 146<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, 136 Member Parliaments were represented. The Parliaments of the Bahamas and Kiribati also attended the Manama Assembly in an observer capacity, with a view to future affiliation. The following seven Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA-CIS), the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), the Pan-African Parliament, the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie. Observers included representatives of the United Nations and related organizations, parliamentary assemblies and associations, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; (iv) Centrist Democrat International (CDI).
13. Of the 1,205 delegates who attended the Assembly, 683 were members of parliament (661 from Member Parliaments and 22 from Associate Member delegations). Those parliamentarians included 58 Presiding Officers, 43 Deputy Presiding Officers, 233 women MPs (34.1%) and 150 young MPs (22%). In continuation of practices established at recent Assemblies, the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly was an in-person event with adaptations for hybrid participation. All of the session rooms were equipped for external engagement and remote interpretation and these technical capacities were well used throughout the Assembly.
14. **Honourable Speaker,** The Kenyan delegation to the 146<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and related meetings comprised the following-
- i) Sen. Kathuri Murungi, MGH, MP, Deputy Speaker of the Senate and Leader of Delegation
  - ii) Sen. Catherine Mumma, MP, (*Member of the Bureau of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians*)
  - iii) Hon. Millie Odhiambo, MP (Member of the IPU Committee on Human Rights of Parliamentarians)
  - iv) Hon. John Kiarie, MP (President of the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law)
  - v) Hon. Naisula Lesuuda, MP (Member of the IPU Committee on Sustainable Development)
  - vi) Hon. Rebecca Tonkei, MP (Member of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs)

- vii) Sen. Beth Syengo, MP
- viii) Sen. Raphael Chimera, MP
- ix) Hon. Joshua Kandie, MP
- x) Hon. Samuel Gachobe, MP
- xi) Hon. John Njuguna, MP
- xii) Hon. Muge Cynthia Jepkosgei, MP.
- xiii) Mr. Mohamed Ali, Deputy Clerk, Senate,/ Member ASGP
- xiv) Mr. Kipkemoi Arap Kirui, Ag. Director, Legislative and Procedural Services (National Assembly)
- xv) Mr. Zakayo Mogere, Deputy Director, L&P Services, Senate
- xvi) Ms. Angela Macharia, Clerk Assistant I, Secretary to the Delegation (Senate)
- xvii) Ms. Perpetual Muiga, Clerk Assistant I, Secretary to the Delegation (National Assembly)
- xviii) Ms. Nancy Kawira Mwititi, Secretary, Deputy Speaker's Office (Senate)

15. During the Assembly and its related meetings, members of the Kenya delegation were actively involved in the deliberations that greatly enriched the resolutions. In his contribution during the General Assembly, the Honourable Deputy Speaker of the Senate, urged the legislators to work together to promote understanding, respect, and inclusion, in order to create a more peaceful and just society where everyone is valued and respected.

**Honourable Speaker,**

16. On behalf of the delegation, I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your support in ensuring that Kenya was well represented during the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

**Honourable Speaker,**

17. Article 7 of the IPU Statutes mandates Members of the IPU to submit the resolutions of the IPU within their respective Parliament, in the most appropriate form; to communicate them to the Government; to stimulate their implementation and to inform the IPU Secretariat, as often and fully as possible, particularly in its annual reports, of the steps taken and the results obtained.



18. In accordance with Article 7 of the Statutes of the IPU, it is my pleasure and humble duty to submit this report, highlighting the proceedings, declaration and resolutions of the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Related Meetings to Parliament for noting and necessary action.



**SEN. KATHURI MURUNGI, MGH, M.P.**  
**LEADER OF THE DELEGATION**

**DATED.....26.04.2023.....**

## **REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 146<sup>TH</sup> INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU) ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS HELD IN MANAMA, KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN FROM 11<sup>TH</sup> TO 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2022**

### **A. BACKGROUND: ABOUT THE IPU**

1. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was established in 1889 as the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue. It exists to protect and build global democracy through political dialogue and concrete action. The current membership is 179 parliaments and 12 associate members. The IPU works closely with the United Nations and other partner organizations with similar ideals. To this end, the IPU aims at -
  - i) Fostering contacts, coordination and the exchange of experience among Parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;
  - ii) Considering questions of international interest and express its views on such issues with the aim of bringing about action by Parliaments and their members;
  - iii) Contributing to the defence and promotion of human rights, which are universal in scope and respect for which is an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development; and
  - iv) Contributing to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.
2. The IPU's main areas of activity are representative democracy, international peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian law, women in politics and education science and culture.
3. The IPU Assembly is the principle statutory body that expresses the views of the Inter Parliamentary Union on political issues. It brings together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations for parliamentary and governmental action. The Assembly meets twice a year and is held each time in a different country, providing participants with an opportunity to see various national realities.
4. The organs of the IPU are the Assembly, the Governing Council, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat. IPU also works through committees, working groups and other *ad hoc* bodies. The following committees and bodies are currently in place:

- i) Standing Committee on Peace and International Security;
- ii) Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade;
- iii) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights;
- iv) Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs;
- v) Committee on Human Rights of Parliamentarians;
- vi) Committee on Middle East Questions;
- vii) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus;
- viii) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law;
- ix) Advisory Group on Health;
- x) Gender Partnership Group;
- xi) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism;
- xii) Forum of Women Parliamentarians; and
- xiii) Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

5. The current President of the IPU is Mr. Duarte Pacheco from Portugal.

## **B. INTRODUCTION**

6. At the invitation of the Parliament of Bahrain, the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the IPU and its related meetings was held in Manama, Bahrain, from Saturday, 11 to Wednesday, 15 March 2023.
7. All IPU statutory bodies, including the Governing Council, Standing Committees, Committees on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and on Middle East Questions, as well as the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the Forum of Young MPs, convened during this Assembly. The General Debate focused on the overall theme of ***“Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance”*** and provided a platform for delegates to deliberate, exchange views and galvanize parliamentary action in this area.

## **C. AGENDA OF THE 146<sup>TH</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY**

8. The following outlines the Agenda of the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly -
  - i. Election of the President of the 146th Assembly
  - ii. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
  - iii. General Debate on the theme Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance
  - iv. Special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions
  - v. Cyberattacks and cybercrimes: The new risks to global security (Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
  - vi. Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests (Standing Committee on Sustainable Development)
  - vii. Reports of the Standing Committees
  - viii. Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development for the 148th Assembly and appointment of the co-Rapporteurs.

#### **D. GENERAL DEBATE: PROMOTING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES: FIGHTING INTOLERANCE**

9. During the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly, 151 parliamentarians from 116 Member Parliaments, including 42 Presiding Officers and 24 young parliamentarians, as well as representatives of three Associate Members and eight permanent observers, contributed to the General Debate.
10. Mr. A. Bin Salman Almusalam, Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain, opened the General Debate on 12 March 2023, recalling that, in his video address during the inaugural ceremony the previous day, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had called upon parliamentarians to work towards peace, stability and inclusiveness and to fight against extremism, violence and terrorism. Parliamentarians had to work together to find a vision that took account of the difficult global context, stepped up multilateral cooperation and proposed innovative solutions in the interests of sustainable development. With up to 200 million people set to be displaced by climate change by 2025, protection of the environment was a priority in safeguarding the future of humanity. The participation of women in politics and society at large was also essential, as already reflected in the IPU's work over many years. There were many opportunities to strengthen sustainable development through reforms of legislation in favour of greater prosperity for States and their people. Human rights were a pillar of social justice and particular attention was needed for vulnerable groups, such as children and the poor. Parliaments needed to reinforce their cooperation, uniting their efforts in favour of development and peace, and paving the way for dialogue to eliminate the many threats facing the world.
11. Mr. D. Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, said that, alongside the crises of war, the climate emergency and a faltering global economy, humanity was also facing a crisis of solidarity. Xenophobia, racism and other forms of bigotry were rife and social media was facilitating their spread. Regulation of social media was needed in the same way that regulation of road traffic was needed, to keep everyone safe. Parliamentarians needed to set an example by showing respect for one another both within their parliaments and on the international stage. The IPU had a long history of promoting peaceful coexistence and tolerance, and the concepts were evident in every area of its Strategy. The theme of the General Debate was of particular relevance in a country like Bahrain, where people of many different cultures and backgrounds lived together side by side. The COVID-19

pandemic had demonstrated that the world was small: on the one hand allowing the disease to spread rapidly but on the other allowing scientists from around the globe to come together to develop vaccines. The IPU was playing its part in fighting extremism and xenophobia by bringing people from all countries, religions and cultures together to work for a better world for all.

12. In a video message, Ms. N. Ghanea, United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief said that the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief defined many of the concepts relevant to the theme of the General Debate. The Declaration states that every individual is worthy of rights and dignity by virtue of being human, and States and other actors have a responsibility to give access to those rights. The 2012 Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence was another reference document for the theme. In implementing that plan, parliamentarians had a unique and critical responsibility in ensuring that such acts were prohibited and that tolerance for all members of society was advanced in the interests of coexistence, human rights and peace.
13. Ms. F. Ma-Ih Sulem Yong, President of Afrogiveness Movement and Positive Youths Africa (PYA), expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to share her message of tolerance with delegates at the Assembly. She believed in the divine power of forgiveness and had dedicated her life to advancing tolerance, forgiveness, empathy and human fraternity. In an era where religion, culture, ethnicity, gender and race were triggers of conflict, peaceful coexistence was more complex than it needed to be. Many parliamentarians were complicit in cultures where greed, envy and discontent were left to linger. All forms of intolerance were based on the desire to view oneself as superior to others. She believed that peace education could change the world and that parliaments should not shy away from legislation based on the values of gratitude, integrity, kindness and love. Good mental health was also an important consideration, as conflicts were always conceived in the minds of human beings.
14. Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, said that the theme of the General Debate was important and timely, as evidenced by rampant discrimination and violence around the world, not least in her own country. Intolerance was always a losing game, often leading to violence and threatening the foundations of democracy.

Gender-based violence was an alltoo-common manifestation of intolerance. The cure for intolerance was inclusion and empowerment, leaving no one behind. Political inclusion remained elusive, with the majority of MPs, ministers and leaders around the world still being male. The world urgently needed women as role models for peaceful coexistence, inclusive societies and tolerance. The strength of parliamentarians lay in collective action and it was their responsibility to promote tolerance, inclusion and equality.

15. Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, said that the young generation saw many challenges in the future but knew that all generations must work together to address them. The exclusion of any sector of society led to inequality, alienation, intolerance and mistrust, and ultimately to violence and conflict. Young people remained largely excluded from the political sphere, with less than 3% of parliamentarians worldwide under the age of 30. Young people expected greater representation and wanted to work across the generations. Two of the pledges in the IPU's I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament campaign were of particular relevance to the theme of the General Debate: on implementing youth quotas to ensure that young people had a seat at the decision-making table, and on channelling youth perspectives into parliamentary work. The link between inclusive politics and peace was clear. Parliaments must lead by example and be models for inclusion, including for young people.
16. Mr. A. Vitorino, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), said that the focus of the 146th IPU Assembly could not have been more relevant, given the rise of conflicts and social unrest that were catalysts for racism and discrimination. Parliamentarians, as elected representatives, had a responsibility to create avenues to de-escalate conflict and build pathways to steer communities away from intolerance and towards peaceful coexistence. The IOM was committed to supporting social cohesion, particularly in conflict-affected areas, with a view to building peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies. The IOM was working towards a holistic migrant integration approach that would go beyond migrants' access to services to ensure genuinely positive contact between migrants and local communities. Parliamentarians should foster a balanced and rights-based narrative about migration and set the standards for inclusive governance.
17. Ms. G. Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), underscored that the world was currently responding to an unprecedented movement of refugees aggravated

by the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine, and the devastating earthquake in Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic. Parliamentarians had an essential role in responding to this phenomenon. As elected representatives, they could reach out to multiple stakeholders like NGOs, the private sector, faith groups and cities to advance refugee protection. MPs should hold their governments accountable and ensure that multi-year budget allocations for inclusive and responsive refugee programmes were approved so the international community could step up efforts to support refugees and host countries.

18. Ms. B. Mathieson, Deputy Chair of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence, recalled Bahrain's long-standing experience with the peaceful coexistence of diverse cultures and faiths and reaffirmed the commitment of Bahrain to religious freedom, especially in the context of present threats to peace, such as terrorism, extremism and hate crimes. Peaceful coexistence was impossible without freedom of religion or belief, not just from a human rights perspective but also from an economic perspective, as research had shown a correlation between the religious freedom index and the economic prosperity of a country. The Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration, originally adopted in 2017, had made a fundamental contribution to countering threats to peace by calling for religious freedom for all, and the work of the King Hamad Centre was based on this Declaration. She concluded her statement by calling on IPU Member Parliaments to endorse and accept the Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration in the framework of their collective action to promote inclusion and peaceful coexistence, and to extinguish the flames of intolerance.
19. Sen. Kathuri Murungi, MP, Deputy Speaker, Senate gave his statement. In the statement, he averred that inclusion and peaceful coexistence can be achieved by governments if underlying factors such as poverty, marginalization, environmental degradation and corruption are addressed. Parliaments should ensure equitable distribution of resources and put in place programmes geared towards reducing socio-economic inequalities as well as allocation of funds to the course. Further, he stated that creating a peaceful and inclusive society requires acceptance of all forms of diversity. Parliament through their oversight role, should ensure governments put in place policies that promote diversity. In concluding, Sen. Kathuri emphasized the need to promote peace and inclusive societies as an essential tool in curbing intolerance.





*Sen. Kathuri Murungi, MP, Deputy Speaker of the Senate, issuing his Statement at the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly*

#### **E. CHOICE OF AND DEBATE ON THE EMERGENCY ITEM**

20. On 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2023, the President informed the Assembly that the following six requests for the inclusion of an emergency item had been proposed-
- i. The urgent need to combat violence against women in politics, particularly in light of the proliferation of hate speech, fake news and violent incidents (Request submitted by the delegation of Argentina);*
  - ii. Criminalizing contempt for religions and the spreading of hatred, and promoting coexistence, tolerance, peace and international security (Request submitted by the delegation of Qatar);*
  - iii. Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples (Request submitted by the delegations of Argentina, Chile, Germany, Netherlands and Ukraine, with the support of GRULAC and the 12+ Group) ;*
  - iv. Combating Islamophobia, fighting intolerance, eliminating racial discrimination, and promoting peaceful coexistence among peoples and religions (Request submitted by the delegation of Indonesia);*
  - v. Creation of a global fund for countries vulnerable to natural disasters to address loss and damage from climate change (Request submitted by the African Group); and*

*vi. Call for urgent action to stop aggression, occupation and massive human rights violations in the DRC in order to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity (Request submitted by the delegation of the DRC).*

21. Following brief presentations on the emergency item, the Assembly proceeded with a roll-call vote on the six items. The proposal put forward by the Argentina was adopted and added to the agenda.

### **Debate on the emergency item**

22. The debate on the emergency item Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children on the emergency item was held in the morning of 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023, with Ms. N.N. Mapisa-Nqakula, Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, in the Chair. In all, 13 delegations took the floor during the debate, namely Syrian Arab Republic, Armenia, Portugal, Peru, Ukraine, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Poland, Netherlands, France, South Africa, the World Health Organization (WHO) and Chile (one of the authors of the proposal).

23. While the draft resolution referred to the humanitarian crises in various countries, many delegates focused on the war in Ukraine. Two delegates referred to the situation of Nagorno-Karabakh. Another emphasized that the draft resolution was intended to have a larger scope and added that the IPU, which had already extensively discussed the war in Ukraine at the 144<sup>th</sup> and 145<sup>th</sup> Assemblies, should not focus solely on the situation in Ukraine, since other wars and conflicts currently in progress were also important. Another delegate underscored the importance of teaching human rights and humanitarian issues at school. One delegate, referring to the situation of many refugees who had been forced to leave their home countries, reminded participants that they should not be indifferent to refugee issues since they could all easily find themselves in a similar situation. Chile, one of the authors of the proposal, recapped the discussion, saying that all delegates wanted peace and urging his fellow parliamentarians to send a clear signal to the world through the emergency item resolution.

24. The Assembly referred the emergency item to a drafting committee made up of representatives of Belarus, Canada, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mexico, Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Senegal and Seychelles.

## **Adoption of the resolution on the emergency item**

25. The Assembly adopted the resolution in plenary by consensus on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023,. Following the adoption of the resolution, the delegation of Yemen expressed a reservation on the entire resolution. It stated that the resolution excluded Palestine, which had a huge number of refugees. The Secretary General clarified that the resolution referred to Palestine in preambular paragraph 27. The delegation from India abstained from supporting the resolution in its entirety. The delegations from Chad and Mali requested that their countries also be mentioned in the final resolution. The delegation from Niger requested that Niger itself, as well as all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, also be added to the resolution. The IPU Secretary General clarified that preambular paragraph 27 already mentioned Mali and suggested that Chad and Niger be added to that paragraph<sup>1</sup> . He also clarified that the list of countries mentioned in the resolution was not exhaustive: the drafting committee had in fact used the expression "not limited to" in the same paragraph so as to make the list open-ended.



*From right to left: Sen. Catherine Mumma, MP, Mr. Zakayo Mogere, Deputy Director Legislative and Procedural Services, Senate, Sen. Kathuri Murungi, MP, Deputy Speaker, Senate, Hon. Joshua Kandie, MP, Hon. Millie Odhiambo, MP, Sen. Beth Syengo, MP and Hon. Rebecca Tonkei, MP during the debate at the occasion of the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly*

### **Special accountability segment**

26. For the third consecutive Assembly, the General Debate included a special accountability segment, chaired by the IPU President. On this occasion, delegations were invited to contribute with interventions on their actions to advance the IPU's climate-related declarations, resolutions and outcome documents, in line with the IPU's strategic focus on climate change and accountability at all levels, as well as the launch of the Parliaments for the Planet campaign. In this context, the IPU President emphasized that an important objective of the Organization was to nurture a culture of mutual accountability on all levels: within Member Parliaments, between Member Parliaments and their constituents, and between Member Parliaments at the international level. He reminded delegates that each year a selected number of parliaments from all geopolitical groups was scheduled to report on parliamentary follow-up to IPU resolutions and decisions and encouraged the Members scheduled for the 2023 exercise to do so.
27. A total of 22 delegations took the floor to report on their good practices and the activities they had undertaken in follow-up to recent climate-relevant IPU decisions, including the Nusa Dua Declaration Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change (144th IPU Assembly), the resolution Addressing climate change (141st IPU Assembly), and the outcome documents of the parliamentary meetings on the occasion of COP26 (November 2021) and COP27 (November 2022). Six delegations shared climate-relevant multimedia content that was screened during the segment.
28. Delegates from Belgium, Portugal and Ukraine prompted all Member Parliaments to follow up on the IPU resolutions Condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine and of the subsequent annexation of territories, in defence of the territorial integrity of all States (145th IPU Assembly), and Peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, respecting international law, the Charter of the United Nations and territorial integrity (144th IPU Assembly).
29. In closing, the IPU President thanked the delegates who had participated in this segment and encouraged all Members to actively engage in the upcoming reporting exercise. A similar accountability segment will be convened in the context of the 147th Assembly.

## **Concluding sitting of the Assembly**

30. At the concluding sitting on 15 March 2023, Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze (Bahrain) and Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname) introduced the Manama Declaration on Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance. The Assembly unanimously endorsed the Manama Declaration. Mr. M.B.M. Al-Ahbabi (Qatar), co-Rapporteur of the resolution of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, presented the resolution Cybercrimes: The new risks to global security. The Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus with reservations expressed by India on one paragraph and by the Russian Federation on two paragraphs.
31. Ms. A. Mulder (Netherlands), co-Rapporteur of the resolution of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, presented the resolution Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests. The Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus with reservations expressed by India on 13 paragraphs and by the Russian Federation on one paragraph.
32. The Assembly took note of the reports of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, presented by its President, Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname), and of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs presented by its acting President, Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland). The delegation of Iraq took the floor to highlight the call it had made during a sitting of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights for increased protection of Muslims around the world. The Assembly approved the subject items for the resolutions to be drafted by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, for adoption at the 148th IPU Assembly, together with the rapporteurs that would be working on the draft resolutions . A short promotional video on the 147th IPU Assembly, to be held from 23 to 27 October 2023 in Luanda, Angola, was shown.
33. At the conclusion of the Assembly, the representatives of the geopolitical groups took the floor: Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) on behalf of the African Group, Mr. A.R. Al-Salihi (Iraq) on behalf of the Arab Group, Mr. M. Dick (Australia) on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, Mr. Y. Bolgert (Kazakhstan) on behalf of the Eurasia Group, Mr. B. Llano (Paraguay) on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group. They conveyed their thanks to the King of Bahrain and the Speakers of the Shura Council and of the Council

of Representatives for hosting the Assembly, as well as to the IPU President, Secretary General and Secretariat, and to all those who had contributed to the organization of Assembly, which had been held in a comfortable and warm atmosphere, conducive to producing successful outcomes. They urged delegates to convey those outcomes, all of which covered important and timely subjects, to their parliaments and to begin work to implement the recommendations therein.

34. The African Group made two proposals for amendments to the Statutes, namely the introduction of an earlier deadline for the submission of emergency item proposals to allow the geopolitical groups further time for consultation, and of the possibility for each Assembly to adopt two emergency item resolutions if Members so decided. The Asia-Pacific Group emphasized its intended engagement with non-Member Parliaments in the region in the interests of reaching universal membership of the IPU. The Twelve Plus Group lamented the revocation of visas by the Bahrain authorities for two representatives of the IPU permanent observer Human Rights Watch, who had been due to attend the Assembly, and encouraged the IPU President to respond accordingly. In his concluding remarks, the IPU President congratulated the Parliament of Bahrain on the warm reception it had given to delegates.
35. The Assembly had been intense, with many highlights: the adoption of the Manama Declaration, good progress on establishing regional offices, the adoption of an IPU anthem, and the election of a new leadership for the IPU's women and youth bodies. Regarding the proposals from the African Group regarding potential changes to the Statutes, he announced that a process would be put in place to allow submission of potential amendments by Member Parliaments for consideration at the 147th Assembly and potential adoption soon thereafter. He hoped that delegates had been able to witness first-hand the progress that Bahrain had made in recent years in the areas of democracy, tolerance, economic development and human rights.
36. In reference to the many recent disasters and ongoing crises that the world was facing, he encouraged parliaments to follow three tenets in their work: to lead by example, creating healthy, tolerant and respectful democracies, to ensure that parliaments were inclusive and fully representative of all of society, and to create laws that would uphold the rights and dignity of all. He hoped that the spirit of the Manama Assembly would endure and that

Member Parliaments would report on the many successes stemming from its outcomes in Angola in October 2023.

37. In his concluding remarks, Mr. A.B.S. Almusalam, President of the 146th Assembly and Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain, expressed his thanks to the Speakers and members of parliament in attendance for their effective contributions to and active participation in the Assembly and its related meetings. Many of the statements had shown delegates' determination to take parliamentary action to foster peaceful coexistence and dialogue. In the inaugural ceremony, His Majesty the King had urged delegates to work towards a new world economic and political order that would be more equitable and free of hate. The multilateral cooperation of IPU Member Parliaments would be vital in achieving this. The common future of humanity depended on joint action to shape a better future for all. Noting that Bahrain had been honoured to host the Assembly, he thanked the organizing committee, the IPU Secretariat and the local staff. He further thanked delegates for their participation, looked forward to seeing them again at the 147th Assembly in Luanda and declared the 146th IPU Assembly closed.

## **F. GOVERNING COUNCIL**

38. The following agenda items were considered during the meetings of the Council-

**i. Election of the President of the 146th Assembly**

At its first sitting on 12 March 2023, the Governing Council proposed that Mr. A.B.S. Almusalam, Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain, be elected President of the 146th IPU Assembly.

**ii. Report of the IPU President**

The Governing Council took note of the report of the IPU President on his activities since the 145th Assembly in Kigali and expressed its gratitude for his initiatives, notably in favour of the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals and in promoting a parliamentary contribution to the resolution of the war in Ukraine.

**iii. Report of the Secretary General**

The Governing Council took note of the IPU's Impact Report for 2022 presented by the IPU Secretary General. The report provides information on the activities carried out by the IPU in 2022 to implement the IPU Strategy and on their impact. The report includes case studies presenting evidence of change implemented by parliaments with IPU support across the four policy goals identified by the Organization. All in all, in 2022, the IPU had organized 69 national support activities to build capacity in 16 countries, held 73 regional and global events to mobilize and leverage parliamentary action and facilitate learning, and released 26 publications and tools in 11 languages.

**iv. Financial situation of the IPU**

The Governing Council received a report on the financial situation of the IPU as at 31 January 2023 with an updated list of unpaid assessed contributions. The highlights of the same are as follows-

- a) The President informed the Governing Council that due to the unusually early date of this first Assembly of 2023, the external audit process was still under way and could not be completed in time for audited financial statements to be presented to the Governing Council at its current session. The Executive



Committee had therefore proposed that approval of the 2022 financial statements and of the Secretary General's financial administration be deferred until the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly of 2023. Reporting on behalf of the Executive Committee, the Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, Ms. J. Alm Ericson (Sweden), noted that the current financial situation of the IPU was healthy and stable and was monitored by the Sub-Committee on Finance during its regular meetings.

- b) The Executive Committee was grateful that most IPU Members were paying their contributions in full and on time, and that 2023 payments were continuing to arrive at a steady pace. However, the list of Members with arrears remained too long. Ms. Alm Ericson encouraged all Executive Committee members to supplement the constant efforts made by the Secretary General to follow up with those parliaments in arrears by working with the Members in question through their geopolitical groups. She also encouraged new members of IPU committees to help with the mobilization of voluntary funds for activities related to the mandate of their committees, to the best of their abilities.
- c) The Secretary General supplemented the reports with additional details of the financial situation to date and the mobilization of voluntary funds towards implementation of the IPU Strategy. Voluntary funding remained at about one quarter of total revenue, providing a strong and important base for expanding the IPU's programmes while avoiding the risk of over-dependence on external support.

**v. Regional offices of the IPU**

The Secretary General gave an account of the progress made on the negotiations regarding the establishment of regional offices in Uruguay and Egypt. The highlights of the same are as follows-

- a) Exchanges of draft host agreements had taken place between the IPU Secretariat and the Host Governments. These would constitute the first step and once signed would be followed by operational agreements between the IPU Secretariat and the Host Parliaments.

- b) The President of the African Group expressed concern that the African Group had not been consulted about the opening of a regional office in Egypt. This concern stemmed from the fact that the Egyptian Parliament was a member of both the Arab and African Groups and that Egypt was situated on the African continent. A delegate of Zimbabwe explained that while the office would serve the Arab Group, it would also be able to serve the African Group. A delegate of South Africa reminded the Council that the regional offices were only at the stage of pilot projects and that the omission of consultation with the African Group should be corrected. At the final sitting of the Governing Council, the President of the African Group reported that an agreement had been reached with the Parliament of Egypt clarifying that the regional office in Egypt would represent both the African Group and the Arab Group on an equal footing. This was confirmed by the Speaker of the Parliament of Egypt.
- c) The Governing Council gave the Secretary General the authority to proceed with further consultations and to conclude the relevant agreements when he was able to ascertain that all the requirements adopted at the Kigali Assembly had been met.

**vi. Cooperation with the United Nations**

When the Governing Council adopted the work plan for the IPU's political project at the United Nations during the Kigali Assembly, it gave the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs some time to consult and report back on its mandate and working methods. Following discussions in Kigali and during a virtual meeting in January 2023, the Bureau of the Standing Committee agreed on a new mandate and new working methods. These were presented at and adopted by the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs during its session on 14 March 2023 and, on the Executive Committee's recommendation, subsequently approved by the Governing Council.

**vii. Questions relating to IPU Membership and observer status**

- a. On the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Governing Council approved the request of the Parliament of Liberia to rejoin the IPU.
- b. The Governing Council also approved the amendments to the Practical modalities of the rights and responsibilities of observers at IPU

meetings, aimed at aligning the conditions of this status with the growing number of requests received.

- c. The Governing Council endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee not to accept the request for observer status from the League of Parliamentarians for Al Quds and took note that the Executive Committee had upheld its decision of October 2022 not to accept the request of the Association of Secretaries General of Arab Parliaments for observer status.
- d. The Governing Council was apprised of the situation of certain parliaments and adopted a number of recommendations from the Executive Committee. These were divided into the following three categories which were; non-functioning parliaments; transitional parliaments; and political instability with the potential to impact the functioning of parliament.
- e. The first category included Afghanistan, where the Governing Council noted that the situation had worsened since its last sitting. Many parliamentarians who had fled the country following the takeover by the Taliban were still in exile. The Governing Council noted with grave concern the deteriorating human rights situation and the denial of education to women in the country. The Governing Council made a strong appeal for urgent action, including by parliaments, to remedy the situation by keeping channels of dialogue open. In the meantime, the Governing Council decided to maintain its previous decision on the status of Afghanistan within the IPU, which was to allow members of the dissolved Parliament to participate in IPU Assemblies in a non-voting observer capacity.
- f. In Haiti, the Governing Council learned that the mandate of the Senate, the only remnant of the Parliament of Haiti, had expired in January 2023. In the absence of elections to the House of Representatives, the country stood critically deprived of parliamentary representation. The Governing Council took note of the situation and, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, urged the authorities of Haiti to organize elections later in 2023 as foreseen.
- g. No change had occurred to the situation of the parliamentarians of Myanmar, who had not been able to meet in person since the military

coup. Several of them had been sentenced to death and executed. Most were still in exile and had constituted themselves as the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), which held remote sittings. The Governing Council decided to maintain its previous decision and, in solidarity with those elected parliamentarians, to allow members of the CRPH to participate in IPU Assemblies in a non-voting observer capacity. The Governing Council also renewed its strong call to stop the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingyas and encouraged the strengthening of global efforts, including by parliamentarians, in support of that call.

- h. The Governing Council was apprised of the status quo in Sudan, which had been suspended from the IPU since 2019 following the military coups that had resulted in suspension of the Parliament. The Governing Council expressed its concern as the elections promised had not taken place. The Governing Council decided to maintain the suspension of the Parliament of Sudan until such time as elections had taken place and a fully fledged Parliament could be welcomed back to the IPU.
- i. Burkina Faso was first in the second category. The Governing Council was pleased to learn about the efforts made by the IPU to engage with the authorities of Burkina Faso in view of a return to constitutional order. Upon the invitation of the IPU Secretary General, a delegation led by the Speaker of the Transitional Legislative Assembly (TLA) had visited the IPU Headquarters in Geneva on 9 February 2023. During that visit, the Secretariat of the IPU and the TLA had agreed to work together closely to support the TLA in the execution of its mandate, by setting out a road map for implementing the recommendations of the IPU governing bodies. In addition, the TLA delegation had met with the Executive Committee on the occasion of the 146th IPU Assembly in Manama. The delegation had used that opportunity to express gratitude to the IPU governing bodies for keeping open channels of dialogue and cooperation during the difficult times the country was facing. The delegation had given assurances to the Executive Committee that it would comply with the recommendations of the IPU governing bodies and respect the timeframe for a return to normality by July 2024. In light of this commitment, the Governing Council endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee to maintain the membership of Burkina Faso and to urge the authorities to scale

up efforts to implement the road map, with a view to its completion by July 2024.

- j. The Governing Council was informed that, in Chad, the consultations undertaken by the Transitional National Council (CNT) with various stakeholders to draft a new constitution were still underway. New elections were to be held by October 2024. The Governing Council also heard an update on the technical assistance that the IPU was providing to the staff of the CNT as per the Governing Council's recommendations to support this transitional body. The Governing Council took note of this development and, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, agreed to maintain the previous position of the IPU governing bodies, expressing the strong wish that the process in place should be accelerated with a view to organizing elections as planned.
- k. For Guinea, the Governing Council was informed that the transitional period established by the military authorities had been reduced to 24 months starting from January 2023. Since the beginning of the crisis, the IPU governing bodies had decided to maintain the membership of Guinea and to provide support to the transitional legislative body of the country to work towards a return to constitutional order. The IPU Secretary General had been engaged in discussions with the body and the Speaker was very keen to move ahead with this undertaking. A delegation was planning to come to Geneva to explore avenues to implement the initial recommendations of the governing bodies. In the meantime, the Governing Council endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee to maintain its previous position, i.e. to maintain the membership of Guinea and to continue to engage with the transitional legislative body with a view to speedy recovery and a return to constitutional order.
- l. Regarding Mali, the Transitional National Council (CNT) was functioning as a legislative body and had adopted an electoral law that was promulgated in June 2022. However, the constitutional referendum foreseen for March 2023 had been postponed. Nonetheless, parliamentary elections were due to take place in October and November 2023 so it was hoped that by the end of 2023 a parliament would have been established in Mali. The Governing Council took note of this development and endorsed the recommendation of the Executive

Committee to urge the Secretary General to continue engaging with the CNT, including through the provision of technical assistance.

- m. Concerning Libya, the Governing Council learned with regret that there was still a multiplicity of governance institutions in the country, as well as a continuing reluctance to actually organize elections as foreseen by the political authorities. The Governing Council was informed that the Secretariat of the IPU was continuing to monitor the situation closely and took note that the parliament recognized by the IPU, based in Tobruk, had now moved to Benghazi. The Governing Council endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee to urge the Libyan authorities to organize elections as soon as possible and resolved to review the situation at the 147th IPU Assembly. The Governing Council also took note of the request of the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives for increased assistance from the IPU.
- n. In South Sudan, disagreements between the different political parties had been resolved and the opposition, which had boycotted the proceedings of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA), had resumed their participation in the work of that Assembly. A constitutional drafting process was in place and was due to conclude in February 2024. Discussion on the support the IPU could bring to the TNLA was under way. The Governing Council took note of these positive developments and encouraged the authorities to continue to work along those lines with a view to bringing about a return to normality in the country.
- o. In the third category, Guinea-Bissau had experienced a long crisis worsened by a recurrent conflict between the executive and legislative branches. Elections had been due to take place following the dissolution of the Parliament in May 2022, but had not yet materialized. The Governing Council took note of the situation and expressed the strong wish that elections be scheduled to take place soon so that it could welcome a new fully fledged Parliament to the IPU.
- p. In Palestine, elections had been due to take place in 2022 but had not gone ahead because of several obstacles raised by a variety of stakeholders in the region. No new dates had been set for those elections. The Governing Council took note of the situation and, as in the past, called for elections to take place as soon as possible. The

Governing Council also took note of the information shared by the Deputy Speaker of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) related to the contingencies for the organization of those elections. The Governing Council reiterated its call for both Israel and Palestine to engage in a strengthened dialogue to find appropriate solutions.

- q. Concerning Tunisia, following the adoption of a new Constitution in July 2022, elections took place in December 2022 and January 2023, albeit with low turnout. On the recommendation of the governing bodies of the IPU, the Secretary General had engaged with the Tunisian authorities, including the Head of State, the Ambassador in Geneva and, most recently in a conversation in Geneva, with the Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Those stakeholders had confirmed that they welcomed the IPU's support with a view to bringing about more stability in the country and more stringent parliamentary efforts to help the governance process in Tunisia. Taking note of those developments, the Governing Council asked the Secretariat to engage with the newly elected Parliament.
- r. The Governing Council was apprised of the recent developments in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, including agreements between the Maduro regime and the opposition. In recent municipal elections, the opposition had won several seats including in Maduro strongholds. Recently, a delegation of the National Assembly elected in 2020 had visited the IPU Headquarters and briefed the Secretary General on the current political developments, giving assurances that things were moving in the right direction. The Governing Council endorsed the dialogue and expressed its wish that the IPU continue to engage with both the National Assembly elected in 2015 and that elected in 2020, and that it accept a delegation from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as observers to IPU Assemblies only if composed of members of both those Assemblies. The Governing Council also wished to express the IPU's availability to engage in dialogue with all parties to support progress towards open and transparent elections.
- s. The last country of this third category was Yemen, where there were no developments to report. The Governing Council urged the international community to step up its efforts to resolve the ongoing crisis in Yemen.

**viii. Future Inter-Parliamentary meetings**

The Governing Council approved the list of future meetings and other activities to be funded by the IPU's regular budget and by external sources. It was confirmed that the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly would take place in October 2023 in Luanda, Angola and the 148<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland in March 2024.

**ix. Report on the work of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine**

- a. On 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023, the IPU Task Force met for an eighth time. Task Force members acknowledged that the situation on the ground and current geopolitics did not provide the necessary circumstances for a ceasefire to be implemented, nor for both parties to be brought to the same table. However, the Task Force restated its commitment to pursue spaces of dialogue in a bilateral manner, to meet more often, and to identify with both delegations possible ways to ease the humanitarian consequences of the war.
- b. It was noted that the unique strengths of the IPU included good and long-standing relations with both delegations, access to influential decision-makers, and a strong network of partnerships within the global parliamentary community. The two delegations accepted the Task Force's proposal to focus on specific points where small steps forward could be made, and expressed their interest in receiving a more detailed proposal from the Task Force.

**x. Reports of committees and other bodies**

The Governing Council approved the recommendations contained in the reports on the activities of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the Committee on Middle East Questions, the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, the Group of Facilitators on Cyprus, the Gender Partnership Group, the Advisory Group on Health, the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG), and the Working Group on Science and Technology. The Council endorsed the new appointments to those bodies. The Governing Council adopted decisions concerning 193 parliamentarians in 10 countries submitted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CHRP).



**xi. IPU Anthem**

The Governing Council approved the proposal of the Executive Committee to adopt the piece written by Mr. Pedro Halffter as the IPU Anthem. The Secretariat will commission a professional chamber orchestra to record the official version of the Anthem, which will then be played at the beginning of each IPU Assembly, starting with the 147th Assembly in Luanda, Angola.

**xii. IPU Cremer-Passy Prize**

Based on lessons learned from the first edition of the Prize and on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Governing Council approved a series of amendments to the prize Rules. The changes included integrating an evaluation matrix into the Rules, implementing a more equitable system for the distribution of the Prize Selection Board's votes, and tasking the geopolitical groups with selecting a single candidate from their regions, with a second candidate as an alternate. In line with the IPU's 2022–2026 Strategy and its focus on climate action, as well as the launch of the new IPU campaign Parliaments for the Planet during the Assembly, the Governing Council also approved the proposal by the Executive Committee to award the 2023 prize to an MP or a group of MPs who had made an outstanding contribution to climate action.

## **G. 289<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

39. The Executive Committee held its 289th session across five sittings: the first online on 5 December 2022, and the remaining four in-person in Manama, Bahrain on 9, 10 and 14 March 2023. The President of the IPU chaired the meetings. The highlights of the meetings are as follows-

### **i. Activities report by the President**

The President presented his activities over the last six months since the 145th Assembly in Kigali. His activities had been aimed at reinforcing the visibility of the IPU, supporting the implementation of the IPU Strategy and strengthening good governance. In view of achieving those objectives, the President had given many media interviews, and had always prioritized opportunities for community outreach visits. The Executive Committee concurred with the President that such visits increased the visibility of the IPU, and thanked him for his initiatives and availability for the Organization.

### **ii. Impact Report**

The Executive Committee was apprised of the first impact report of the Secretary General since the adoption of the IPU Strategy for 2022–2026. The Executive Committee highlighted the impressive statistics in this report – 69 activities had been organized in 23 countries and some 73 regional or global events had been held. The Executive Committee congratulated the Secretary General and his team on their commendable dynamism and dedication to the IPU. The Executive Committee encouraged the Secretary General to maintain this high quality of deliverables and thanked those parliaments that had hosted IPU meetings and events.

### **iii. Parliaments for the Planet**

The Executive Committee reviewed progress with this campaign, which aims at raising awareness among parliamentarians of the growing threat that climate change poses to humanity. The campaign also highlights the need for urgent action to minimize the most devastating potential impacts of climate change and help the most vulnerable people and countries.

**iv. Questions relating to IPU membership and the situation of certain parliaments**

- a. The Executive Committee noted that efforts in favour of increased membership had started to pay off and endorsed the request for reaffiliation of the Parliament of Liberia, one of the founding Members of the Organization. It also welcomed the participation in Manama of high-level delegations from the Bahamas and Kiribati in an observer capacity in view of possible future IPU membership. Members of the Executive Committee encouraged Member Parliaments to redouble their efforts to encourage the small number of national parliaments that were still missing from the IPU to join as soon as possible in the interests of universal membership.
- b. The Executive Committee was apprised of proposed amendments to the Practical modalities of the rights and responsibilities of observers at IPU meetings as requested by the governing bodies. Firstly, permanent observer status would henceforth be granted upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee following a careful examination of the structure, funding, mission statement, programme of work and track record of the organization concerned with a focus on impact and deliverables.
- c. Secondly, permanent observer status would generally be reserved for parliamentary organizations in line with the IPU's commitment to foster inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, as well as for organizations with which the IPU had established a close and mutually beneficial relationship.
- d. Thirdly, observers would henceforth be expected to pay a token registration fee, to be determined by the Executive Committee, for participation in IPU Assemblies. However, the United Nations and related organizations, as well as observers contributing directly to the programme of the Assembly, would be exempt from such fees.
- e. Finally, the categories of permanent observers would be restructured as follows: United Nations and related organizations, parliamentary assemblies or associations, international non-governmental organizations, international

political party federations, and other partner organizations. As part of the same process, it had been noted that two observers had not had any communication with the IPU Secretariat for several years and would thus be removed from the list of observers, namely the International Fund for Agricultural Department (IFAD) and the Organization of American States (OAS). The Executive Committee agreed to submit the amendments to the Governing Council for approval.

- f. The Executive Committee also considered three requests for permanent observer status. Following consultations with the delegation of Palestine, the Executive Committee decided not to accept the request of the League of Parliamentarians for Al Quds for permanent observer status. Additionally, a new request had been received from the International Parliamentarians' Congress. On this the Executive Committee decided to defer its decision pending the collection of additional information about the organization. Finally, following further consultations with the President of the Association of Secretaries General of Arab Parliaments, the Executive Committee upheld its decision of October 2022 not to accept the Association's request for observer status and propose that it continue to engage with the IPU via the global Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP).

**v. Preparations for the 146<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly**

The Executive Committee was briefed on preparations for the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The Executive Committee also took note of information from the Secretary General that the Bahraini authorities had decided to revoke the visas that had been granted to two officials of Human Rights Watch, an IPU observer, for the purposes of attending the Assembly.

**vi. Future Inter-Parliamentary meetings**

The Executive Committee reviewed the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings. Regarding the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, initially scheduled to take place in Geneva, the Executive Committee recommended holding it instead in Luanda at the invitation of the Parliament of Angola. The Executive Committee believed that holding the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Angola would be a valuable opportunity for the country, following the various tragedies it had experienced during its recent history, and

would support its efforts to rebuild democracy and the rule of law. The Executive Committee met with the Angolan organizing committee and was apprised of preparations being made for the Assembly. The members of the Executive Committee took the opportunity to request that specific attention be paid to guaranteed issuance of visas, reliable and efficient transportation arrangements, provision of accommodation at preferential rates near to the Assembly venue, and the presence of qualified medical staff to provide required care to all participants.

**vii. IPU Anthem**

Following the Governing Council's decision to introduce an IPU Anthem, the IPU Secretariat was tasked with drafting terms of reference and identifying a process. After consulting music experts, the Secretariat published a request for proposals and gave potential composers six months to submit their entries. By 31 December 2022, the IPU Secretariat had received 19 submissions. The Secretariat enlisted the help of a music expert to narrow the selection down to a shortlist of two submissions, taking into account the musical properties of each piece and its suitability as an anthem. The Executive Committee voted on those two proposals and recommended that the piece composed by Mr. Pedro Halffter become the IPU Anthem, to be played at the beginning of each IPU Assembly and other IPU events.

**viii. IPU regional offices**

At its 210<sup>th</sup> session during the 145<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda, the Governing Council had endorsed the Executive Committee's conclusion relating to the establishment of IPU regional offices. The Secretary General designated the IPU Director of Support Services to be the focal point for these consultations on his behalf. Once these discussions were concluded, the next steps would consist of drafting an agreement between the IPU and the Parliament that will address staffing, administrative and budgetary issues, as per the requirements for opening regional offices. The Executive Committee agreed that it was important to get the administrative and legal aspects in order before signing these agreements.

**ix. The IPU political project at the United Nations**

During its session in Kigali in October 2022, the Executive Committee had endorsed the roadmap for the IPU political project at the United Nations. In light of this roadmap, extensive consultations had taken place with the Bureau of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs with a view to fine-tuning its mandate and working methods. In line with the same approach used during the roadmap process, the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs submitted to the Executive Committee a document outlining proposed new modalities and working methods. The Executive Committee endorsed the modalities and working methods set out in that document and recommended that the Standing Committee continue with its work on that basis.

**x. Report on the work of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine**

The Executive Committee received an update on the work of the Task Force and took note of its recommendations and intended next steps. Further, the Executive Committee urged all IPU Member Parliaments to support the members of the Task Force in light of the importance of their work.

**xi. Working Group on Transparency, Accountability and Openness**

The Executive Committee heard the report of Ms. J. Alm Ericson (Sweden), Chair of the Working Group, on current developments in accordance with its roadmap. The Working Group was provided with a draft Code of Conduct for Governance Officials, which would upon completion, lead to amendments to the IPU Statutes to implement it. The Chair of the Working Group took note that as part of its digitalization strategy, the IPU Secretariat had prepared an IT User Policy which was shared with the Working Group. This policy would be shared within the Secretariat as an Administrative Instruction for all IPU personnel. The Secretary General also informed the members of the Executive Committee about the work on an anti-harassment policy for IPU meeting and events, which had been presented to the Gender Partnership Group for review.

**xii. IPU Cremer-Passy Prize**

Based on experience gained from the first edition of the Prize, the Executive Committee recommended that the Governing Council approves a series of proposed amendments to the Rules, including the integration of an evaluation matrix and the implementation of a more equitable system for the distribution of votes.

**xiii. Sub-Committee on Finance**

The Executive Committee heard the report of Ms. J. Alm Ericson (Sweden), Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, on the financial situation of the IPU and the mobilization of voluntary funding. The external audit process was still under way and could not be completed in time to present audited financial statements at the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The Sub-Committee therefore proposed that approval of the 2022 financial statements and that of the Secretary General's financial administration be deferred until the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

## **H. MEETINGS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **i) Standing Committee on Peace and International Security**

40. The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held three sittings from 12 to 14 March 2023, with its President, Mr. M. Al-Ahbabi (Qatar), in the chair. The Committee was entrusted with the task of debating the draft resolution on the theme *Cyberattacks and cybercrimes: The new risks to global security*.
41. During the drafting process, the Committee considered 320 amendments tabled by 27 Member Parliaments and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. One quarter of the proposed amendments and sub-amendments were taken on board. This included an amendment that proposed to change the title of the resolution to *Cybercrimes: The new risks to global security*, as the issue of cyberattacks had been removed from the final text.
42. The Bureau of the Committee held a meeting on 13 March 2023, at which it agreed to continue consultations to establish a full programme of work for the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly. At the Committee's last sitting, on 14 March 2023, the consolidated draft resolution was adopted by consensus. The Committee decided that its President would present the draft resolution to the Assembly. The draft resolution was adopted by consensus at the plenary sitting of the Assembly in the afternoon of 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2023. The Committee approved the subject item entitled "*Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*", presented by the delegations of Argentina and Belgium. The Committee elected new representatives of geopolitical groups to its Bureau, as well as endorsing the re-election of several existing members for a second two-year mandate.

### **ii) Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade**

43. The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development held its sittings on 12, 13 and 14 March 2023 with its President, Ms. A. Mulder (Netherlands), in the chair. The Committee was entrusted with the task of debating the draft resolution on the theme *Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests*. The Committee considered 150 amendments submitted by 23 Member Parliaments. The consolidated draft resolution was adopted by acclamation. At its final sitting and at the proposal of its Bureau, the Committee adopted its next subject item entitled "*Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*".



44. The Committee also approved a work plan for the next Assembly to be held in Angola. The work plan included a debate on the theme of the next resolution, an expert hearing on food security, and a segment to discuss preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in the United Arab Emirates (COP28). The Committee held elections for vacant seats on the Bureau and endorsed the nominations received from the geopolitical groups. Hon. Naisula Lesuuda, MP, MP was endorsed for re-election for a second two-year term.

### **iii) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights**

45. The Committee held two sittings. At its first sitting, held on 13 March 2023 with Bureau member Ms. J. Mahmood (Maldives) in the chair, the Committee held a debate on the theme of its next resolution, "*Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliamentarians in reducing harm*". The debate on this new form of child trafficking and modern slavery included contributions from experts and input from more than 30 delegates.

46. At its second sitting, held on 14 March 2023 with the President of the Committee, Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname), in the chair, the Committee held a debate on the theme "*Parliamentary impetus in favour of the fight against disinformation and hateful and discriminatory content in cyberspace*". The debate opened with an overview of the issues from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) followed by an expert hearing, with numerous interventions from delegates throughout the session. Delegates underscored the need to protect the amazing opportunities offered by the internet, while also creating the means to prosecute perpetrators of online harms in accordance with international human rights standards.

### **iv) Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs**

47. The Committee met on 14 March 2023, with its acting President, Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), in the chair and unanimously adopted a new mandate and new working methods. The Committee also embarked on its first campaign, an initiative to advance gender equality in the UN General Assembly. Members reviewed data on the current number of male and female Permanent Representatives, addressed national appointment processes, and considered how they might advance the discussion in their own parliaments. Gender equality in the UN General Assembly will be a recurring item on the Committee's agenda.

48. The Committee discussed parliamentary engagement in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The findings of the IPU survey on this topic were

presented, covering the results from the 42 countries that volunteered reports in 2022. Committee members expressed general concern about the weakness of parliamentary engagement in the VNR process and about very low participation in the survey by IPU Member Parliaments. The acting President urged parliaments whose governments will submit reports in 2023 to complete the IPU survey thoroughly and before the deadline, and called on parliamentarians to ensure oversight of their governments' reports to the UN. The Committee elected new representatives of geopolitical groups to its Bureau, as well as endorsing the re-election of several existing members for a second two-year mandate. Hon. Rebecca Tonkei, MP was endorsed for re-election for a second two-year term.

## I. FORUM AND BUREAU OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

49. The 35<sup>th</sup> session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians was held on 11 and 14 March 2023. It brought together 228 participants, including 186 parliamentarians (161 women and 25 men) from 66 countries and representatives from various international organizations. The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine), opened the session. The Forum elected Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez, member of the Shura Council of Bahrain and First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, to the Presidency of its 35<sup>th</sup> session.
50. As their contribution to the Assembly, the participants examined, from a gender perspective, the draft resolution before the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security entitled "*Cyberattacks and cybercrimes: The new risks to global security*". They highlighted how women and girls were targets of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, including online sexual harassment, threats, stalking, bullying and sexist hate speech. They agreed that it was urgent to prevent and address such cybercrimes with comprehensive, gender-sensitive and victim-centric legislation. It was also urgent to address the under-representation of women in the cybersecurity sector. The Forum subsequently proposed to the Standing Committee a series of amendments to the draft resolution. All the proposed amendments were included in the resolution.
51. The Forum also held a panel discussion on Parliamentary leadership in addressing insecurity and crises: Putting gender equality at the centre of water security, climate resilience and peace sustainability. Participants agreed that it was crucial to increase women's participation at all levels in these fields. Gender responsive strategies and measures were needed in water management, climate change mitigation and peace processes, as well as reconstruction and recovery efforts. At its sitting on 14 March 2023, the Forum held elections to replace half of the regional representatives, whose terms had ended, and two further regional representatives, one for the African Group and one for the Twelve Plus Group, to fill seats that had become vacant.

## **FORUM AND BOARD OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE IPU**

52. The Forum of Young Parliamentarians was held on 12 March 2023. It brought together 100 participants, including 60 parliamentarians (22 young women and 38 young men) from 58 countries, as well as representatives from various organizations. The meeting was presided over by Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. In her opening remarks, Ms. Albazar reflected on the successes of the Board over the last two years. She emphasized the importance of sustaining the new initiatives created during the Board's tenure, such as the Empowerment Series of online briefings.
53. The IPU President also attended the Forum and highlighted the importance of elevating the voice of youth in the IPU's work. Taking stock of recent developments in youth participation in their respective countries, the young MPs shared good practices on the creation of youth caucuses, the election of young politicians to leadership positions, and increased efforts by political parties to empower young MPs. The members of the Forum highlighted their commitment to the I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament! campaign and showcased efforts undertaken in its implementation. Youth overview reports to contribute youth perspectives on two draft resolutions were presented.
54. The young MPs highlighted the importance of special measures to protect young people from harm online, including through education and awareness-raising. They also underlined the holistic relationship between the environment and health, and called for more sustainable models of consumption and production. The Forum approved the nominations made by the geopolitical groups for membership of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians for the period 2023 to 2025.
55. The new Board then held a meeting, at which it elected Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom) as its President. The Forum appointed Ms. O. Rudenko (Ukraine), member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, to prepare a youth overview report on the resolution Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliamentarians in reducing harm, which will be proposed for adoption at the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. The Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, having taken stock of youth participation at the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly, resolved that there remained more work to do to further advance youth participation at the IPU, including by amending the Statutes and Rules to promote participation by younger MPs in IPU Assemblies and to enhance the attendance of Board members. Lowering the age limit to be considered a young MP was also identified as a necessary way forward.

## **J. OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

### **i) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**

56. The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians held its 171st session from 10 to 14 March 2023. During the session, the Committee examined the situation of 249 parliamentarians (30% of whom were women) in 14 countries. New cases concerning four parliamentarians were declared admissible in the following countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (two MPs) and Uganda (two MPs). One case, concerning 50 parliamentarians from South Africa, was declared inadmissible. The Committee also held 11 hearings (three of which took place online) with national delegations and complainants. The Committee submitted decisions to the Governing Council for adoption on the situation of 193 parliamentarians in the following countries: Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Senegal, Somalia, Uganda and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic).



*Hon. Millie Adhiambo, MP, speaking at the meeting of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians*

### **ii) Committee on Middle East Questions**

57. A sitting of the Committee on Middle East Questions was held on 12 March 2023, with 12 members in attendance. Members emphasized their commitment to working together based on mutual comprehension and constructive dialogue. The Committee heard a briefing on the first IPU Science for Peace Schools session, held at the European Organization for Nuclear

Research (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland, from 5 to 9 December 2022, on the theme Dealing with water scarcity: An opportunity to rebuild peace with Science.

58. The session aimed to help foster a positive environment for cooperation by proposing alternative technologies to lessen tensions related to water scarcity, thus encouraging coexistence between nations. A follow-up conference for parliamentarians would be held in Viet Nam in June 2023. The second Science for Peace Schools session would be held in July 2023, focusing on the theme of climate change. This would be followed by a conference for parliamentarians on the sidelines of COP28, which will take place in the United Arab Emirates in November and December 2023.
59. Members heard a report from the IPU Secretariat on the Committee's activities since the 145th IPU Assembly. Mr. M. Lassouaoui, from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), briefed members on the Agency's crucial role in providing aid to Palestinian refugees in the region. The IPU Secretariat briefed members on the current situation in Israel and Palestine. The Committee expressed its alarm at the critical situation following a significant surge in violence, including attacks by settlers, since the beginning of 2023, including some of the deadliest incidents in nearly 20 years.
60. Members stressed the centrality of the crisis in Israel and Palestine to the Committee's mandate and agreed to set up a focus group on Israel and Palestine. Other focus groups, including on the crises in Yemen and Libya, should also be established. Members also agreed to hold two Committee sittings at each Assembly to allow sufficient time to focus on the multiple crises occurring in the Middle East. The Committee agreed to visit the region in 2023, including Israel, Jordan and Palestine. The visit, which will aim to establish real dialogue with stakeholders and gain an in-depth understanding of the situation, will provide an opportunity to promote rapprochement and to advance reconciliation in the region.

### **iii) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law**

61. The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) met on 14 March 2023. The Committee heard an update on recent developments with regard to specific IHL and refugee crisis situations, including in Afghanistan, Myanmar and Ukraine. In general, Committee members noted with concern the multiplication of situations of conflict and the growth in the numbers of men and women, boys and girls having to flee to escape from violence and persecution. In the three countries reviewed, the great majority (70%) of those fleeing conflict were women and girls. In the case of Ukraine, this number was as high as 90%. These situations are becoming more and more complex, and new dimensions, such as the impact of climate

change, or economic and social challenges in host countries, also need to be factored in when providing assistance and support.

62. The Committee also emphasized the prevalence of gender-based violence. Impunity, including of non-State actors, and the question of war crimes were raised and will be discussed at the next session of the Committee. The Committee called on parliaments to discuss support efforts, noting that there was a strong need to build multilateral cooperation to respond to the dramatic situations faced not only in Ukraine but also in other parts of the world. Refugees from Afghanistan and Myanmar, as well as populations affected by the earthquake in the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye, need urgent help and assistance. Committee members also highlighted the need to provide support to host countries.
63. The Committee made a special plea with regard to the situation in Afghanistan. The Committee also stressed the importance of securing access to health care and education for women and girls and also discussed preparations for the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) that will be held in December 2023. The Committee also encouraged parliaments to further engage in the implementation of the GCR with new pledges. The Committee discussed work towards the universalization and implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and agreed to organize a global virtual webinar on the issue as a way to raise awareness and to support further engagement by parliaments. Additionally, the Committee discussed the Convention on Cluster Munitions and agreed to begin work towards a similar objective of universalization and effective implementation. Finally, the Committee noted that one of its members, Ms. E. Afanasieva (Russian Federation), had not attended the last three Committee sessions. In accordance with its Rules, the Committee therefore asked for the seat to be declared vacant.

#### **iv) Gender Partnership Group**

64. The Gender Partnership Group held its 47<sup>th</sup> session on 10 and 14 March 2023. In attendance were the Chair, Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), and members Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) and Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine). Mr. J.I. Echániz (Spain) joined the Group for the dialogue session with the delegation of Maldives. The Group reviewed the composition of delegations at the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly. As at 15 March 2023, 34.5% of the delegates at the Assembly were women. This was one of the highest numbers of women delegates attending any in-person IPU Assembly. In Manama, 37 delegations out of 136 (or 27.2%) were gender-balanced, namely composed of 40% to 60% women or men. This is a slight decrease relative to the last Assembly, when 29.4% of delegations were gender-balanced (35 out of 119 delegations).
65. Of the 136 delegations present, 131 were composed of at least 2 delegates, of which 21 were all-male (16%). In addition, three delegations of two or more

delegates were composed entirely of women. These 24 single-sex delegations were from the parliaments of the following States: Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, Chad, Comoros, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Italy, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, Qatar, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Somalia, Tonga, Yemen and Zimbabwe. In addition, there were five single-member delegations attending the Assembly: Lithuania, Monaco, Paraguay, Sierra Leone and Turkmenistan. 14 delegations were subject to sanctions at the Assembly, versus 11 at the last Assembly. During its session in Manama, the Group reviewed and commented upon a first draft of the IPU's Policy to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events.

66. As per its mandate, the Group held a dialogue session with the delegation of Maldives attending the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly, in view of the country's forthcoming elections in 2024. The delegation of Maldives highlighted the particular difficulties facing women in politics in the country, including cultural norms, sexist stereotypes, violence against women in politics (especially online violence), and the challenges of juggling the responsibilities of private and public life. At the 2019 elections, women's representation in parliament fell from 5.9% to 4.6%. In Maldives, there are currently 4 women and 83 men MPs. Of these four women, one is Deputy Speaker and the other three are committee chairs. Women also hold 36% of ministerial portfolios. In 2019, an electoral quota was introduced, with 30% of local council seats allocated to women. As a result, women candidates found it easier to gain election to positions of responsibility in local government at the 2021 elections. Efforts are under way to introduce quotas or temporary special measures for the 2024 legislative elections, with a view to increasing women's representation in parliament to 33%. Bringing in such measures would require support from political parties and male parliamentarians.
67. The Gender Partnership Group welcomed the exchanges and said it was heartened to see the progress made in the past four years. With the elections on the horizon, now is a pivotal moment. The Group and the IPU stand ready to provide support in terms of raising awareness, building capacities and mobilizing political will.

#### **v) Advisory Group on Health**

68. The IPU Advisory Group on Health met on 11 March 2023, with 5 out of 12 members in attendance. The Group welcomed three new members, from Ireland, Pakistan and the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as technical partners from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), UNAIDS, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Advisory Group discussed ways to strengthen the IPU's relevance in the global health arena and to implement the health component of the IPU Strategy. The Group also agreed that the



challenge of health was very broad and that it would not expand its priorities further, but instead retain and address certain key priorities.

69. The Advisory Group reflected together on the importance of human rights obligations in health-related work. The Advisory Group decided to act on its outreach mandate, agreeing to organize a field visit in 2023 to learn about and document practices related to equity in health, in particular for marginalized groups. Pakistan offered to host the Advisory Group. The Advisory Group also reflected on its rules and practices and agreed to continue this discussion with a view to further strengthening the IPU's relevance and work in the global health arena. During his report to the Governing Council, the Chair of the Advisory Group launched the joint IPUWHO handbook: *The path towards universal health coverage*. The WHO Director-General sent a video message to mark the occasion.

#### **vi) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)**

70. A meeting of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism was held on 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2023. Elections for the post of Chair and Vice-Chair were held. Mr. Monder Bouden (Algeri) was elected as Chair and Ms. Agnes Vada (Hungary) was elected as Vice-Chair. During the meeting, the members of the Group discussed the results of the three thematic meetings of the *Call of Sahel*, which were held in late 2022 and early 2023. The Group agreed on the following four overarching principles for engaging with Sahel countries-

1. Focus on immediate action, not just talking or holding meetings;
2. Harmonize all global activities regarding the Sahel countries with regional and international initiatives;
3. Take into account solutions emerging from impacted communities: Africa-led solutions to problems affecting Africa; and
4. Rebuild trust at the national and international level between all key stakeholders.

71. The First thematic meeting of the Group was held during the 145<sup>th</sup> IPU in Kigali, Rwanda and focused on environmental concerns, the Second thematic meeting was held in Algiers, Algeria, which focused on the theme “ *Engaging communities in the prevention of violent extremism and addressing the conditions conducive to terrorism*” and the third thematic meeting was held

on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 during the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly which focused on “*Mitigating the impact of security threats by building resilience in Sahel*”.

72. During the meeting of the Group at the 146<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, the results of the three thematic meetings on the Call of the Sahel were evaluated and the members identified Internal coordination within the forums in the IPU, Inter-Parliamentary coordination with all parliamentary actors, international coordination with regards to UN organizations active in Sahel and Communication and visibiloity of the work of the Group as the steps to undertake in future.

### **vii) Working Group on Science and Technology**

73. A sitting of the Working Group was held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023, with 14 members in attendance. The Working Group applauded the success of the first session of the Science for Peace Schools, which was held from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland, with the theme Dealing with water scarcity: An opportunity to rebuild peace with Science. The session focused on water management and the exploration of new and renewable sources of water, with the aim of creating a positive environment for technical cooperation and negotiations by encouraging proposals for alternative technologies and modalities to lessen tensions related to water scarcity, and thus transform elements of conflict between parties into reasons for coexistence.
74. A total of 24 participants, including representatives of all six geopolitical groups, attended the first session. As the first joint activity of the IPU’s Committee on Middle East Questions and the Working Group on Science and Technology, the aim of the Science for Peace Schools is to bridge the worlds of science and politics by initiating dialogue and creating a community of parliamentary experts to address challenges together under the neutral umbrella of science.
75. The first session provided a space for participants to exchange experiences of evidence-based decision-making and to learn about methods of scientific collaboration. Notably, participants agreed on the importance of implementing two regional projects on water, in the Sahel region and in Palestine. The Working Group agreed to hold a follow-up conference for parliamentarians, with a focus on water and food security, in June 2023 at the International Centre for Interdisciplinary Science and Education (ICISE) in Quy Nhon, Viet Nam. The Working Group also agreed to hold the second session of the Science for Peace Schools in July 2023 on the theme of climate change, in order to set the tone for a follow-up conference for parliamentarians on the sidelines of COP28, which will take place in the United Arab Emirates in December 2023. With regard to the Working Group’s

work plan, members welcomed the proposed recruitment of a senior science consultant for three to six months, in order to finalize the work on the International Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology.

76. Members also agreed on their intention to participate as observers in the 26th session of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development, which will be held from 27 to 31 March 2023 in Geneva. The Working Group was briefed by Mr. D. Kirrane, Chair of the 9th Science Summit in the context of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, on the theme and activities of the Summit. The Working Group agreed to officially participate in the next Summit in New York, which will be held from 13 to 29 September 2023. Their participation would help them to identify ways in which science can contribute to global challenges, while developing and launching science collaborations to ensure a more policy-focused approach to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
77. The Working Group also agreed to collaborate with the IPU Standing Committee on Sustainable Development to develop and present a key report at the Science Summit, reinforcing the role of parliamentarians in setting the global agenda. In addition, the Working Group agreed to organize an IPU Day as part of the Summit, with a focus on the contribution of the IPU in general, and parliamentarians in particular, to achieving the SDGs. Finally, the Working Group agreed to pursue several pilot projects on the engagement of the scientific community with parliaments. Conclusions and recommendations from each parliament participating in these projects will be used to develop a practical parliamentary toolkit on the importance of scientific engagement in parliamentary decision-making. The Working Group will review and approve the toolkit at its meeting during the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda, Angola, in October 2023

#### **viii) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus**

78. The Group of Facilitators for Cyprus met on 11 March 2023. The meeting was attended by all three Facilitators – Mr. S. Cogolati (Belgium), Ms. L. Quartapelle (Italy) and Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland) – as well as by three members of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus and four representatives of the Turkish-Cypriot political parties. The parties reiterated their determination to end the current impasse and resume negotiations to reach a solution to the Cyprus problem, on the basis of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, as stipulated in relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the European Union values and principles. They also acknowledged the need for closer cooperation in managing natural disasters, in view of the deadly earthquakes in the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye.

## **ix) Meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP)**

79. The ASGP brings together Secretaries General and other senior office holders in charge of parliamentary services. It studies the law, procedure, practice and working methods of different parliaments and proposes measures for improvement and for securing cooperation between the different services of different parliaments. It is a consultative body of the IPU, and the its President reports annually to the IPU Executive Committee on the Association's activities. The ASGP assists IPU at the latter's request on subjects within the scope of the Association. The Clerks and Deputy Clerks of both Houses of the Kenya Parliament are members of the ASGP.
80. During the 146<sup>th</sup> IPU meeting, the ASGP held meetings on 12<sup>th</sup> , 13<sup>th</sup> , 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2023. Kenya was represented by Deputy Clerk of the Senat, Mr. Mohamed Ali. The debates were centered on three thematic areas which were as follows-
- i. Participation of citizens in the work of Parliament: This debate sought to determine how public engagement in forms of direct democracy interacts with traditional representative democracy as carried out by Members of Parliament. Members agreed Public engagement and traditional representative democracy, as carried out by members of parliament, are two essential components of a democratic system which enhances the responsiveness and accountability of representative democracy and strengthens the legitimacy of democratic institutions.
  - ii. Gender inequality in Parliaments (What are the solutions?): This discussion revolved around gender inequality in Parliaments and steps that may be undertaken for gender equality in Parliaments. Members observed that gender inequality in Parliaments is a significant challenge in many countries worldwide. Women remain underrepresented in most Parliaments, with men occupying the majority of seats. This imbalance in representation undermines the legitimacy of democratic institutions and can limit the perspectives and experiences represented in the policymaking process. Members agreed that to solve the gender inequality, it would be necessary to take a comprehensive approach that involves a range of interventions to increase women's representation in politics and promote gender equality in democratic institutions.
  - iii. Debate on MPs and conflicts of interest: This debate centred on the conflicts face by Members of Parliament (MPs) and how they may

overcome them. Members recognized that Members of Parliament are often faced with conflicts of interest because of their positions of power and influence. These conflicts of interest can undermine the integrity and credibility of democratic institutions. For this reason, members noted that it is essential to establish clear ethical standards for MPs and to provide mechanisms to enforce these standards. This can help to maintain public trust in democratic institutions and ensure that MPs act in the public interest rather than their personal interests.

- iv. The role of Parliaments in combating climate change: This debate entailed the role that Parliaments can play to combat climate change. Members observed that climate change is a global challenge that requires urgent action from governments. They agreed that Parliaments can play a crucial role in combating climate change by enacting legislation, providing oversight and accountability, promoting international cooperation, raising public awareness, and creating financial instruments. Additionally, Parliaments can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote sustainable development, and protect the environment for future generations.

## **K. OTHER ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

### **i) Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Geopolitical Groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees**

81. On 11 March 2023, the IPU President and Secretary General met with the Chairs of the geopolitical groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees. The meeting was attended by: Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), Chair of the African Group; Mr. M. Alhalboosi (Iraq), Chair of the Arab Group; Mr. M. Dick (Australia), Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group; Mr. Y. Bolgert (Kazakhstan) and Ms. L. Rysbekova (Kazakhstan) on behalf of the Eurasia Group; Mr. B. Llano (Paraguay), Chair of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC); and Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), Chair of the Twelve Plus Group; as well as by Mr. M.B.M. Al-Ahbab (Qatar), President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security; Mr. W. William (Seychelles), Vice-President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development; Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname), President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights; and Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), acting President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs.
82. The IPU President provided an overview of his main activities and initiatives over the past six months since the previous Assembly, including in terms of raising the visibility of the Organization and advancing towards the goal of universal membership rooted in Strategic Objective 4 of the IPU 2022-2026 Strategy. The Chairs of GRULAC and the Asia-Pacific Group were encouraged to reach out to the parliaments of the Bahamas and Kiribati respectively, given their attendance at the 146th IPU Assembly in Manama as observers with a view to possible affiliation. The Chair of the African Group was also invited to promote close cooperation with Liberia, which became an IPU Member during the 146th Assembly. The issue of Members' financial contributions to the IPU was raised.
83. The Chairs of the geopolitical groups were prompted to remind their members in arrears within their groups of their financial obligations to the Organization. The IPU President provided an update on progress made towards the establishment of IPU regional offices. He stated that consultations on two independent pilot projects, in Egypt and Uruguay, were advancing, and that the results of these pilots would determine the viability of establishing additional regional offices. The Presidents of the Standing Committees provided an overview of their planned activities in the context of the 146th Assembly. They gave an update on the follow-up to the concept note, prepared by the IPU Secretariat, on the contribution of the Standing Committees to the implementation of the IPU Strategy. The acting President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs indicated that the Bureau of his Committee had agreed on a proposal to improve the modalities,

working methods and scope of the Committee, and that this proposal was expected to be approved. He explained that his Committee would work to support reforms aimed at making the UN Security Council more representative of the international community.

84. The Chairs of the geopolitical groups provided an overview of their recent activities. The African Group had held discussions on the need to review the IPU Statutes and Rules so as to ensure greater flexibility and effectiveness in the work of the Organization. In particular, it had examined the possibility of amending the Statutes and Rules to allow for the selection of more than one emergency item per Assembly, as well as to set a deadline for the submission of proposals. The Chair of GRULAC noted that talks on establishing an IPU regional office in Uruguay were progressing well and that, in light of the positive experience with the Regional Seminar on Climate Change for the Parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean, held last year in Montevideo, plans were under way for such regional events to be held on an annual basis. The Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group explained that he would be visiting parliaments in the Pacific region to encourage and support participation in the IPU's work from those Small Island Developing States which were Members of the Organization.
85. The Chair of the Twelve Plus Group proposed the creation of a working group on amending the IPU Statutes and Rules, which would ensure a transparent process and give all Chairs of geopolitical groups and Presidents of Standing Committees an opportunity to contribute their ideas. The IPU Secretary General welcomed the proposal, noting that would guarantee that IPU Members owned any changes to the Statutes and Rules.



*From right to left: Sen. Kathuri Murungi, MP, Deputy Speaker of the Senate and Hon. Naisula Lesuada, MP at the meeting of the Africa Geopolitical Group*

## **ii) Panel discussion on Parliamentary action on biodiversity: Translating global commitments into national action**

86. This panel discussion on 13 March 2023 aimed to provide a platform for parliamentarians to share experiences and knowledge on biodiversity, including its linkages with climate change and sustainable development. It also served to familiarize parliamentarians with the outcomes of the latest United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15), held in Montreal, Canada. The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. A. Blagojevic, IPU Programme Manager for International Development, who introduced the topic and provided a brief overview of Parliaments for the Planet, the recently launched IPU campaign which will mobilize parliaments and parliamentarians to act on the climate emergency.
87. The first panellist, presenting remotely, was Mr. B. Pisupati, Head, Environment Policy, Law Division of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). He introduced the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at COP15, outlining the framework's four goals, which encompass efforts to increase the area of natural ecosystems, reduce extinction rates, value nature's contribution to people, share the benefits from the utilization of genetic resources, and ensure all Parties have adequate means for implementation. Mr. Pisupati highlighted the important role parliamentarians can play in mobilizing women and youth to participate in biodiversity action, ensuring the integration of climate and biodiversity goals into policymaking at the national level, promoting whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches, and supporting innovative financing for biodiversity.
88. The second panellist, Mr. Wang Yi (China), shared his remarks by video message, describing how biodiversity loss is threatening people's well-being, including in matters related to food, energy and safety, and undermining progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. He expressed how the presidency of China of COP15 had been backed by political will at the highest level and also highlighted efforts that China had made to promote biodiversity conservation, including the promulgation and revision of laws and regulations to provide solid legal safeguards for biodiversity conservation.
89. The third panellist, Mr. P. Julian (Canada), provided information on Canada's hosting of COP15 and emphasized the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution that the world is now facing. He described the challenges biodiversity loss creates, including for Indigenous people, and highlighted legislative efforts made in his country, including on addressing the risk of extinction of species. Mr. Julian stressed the need for the Parliament of Canada, as the federal institution, to work with provinces and territories on biodiversity conservation. Interventions from the floor came from Canada, Ghana, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Liechtenstein,



Mauritius and Seychelles. Participants highlighted various actions to protect biodiversity, including conserving biodiversity hotspots, promoting environmental education in schools, increasing the size of protected areas, passing legislation on single-use plastics, and allocating resources for disaster risk reduction. There were also calls to enhance community engagement and strengthen the role of women in biodiversity conservation, as well as to ensure that parliamentarians have access to data, knowledge and resources so they can effectively address biodiversity through their legislative, budgetary, oversight and representation functions.

### **iii) Panel discussion on climate oversight action**

90. This panel discussion, held on 13 March 2023, was organized by the IPU in collaboration with the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) Development Initiative (IDI). The session focused on performance and expenditure oversight, and on how parliaments and Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) can better work together in this area. Owing to the nature and importance of the topic, the panel discussion was well-attended and led to an interesting and engaged debate. The discussion was moderated by Ms. R. Garvey (Ireland). The panellists parliamentarians and a representative of an SAI each made opening remarks and provided insights into climate oversight action in their respective countries. Mr. H. Aoyagi (Japan) shared details of how oversight is performed in his country, including by parliament, parliamentary committees, local government and the Board of Audit of Japan. He suggested that government action on climate change was insufficient and that an ecosystem for promoting such action needed to be developed.
91. Mr. H. Niyazy, Auditor General of Maldives, spoke about his country's unique vulnerability to climate change as an archipelago. He emphasized that a lot of spending was going towards climate resilience and mitigation, and explained that his office had undertaken several audits of climate-related performance and expenditure, remarking that parliamentarians had also requested expenditure audits. Mr. Niyazy added that, in the People's Majlis of Maldives, both the Public Accounts Committee and the Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environment were undertaking oversight and accountability work on climate change. Mr. S. Simpson (New Zealand) spoke about legislation establishing a target of net zero emissions by 2050, mentioning that progress on this front was overseen by the independent Climate Change Commission. He added that New Zealand used statistics and data to prepare reports on the effectiveness of its climate legislation. Mr. Simpson noted, however, that it was a challenge to measure and determine the effectiveness of climate policies and actions, and indicated that oversight in this area would be a positive step. In the first part of the ensuing discussion, participants considered how parliamentarians and SAIs could

advocate for enhanced parliamentary oversight of climate-related performance and what mechanisms could be used for this purpose.

92. Participants touched on the importance of parliamentary committees, and on the need for parliaments to make use of SAIs for oversight of climate action, of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, and of existing legislative frameworks on climate mitigation. A number of smaller nations emphasized that they were experiencing the worst impacts of climate change despite their emissions being lower than those of other countries, and called for more direct funding for in-country mitigation and reduction projects.
93. The second part of the session looked at expenditure, with delegates and panellists exploring how parliaments and SAIs could better incorporate scrutiny of climate-related expenditure (linked to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement) into their oversight work. Among other topics, the discussion covered different reporting requirements for climate expenditure across parliaments, as well as ways to enhance reporting, to improve oversight of climate funding to the private sector, and to strengthen accountability for NDCs. A representative from the Legislative Assembly of Tonga stressed that clearly identifying funding for mitigation and adaptation was a challenge, and expressed an interest in a dedicated programme for identifying climate expenditure.
94. In their closing remarks, the panellists highlighted the need for parliaments to work with SAIs and to utilize their reports on climate action and policy. They also reiterated that all public expenditure, including on climate change, needed to be accountable and auditable.

#### **iv) Workshop in preparation for the United Nations Summit of the Future**

95. The objective of this workshop, held on 13 March 2023 and attended by about 40 MPs, was to familiarize parliamentarians with the preparation process for the United Nations Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024. Ms. P. Torsney, Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York, welcomed participants and explained the basic rationale of the Summit of the Future: strengthening multilateralism as a way to respond to ever-growing global challenges, both old and new.
96. Ms. Torsney then introduced the main presenter for the session, Ms. M.F. Espinosa, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, President of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly, and a leading member of the Coalition for the UN We Need, a platform working to help civil society organizations contribute to UN reform. Ms. Espinosa traced the genesis of the Summit of the Future back to September 2020 and the 12 commitments set out in the

UN Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda*, which emerged from the High-level Meeting to Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations. She explained that the Summit would provide a much-needed opportunity to strengthen the legitimacy of the multilateral system by enabling it to deliver on its many unfulfilled promises and by more effectively including the voices of non-governmental stakeholders.

97. Ms. Espinosa stressed the importance of civil society organizations, parliaments and other nongovernmental bodies being more actively engaged with the UN. She explained that, among other things, parliaments had a special responsibility to ensure adequate funding for the UN. Ms. Espinosa's overarching recommendation with regard to UN reforms was that they needed to be system-wide, and that partial "band-aid" solutions should be avoided. After a brief exchange with Ms. Espinosa, participants completed a live survey. The responses indicated that, in the view of participants, the agenda should cast a wide net, capturing both current issues (such as UN Security Council reform) and new areas of focus (such as global commons). It was also clear that the emphasis should be on peace and security threats, and in particular those posed by nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, as well as those coming from the cyber world.
98. Participants demonstrated broad support for the Summit to include a discussion on alternative measures of sustainable development, and on a new Global Digital Compact, with a particular emphasis on digital inclusion and data protection. They also supported the idea of the Summit's agenda including issues that are currently off the table at the UN, such as the role of multinationals and of the military industrial complex, as well as the phenomenon of land-grabbing. As the workshop drew to a close, Ms. S. Nane (Uruguay) explained that many parliaments are establishing parliamentary Committees of the Future, whose work may well dovetail with IPU efforts to contribute to the UN Summit. She announced that the second World Summit of the Committees of the Future would be held in Uruguay in October 2023. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Torsney urged all participants to stay tuned to this issue and to demand regular briefings from ministers or their countries' Permanent Representatives in New York.

#### **v) Panel discussion on parliamentary solidarity with MPs at risk**

99. This panel discussion, held on 14 March 2023, was attended by 39 participants (13 women and 26 men) from 23 countries. The meeting aimed to give participants a better understanding of what parliamentary solidarity entailed, as well as an opportunity to exchange good practices with their peers on putting this concept into practice. The event was moderated by Mr. S. Cogolati (Belgium), President of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CHRP). In his opening remarks, he elaborated on the work

of the CHRP, as well as on the principle of parliamentary solidarity on which it relies to protect and promote the rights of parliamentarians.

100. Participants saw three video testimonies from MPs who had been victims of human rights violations, or from members of their families. These testimonies related to cases in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Eritrea and Iraq. Ms. C.L. Crexell (Argentina) talked about her parliament's engagement in the evacuation and resettlement of Afghan parliamentarians, with a special focus on women MPs. She explained that this action had followed the joint statement issued on 30 August 2021 by the CHRP and the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, expressing concern over the situation in Afghanistan and calling on MPs around the world to support their colleagues in the country. Ms. Crexell described ongoing joint efforts with specialized organizations and United Nations agencies to build support for a resettlement programme across party lines.
101. Ms. L. Quartapelle (Italy) explained how her parliament had engaged in defending the rights of parliamentarians in Uganda featuring in cases before the CHRP by raising awareness about their cases and pressuring the authorities. She invited other parliaments to do the same with other cases before the CHRP. Dr. W. Myat Aye (Myanmar) thanked the CHRP for its ongoing support. He elaborated on the plight of his colleagues following the coup d'état of 1 February 2021 in Myanmar and called on the participants and the global parliamentary community to recognize and assist the National Unity Government established by the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, to apply pressure on the military authorities, and to prosecute those responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes abroad. In the ensuing discussion, participants took the floor to share their comments and experience. They emphasized the importance of providing tangible support to victims of human rights violations, and stressed that, in dealings with national authorities, engaging in dialogue was just as important as applying pressure.
102. Participants also raised the issue of reprisals and the harassment of women parliamentarians, noted the importance of concerted action by the international community to withhold support from belligerents responsible for violations of the rights of parliamentarians, and touched on practical measures to address to human rights concerns, including at the regional level. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Cogolati thanked all those who dedicated their energy to supporting MPs in danger. He stressed that, when parliamentarians are at risk, democracy itself is in peril, which is why the work of the CHRP and the principle of parliamentary solidarity are so important.

**vi) Workshop on sexual and reproductive health - Preparing young people for a safe, healthy, fulfilling life: Parliamentarians advancing comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) with and for their communities**

103. The workshop, held on 14 March 2023, was organized by the IPU and the World Health Organization (WHO). It aimed to inform parliamentarians about comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and its importance, and to provide a safe space for them to share perspectives on challenges and opportunities for engaging with CSE in their countries. Mr. I. Čelić (Croatia), a member of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, opened the workshop. The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. L. Clifford-Lee (Ireland), a new member of the Advisory Group. Dr. V. Chandra-Mouli, a scientist at WHO and the technical lead for the session, opened the discussion with a short presentation explaining what CSE was, why it was needed, and the state of CSE globally in terms of goals, evidence and trends. He also addressed misunderstandings, concerns and the importance of national adaptation. The panellists were then asked to share details of CSE-related efforts in their own countries, including one strength and one lesson learned. The first panellist, Ms. Clifford-Lee, briefly presented the situation on CSE for children in Ireland. An updated sexual education programme for the age group 12–15 will shortly be rolled out because current provision does not equip children to navigate the modern world.
104. The second panellist, Mr. F. Ndugulile, (United Republic of Tanzania), a member of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, presented the situation in his country, where 60% of the population is under age 24 and teen pregnancies are a challenge. Current sexual education provision in schools focuses mainly on abstinence or delaying first sexual intercourse. Gaining acceptance for CSE is challenging, especially amid resistance from parents, and from traditional and religious leaders. In the absence of information, young people turn to the digital space, where content is neither regulated nor age-specific. The third panellist, Ms. M. Brawer (Argentina), spoke about the process behind the CSE law in her country, which was the result of a strong political decision. She emphasized that the State had an obligation to provide scientifically validated information, including on contraception and sexually transmitted diseases. In Argentina, sexual education is a right for all children from kindergarten onwards. It is not a standalone subject, but instead cuts across the curriculum. Schools organize workshops for parents on CSE. Ten million copies of a guide to help young people talk about sex with family members have been produced, and adults are using it too. Ms. Brawer emphasized that sexual education is not just about reproductive health but also links to diversity. The fourth panellist, Ms. G. Katuta Mwelwa (Zambia), a member of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, stressed the need for parliamentarians to better understand sexual education. There should be more campaigns emphasizing that sexual education is not about teaching

children how to start their sexual life, but rather how to protect themselves. Ms. Katuta Mwelwa called for more support to help raise awareness in her country and stressed the need to reach out to rural areas.

105. The fifth panellist, Ms. P. Stienen (Netherlands), raised concerns about children accessing pornography. She explained that, as Rapporteur for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, she had recently produced a report entitled Innovative approaches to sexual and reproductive health and rights. She stressed that all parliamentarians should be more aware of innovative approaches and new technological developments. She spoke of the need to create an open, safe space for discussion on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and how parliamentarians can use their law-making function to create an enabling environment for CSE. The IPU Secretary General made an intervention, raising the issue of vulnerable and marginalized groups. He mentioned his role on the Board of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH). He also touched on his work as a member of the High-Level Commission on the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 Follow-up which, in its second report published in early March 2023, emphasized the importance of promoting CSE for access to sexual and reproductive health services, as a question of justice and human rights.
106. The Secretary General added that this subject would remain a priority for the IPU, which would follow up on the discussions in this workshop. Interventions from the floor, from delegates from Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, India, Morocco and Norway, highlighted the overwhelming interest in this topic among parliamentarians. The MPs talked about the importance of educating not just youth, but also people at all stages of life. Much more needs to be done, and more discussions need to be held. The IPU and WHO will continue working in this area, together with PMNCH, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and other partners.

**vii) The Call of the Sahel: A global response - Meeting series on counter-terrorism Mitigating the impact of security threats by building resilience in the Sahel**

107. The third meeting in the Call of the Sahel series was held on 11 March 2023. The meeting was wellattended, with over 60 confirmed participants from more than a dozen delegations, including from parliaments of the Sahel countries and the surrounding States. The meeting followed a panel format, with four sessions and six panellists. The IPU Secretary General highlighted the importance of the Call of the Sahel for the IPU and reaffirmed his ongoing support for the initiative. Mr. S. Stroobants, Director, Europe and MENA at the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), gave an overview of the security situation in the Sahel, making reference to the Global Terrorism Index and the Index of Positive Peace, both developed by his organization. He explained that deaths caused by terrorism had increased exponentially in recent years, and that the resulting political instability was reflected in the number and

scale of coups d'état in the region. Mr. Stroobants stressed that including women and youth in strategies to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism was essential, not least because women's inclusion helped communities to remain united. He added that, in the Sahel, including women and youth in interventions had a proven multiplicative effect in peace efforts.

108. Participants emphasized that meetings were no longer enough and that immediate action was needed. They also stressed to the panellists that the international community should not overpromise and underdeliver. The Sahel countries need funding for their programmes to counter terrorism. Any further meetings must be attended by funders and key stakeholders in the Sahel. Participants also addressed the issue of porous borders, which are difficult to control. They asked for technical and financial support to contain the situation so that terrorism would not spread to other countries in the region. Mr. N. Tankoano, Executive Secretary of the Interparliamentary Committee of the G5 Sahel, presented a report that delved into the causes of terrorism, including the failure of the international community to take notice of the dire situation in the Sahel. Mr. Tankoano also cited weak social and economic investment in the Sahel, stressing that such investment was crucial to stemming the tide of terrorism, as well as to building the resilience of local populations to radicalization, extremism and recruitment. Participants recommended that Sahelian States enhance regional cooperation, on the basis of sincerity and transparency, and that parliaments strengthen oversight of armed forces action and execution of the defence budget. They also called for further efforts to build trust at the national and international levels, noting that regional institutions should be supported and reformed accordingly.

## **L. DECLARATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE 146<sup>TH</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS**

109. At the conclusion of the 146<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and related meetings, delegates adopted the following Declarations and Resolutions-

### **a) Manama Declaration: Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance**

*(Endorsed by the 146th IPU Assembly on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023)*

We, Members of Parliament from around the world, gathered at the 146th IPU Assembly in Manama, Bahrain, are deeply aware of the dangers that hate, intolerance, exclusion and violence in all their forms pose to the very foundations of democracy and to the social contract that holds our societies together.

Consumed by greed and competition, our world is facing social and economic inequalities on an unprecedented scale. Heightened economic insecurity is breaking communities apart and leaving growing numbers of people socially isolated, fending for themselves and often with inadequate access to public service delivery and social safety nets.

Inequality and economic insecurity can give rise to anger and frustration in communities everywhere. The dignity intrinsic to every human being can be undermined by factors such as poverty, the denial of inalienable economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, violations of the rule of law, discrimination against women, lack of inclusion of youth, and the de facto exclusion from politics of the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Xenophobia, racism, intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination and extremist narratives are all expressions of this deep malaise in our societies. They manifest themselves in hate speech or outright violence in various forms against migrants, people with disabilities, and national, ethnic, religious, linguistic or other marginalized groups perceived as a threat to the established order. They can also be expressed in the desecration of religious sites and symbols, actions which are deeply offensive to people of faith. We, however, recognize the diversity within our communities as a source of enrichment, and we reaffirm the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Regrettably, some in positions of influence in society seek to exploit the vulnerabilities of others, sowing hatred and division as a way to advance their own interests. Digital platforms designed to facilitate social interaction and communication are being misused to micro-target, amplify and spread disinformation and ill intent against others. The ease with which some of these voices speak in total disregard of the truth carries profound dangers for democracy. Most worryingly, their words can be a direct cause of violence and intolerance within communities and between nations.

We can respond to these challenges by encouraging collaborative networks promoting dialogue and joint projects in service to the community, by creating channels for conflict prevention and mediation, by promoting moderation, by advancing education and awareness building, and by encouraging community and religious leaders to contribute to these objectives. We commit to speaking out against intolerance and especially any advocacy of hatred that constitutes discrimination, hostility or violence. We will also assist in the resolution of conflict through the exercise of parliamentary diplomacy.

With all this in mind, we consider it our unique responsibility, as parliamentarians, to speak and act responsibly towards all people, particularly those who disagree with us, and in ways that bring people together peacefully in pursuit of the common good. We affirm that societies that are inclusive and just, and in which rights are upheld, are more likely to be cohesive, peaceful and democratic. We pledge to fight inequality through rights-based economic and social policies that put people before profit and the weak before the strong, and that uphold the equality and dignity of every person. We reaffirm the urgent need to implement the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 – leaving no one behind – as our best hope for peace, democracy and sustainable development for all.

More concretely, we are committed to utilizing our law-making, representative and oversight functions towards the following objectives:-

- a) Make hate-motivated acts and all forms of violence linked to religion, belief, xenophobia, racism, or intolerance of marginalized groups an offence under the law.
  - i. Invest in education for all and at all levels, including peace education and “education for democracy”, pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly resolutions by this name.

- ii. Make parliamentary proceedings consistently open to the input of relevant civil society organizations and community groups representative of the diversity of society.
- iii. Engage in constructive, respectful dialogue with parliamentarians of all political persuasions, both nationally and internationally.
- iv. Ensure that national statistical institutes and research bodies produce up-to-date disaggregated data to assist with the formulation of inclusive economic and social policies.
- v. Perform self-assessments of the inclusivity of our parliaments and take active measures to increase the representation in our parliaments of women and youth, as well as of underrepresented national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other marginalized and vulnerable communities.
- vi. Uphold the rights of migrants, refugees and stateless people, as particularly vulnerable groups, consistent with international conventions.
- vii. Regulate digital platforms and other media to diminish the risk of hate speech and various forms of disinformation while protecting the fundamental right of free speech as a bulwark of democracy.
- viii. Protect cultural sites as expressions of our common heritage, as well as holy sites, places of worship and religious symbols as expressions of different religions and beliefs.
- ix. Promote interaction with relevant UN organizations working for interfaith and intercultural dialogue, and support UN peacekeeping and mediation efforts.

We pledge to take this Declaration forward through concrete actions and in accordance with the core values of the IPU as outlined in its current Strategy.

***b) Cybercrimes: The new risks to global security - Standing Committee on Peace and International Security***

**Resolution adopted by consensus by the 146<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly on 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2023**

Condemning all forms of cybercrime and reaffirming the need to combat such acts through international cooperation,

Reaffirming the existing United Nations framework for responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and the need to implement this framework,

Recognizing the need to build trust and mutual understanding between countries in response to the malicious use of ICTs by State as well as non-State actors, who recognize neither boundaries nor borders,

Observing the growing use of and dependence on ICTs worldwide,

Cognizant of the increase in cybercrime activities due to increasing digitalization, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic,

Noting the responsibility of parliaments to build a regulatory framework that protects citizens in cyberspace with new infrastructure and resources, in the same way as in the physical world,

Recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 31/72 of 10 December 1976 on the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, resolutions 55/63 of 4 December 2000 and 56/121 of 19 December 2001 on Combating the criminal misuse of information technologies, and resolution 57/239 of 31 January 2003 on the Creation of a global culture of cybersecurity,

Recalling also the annual resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, and in particular resolution 69/28 of 2 December 2014, resolution 73/266 of 22 December 2018 establishing the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in the context of international security, and resolution 75/240 of 31 December 2020 establishing the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025, and highlighting the voluntary and non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs in the context of international security, developed by the Group of Governmental Experts and endorsed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/237 of 23 December 2015, which calls on United Nations Member States to be guided by these norms, as well as the establishment, through United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/37 of 7 December

2022, of a United Nations programme of action to discuss existing and potential threats and to support States' capacities and efforts to implement and advance commitments,

Recalling further the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 15 November 2000 and the United Nations Convention against Corruption of 31 October 2003,

Stressing the importance of regional conventions on cybercrime, transnational organized crime, exchange of information and administrative assistance, including the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime of 23 November 2001 and its Additional Protocol concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems of 28 January 2003, the Agreement on Cooperation in Ensuring International Information Security between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization of 16 June 2009, the Arab Convention on Combating Information Technology Offences of 21 December 2010, the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (Parlatino) Model Law on Cybercrime of November 2013 and its updates, the Parlatino Model Law on Social Prevention of Violence and Crime of November 2015, the Parlatino Model Law on Computer Crimes of February 2021, and the Parlatino Model Law on Combating Illicit Trade and Transnational Crime of February 2021, the Agreement on Cooperation among the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the Field of Ensuring Information Security of 20 November 2013, the Agreement on Cooperation among the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the Fight Against Crimes in the Field of Information Technology of 28 September 2018, and the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection of 27 June 2014,

Stressing also that the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, which is open for accession by any country, has become an instrument of global significance, with States Parties from, and impact in, all regions of the world,

Recalling the IPU's work on the various new risks faced by our increasingly digitized societies, including the IPU resolutions Cyber warfare: A serious threat to peace and global security (adopted at the 132nd Assembly, Hanoi, 1 April 2015), and Legislation worldwide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse (adopted at the 143rd Assembly, Madrid, 30 November 2021), which also recalls the Council of Europe Convention on

the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the “Lanzarote Convention”) of 25 October 2007,

Commending the work of the United Nations on advancing responsible State behavior in cyberspace,

Commending also the efforts of the United Nations to enact, through General Assembly resolution 74/247 of 27 December 2019, an international cybercrime convention, and welcoming the creation of an ad hoc committee charged with drafting this convention,

Welcoming the participation of the IPU in the multi-stakeholder consultation process of that ad hoc committee in order to ensure that the voice of parliaments is heard,

Noting the need for a global approach to the issue of cybercrime and its serious consequences for citizens, as well as the need to protect global peace, security and economic stability while upholding the basic tenets of human rights including freedom of speech,

Recognizing the urgent need for legislators, governments and all stakeholders to take more proactive national steps to combat cybercrime, given its renewed intensity and rapidly evolving nature,

Recognizing also that all actions in this field need to have respect for human rights and fundamental rights at their centre,

Noting the uneven development in countries’ ICT application capacity and ability to protect ICT infrastructure, and emphasizing the need for increased technical assistance and collaboration, especially for developing countries,

Noting also that States shall act in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law, including but not limited to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and additional protocols and other relevant international human rights instruments,

Recognizing the need for common, international parliamentary action to advance awareness and implementation of voluntary and non-binding norms regarding responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs,

Noting that cybercrime may constitute a serious threat to democratic processes, especially interference in elections through cybersecurity breaches or false social media accounts,

Acknowledging that women, young people, children, elderly people, people with disabilities, and racialized communities are particularly vulnerable to cybercrimes,

Acknowledging also the need for efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all their diversity, including through gender mainstreaming, in the development, implementation and application of policies, programmes and legislation in this field,

Noting the nature of the threats and risks of transnational cybercrime to international peace and security, and the tremendous developments in cyberspace, as a result of which the methods used by cybercriminals are becoming increasingly sophisticated,

Noting also that cybercrime includes but is not limited to attacks on computer systems, breaches of privacy, the creation and deployment of malware, and, increasingly, the facilitation of attacks on critical civilian infrastructure, as well as other acts that can occur offline and be facilitated by computer systems, including online fraud, drug trade, money-laundering, hate crimes, human trafficking, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence such as sexual harassment, threats, stalking, bullying, sexist hate speech, and the sexual exploitation of women and children via the internet – all of which negatively affect global security and economic stability,

Considering that most national laws were enacted before cybercrime arose and therefore do not always adequately address these threats,

1. Encourages parliaments to consider taking the necessary steps for their country to accede, if it has not yet done so, to existing international instruments that address the use of ICTs for criminal purposes, including the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, which is the most comprehensive multilateral cybercrime treaty in force and is open for accession by all States;
2. Calls upon parliaments to make sure their legislation on cybercrime is up to date and relevant, in accordance with international law, including international human rights instruments, to allocate the necessary resources to this end and to engage all stakeholders, including the

private sector, academia, civil society and the technical community, considering the ongoing increase in the scale, scope, speed, complexity and frequency of such acts and their implications for national security, international peace and security, and global economic stability, as well as to include in such legislation extraterritorial jurisdiction to enable the prosecution of criminal acts, irrespective of where those acts were committed and whether they constitute offences in the foreign jurisdiction in question;

3. Urges parliaments to ensure that human rights impact assessments are embedded in all legislative processes on cybercrime;
4. Calls upon parliaments to enhance the capacity of law enforcement officers, including investigative authorities, prosecutors and judges, in the field of cybercrime, and to equip them to effectively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of cybercrime offences;
5. Encourages parliaments to make full use of their oversight function to ensure that governments have the tools, including appropriate resources and capacity, to prevent and combat the rapid increase in cybercrimes and to protect the cybersecurity, identity, privacy and data of citizens while safeguarding human rights and freedoms;
6. Strongly recommends that parliaments ensure that their national legislative frameworks on the protection of critical national infrastructure, including the infrastructure that supports the internet, are up to date, or that they establish such frameworks where necessary;
7. Encourages parliaments to promote an open, free and secure cyberspace by calling on their governments to abide by the United Nations norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, to cooperate in fighting cybercrime as well as cybercriminals and malicious actors, to respond to requests for assistance and capacity-building, if possible in real time, in accordance with the rule of law and fully respecting international human rights law and fundamental freedoms, to secure the supply chain of companies in their countries, to report voluntarily on potential vulnerabilities to third parties to assist them in preventing future incidents, and in particular to support and protect all cyber incident response teams within and beyond their borders;
8. Also encourages parliaments to draft gender-responsive legislation promoting crosscutting cybersecurity services that prioritize prevention

(awareness-raising, auditing and training), incident detection (24 hours a day, 7 days a week), and an instant and efficient response to cyber threats, through a victim-centric approach

9. Recommends that parliaments promote the establishment of relevant institutions and bodies – such as national cybersecurity centres, computer emergency response teams, computer security incident response teams and security operations centres – where these do not already exist in their country;
10. Also recommends that all parliaments ensure that such institutions and bodies have adequate budgetary resources and specialized personnel, including women cybersecurity experts, to allow for an agile, timely and effective response to cybercrime and to protect critical civilian infrastructure, public institutions, companies and citizens without breaching privacy, while taking into account that the increasing digitalization of public services and utilities could imply major exposure to digital risks;
11. Urges parliaments to promote international coordination between such institutions and bodies in order to monitor, prevent, detect, investigate and respond to cyber threats;
12. Invites parliaments to encourage their governments to provide specific cybersecurity training in order to help increase the number of cybersecurity professionals and to strengthen their performance;
13. Reaffirms that an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment is essential for all and requires effective cooperation among States to reduce risks to international peace and security, and calls upon the international community to promote full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
14. Calls upon parliaments to encourage investment in research and development, incorporating into the design of each project specific cybersecurity provisions, with appropriate budget allocation, in order to anticipate and protect against possible emerging cyber threats;
15. Encourages parliaments to partner with industry, academia and all other stakeholders, including civil society, with their respective governments as key facilitators, in order to foster a strong and collaborative cybersecurity ecosystem that fully respects human rights principles and international human rights obligations;



16. Calls upon parliaments and parliamentarians to actively engage in promoting a shared, up-to-date national understanding of the nature of cybercrime as experienced by citizens, organizations and institutions;
17. Urges parliaments to help foster a true “culture of cybersecurity” by developing educational curricula focused on training future generations, from childhood onwards, in digital literacy and technological know-how, covering both the great opportunities presented and the serious risks posed by technology;
18. Recommends that parliaments broaden protections for women, young people, children, elderly people, people with disabilities, and racialized communities in cyberspace, taking respect for human rights and the prevention of gender-based violence into account in the development of educational policies on the use of social media;
19. Urges parliaments to take the necessary action to protect critical moments in democracy, and especially those periods when citizens exercise their right to vote, in order to avoid attacks and interferences that seek to influence, change or violate the free formation of public opinion during the electoral process;
20. Calls upon the international community to take action to protect democracy by ensuring that all parliaments worldwide, as institutions representing the will of the people, are afforded special protection through their inclusion in lists of critical civilian infrastructure and essential services;
21. Stresses the need to further enhance international cooperation and assistance in the area of ICT security and capacity-building, as a means to bridge digital divides and strengthen the response to cyber threats globally;
22. Calls upon parliaments to deepen their understanding of the complex and rapidly evolving nature of cybercrime by enabling the open sharing of knowledge, experience and expertise, and by holding specialized seminars, workshops and conferences on this subject;
23. Invites the IPU Secretariat, in partnership with other relevant organizations, to promote this new vision of cybersecurity by supporting parliaments in their capacity-building endeavours;

24. Recommends that the IPU, as the global organization of parliaments, play a leading role in preventing and combating cybercrime, and in stimulating cyber-resilience, by participating in all relevant international forums, including those led by the United Nations, with a view to ensuring that the voice of parliaments is heard;
25. Promotes the creation of a working group on cybercrime, subsidiary to the Governing Council of the IPU, whose specific mission shall be to comply with the mandates and objectives established in this resolution, and whose powers shall include both supporting the process for the promotion of an international convention on cybercrime within the framework of the United Nations, and strengthening the capacities of IPU Member Parliaments in terms of law-making, oversight and budgeting;
26. Recommends that the IPU raise awareness among parliaments on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through, above all else, their universal commitments to digital security.

**c) Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon emission balances of forests - *Standing Committee on Sustainable Development***

**Resolution adopted by consensus by the 146th IPU Assembly on 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2023**

Recalling the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 2015 Paris Agreement, including its goal to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and in particular its Article 5, which calls on the Parties to the Agreement to take action to conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, including forests, and encourages them to develop policy approaches to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, to set positive incentives for sustainable management of forests, and to enhance carbon sequestration and reduce emissions in forests,

Mindful of the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences in Glasgow (COP26) and Sharm el-Sheikh (COP27) and taking note of the forest-relevant contribution of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, in which more than 140 countries committed to working collectively to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030

while delivering sustainable development and promoting inclusive rural transformation and value chains, and in which they reaffirmed international financial commitments, private finance and investment support to enable forest conservation and restoration, and support for indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the findings of the IPCC Working Group III on mitigation and its recommendations on reducing deforestation and increasing reforestation,

Welcoming the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted in December 2022 and its 4 goals and 23 targets, including target 2, which seeks to “ensure that by 2030 at least 30% of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity”,

Looking forward to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai (COP28), which will follow up on the COP26 and COP27 climate conferences’ outcomes regarding forest protection,

Recalling the IPU resolutions Climate change, sustainable development models, and renewable energies (120th IPU Assembly, Addis Ababa, April 2009), Addressing climate change (141st IPU Assembly, Belgrade, October 2019), Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences (142nd IPU Assembly, virtual session, May 2021), the Nusa Dua Declaration Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change (144th IPU Assembly, Nusa Dua, March 2022), and the Declaration of the President of the Assembly on climate change (116th IPU Assembly, Nusa Dua, May 2007),

Guided by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize that climate policy, poverty reduction and universal peace are all inextricably linked in achieving sustainable development, in particular SDG 15 to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss” and SDG 13 to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”, as well as SDG 17 to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”,

Committed to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted by the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022, in particular of target 2 to restore at least 30% of areas of degraded ecosystems by 2030 and of target 3 to ensure that by 2030 at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine areas are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures,

Reaffirming United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/300 recognizing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right, resolution 71/285, in which the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 was adopted, and resolution 73/284 on the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030),

Committed to the realization of the shared vision set out in the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 “of a world in which all types of forests and trees outside forests are sustainably managed, contribute to sustainable development and provide economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits for present and future generations”,

Reaffirming the importance of the six goals defined in the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030, and especially goal 1 to “reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change”, which would, among other benefits, serve the achievement of SDG targets 6.6 to “protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including [...] forests”, 12.2 to “achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources”, 15.1 to “ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests”, and especially 15.2 to “promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally”,

Emphasizing target 1.2 of goal 1 of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, which calls for “the world’s forest carbon stocks [to be] maintained or enhanced”,

Endorsing goal 2 of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030, to “enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people”, especially its target 2.2 to “increase the access of small-scale forest enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets” and target 2.3, which calls for “the contribution of forests and trees to food security [to be] significantly increased”,

Welcoming the international community’s continuing engagement in numerous global initiatives to address the contribution of forests to climate protection, including the Forests and Climate Leaders’ Partnership; the Congo Basin Forest Partnership; the 15th World Forestry Congress held in Seoul in May 2022; the ASEAN Green Initiative to ramp up restoration efforts and plant at least 10 million native trees in the next 10 years across the 10 ASEAN Member States starting from 2021, and to set standards for the recognition of tree planting activities and programmes across the region that not only regrow forests in the region but also contribute to people’s well-being, livelihood improvement, and resilience-building; the Bonn Challenge, a global goal to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030; the World Economic Forum’s global initiative to conserve, restore and grow 1 trillion trees by 2030; the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative; and the Strategic Plan of Action for ASEAN Cooperation on Forestry; and recognizing that all of these initiatives have contributed to States’ affirmation of forest protection and emission reduction targets, and have showcased the many opportunities for prevention, mitigation, resilience-building and adaptation through the contributions of national governments, provinces, cities and villages, private corporations, financial institutions and civil society,

Recognizing the crucial role that women and youth play in forest ecosystem conservation and restoration, and stressing the need for the full participation of women and youth at all levels of policymaking and implementation in forest ecosystem conservation and restoration,

Noting that forests are resources of global significance, covering 31% of the Earth’s land surface, but storing almost half of terrestrial carbon; that forests help to regulate regional climate by influencing rainfall patterns and cooling urban areas; that trees and forests regulate the water balance, serve as drinking-water reservoirs and protect against erosion, landslide,

rockfalls, avalanches, floods, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity; that sustainably managed forests deliver natural, climate-neutral resources for various value chains; and that well-managed forests provide subsistence, medicines, recreational and cultural purpose, livelihoods, employment and income to forest-dwelling communities, forest-dependent people and Indigenous people, and act as a natural buffer against the transmission of zoonoses,

Gravely concerned about the loss, through deforestation, of 420 million hectares of forests between 1990 and 2020, equivalent to approximately 10.34% of the world's total forest area in the last 30 years, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations report *The State of the World's Forests 2022*, with associated damage as manifested in droughts, desertification, and changes to weather patterns, as well as about the severe impact of forest loss on aspects of human life and on human development, and the fact that deforestation has a multiplying effect on existing crises in many respects and aspects,

Noting with great concern that deforestation and forest degradation are having an accelerating severe impact on climate change, with destruction and degradation of forests, including their soils, accounting for around 15% of global human-induced carbon release on Earth,

Cognizant of the detrimental impact of armed conflicts on forest ecosystems and the contribution of such conflicts to greenhouse gas emissions,

Regretting that the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the largest conflict currently in existence, accompanied by massive forest fires and resulting in at least 33 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions, has significantly undermined global efforts to achieve negative carbon emission balances of forests and to combat climate change,

Aware that the progression of deforestation and forest degradation is one of the main root causes of increasing biodiversity loss and loss of genetic resources, as forests provide habitat for 80% of amphibian species, 75% of bird species and 68% of mammal species; and that tropical forests are particularly important as they contain about 50% of all animal and plant species,

Underlining the concrete and existential threat to food security and agriculture caused by deforestation and forest degradation, with forest destruction having massive regional impacts on rainfall and consequently on rainfed agriculture, particularly in the Amazon and the African tropics,

Recalling paragraphs 47 and 48 of the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan adopted at COP27 in November 2022 pertaining to the provision of adequate and predictable support to developing-country Parties, in the context of which Parties should collectively aim to slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss, in accordance with national circumstances, consistently with the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC, while ensuring relevant social and environmental safeguards,

Expressing deep concern about the severe damage caused by forest loss to societies and economies, with an estimated 1.6 billion people, or 20% of the global population, depending on forests for subsistence, livelihoods, employment and income generation, according to the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030,

1. Urges IPU Member Parliaments to provide, in line with their parliamentary tasks, national regulations and laws that commit to the objective of net zero deforestation, meaning that when forests or trees are cleared in one area, reforestation or afforestation is ensured in another area as appropriate, seeking to maintain the same CO<sub>2</sub> storage balance and taking account of the time that different varieties of tree take to grow;
2. Calls on IPU Member Parliaments and their governments to intensify urgent actions to prevent and halt deforestation and forest degradation, increase forest areas and enhance the resilience of forest ecosystems, which are among the most cost-effective actions for mitigating and adapting to climate change, while stressing that reducing deforestation to a minimum and encouraging climate-focused afforestation avoid the direct emissions from lost biomass and enable conservation and enhancement of the greenhouse gas absorbing and capturing capacity of forests;
3. Urges IPU Member Parliaments and their governments to: expand existing protected areas and create new ones to protect forest ecosystems in line with the relevant international commitments; guarantee demilitarization of protected areas, especially in times of war; establish an appropriate legislative framework for the management of protected areas and take effective measures to enforce it; and cooperate, where appropriate, with neighbouring States to ensure better management and functioning of protected areas;

4. Urges IPU Member Parliaments to ramp up efforts to reforest and even restore degraded forests in the light of national circumstances, keeping in mind: that forest restoration is an active attempt to return an area to its previous naturally forested state using native trees; that non-native trees provide timber that can boost local economies and reduce logging pressure in native forests; that reforestation, afforestation and agroforestry using native and/or non-native trees help diversify livelihoods and landscapes to increase land productivity; that afforestation and restoration of forests can provide significant environmental, climatic, sociocultural and economic benefits; and that trees provide shade on agricultural land, prevent extreme sun exposure for the soil and cultivated plants, cool down temperatures on the ground, influence precipitation and lead to improved harvest results;
5. Calls on IPU Member Parliaments to promote more productive, efficient and sustainable agrifood systems by continuing to use existing arable land to reduce the demand for new agricultural land, maintain forests and secure the multiple benefits that forests provide to farming systems, keeping in mind that agricultural expansion is driving almost 90% of global deforestation, that many areas of arable land are not being utilized as efficiently and productively as possible, and that sustainably increasing productivity will reduce the pressure on forestland caused by a 35–56% increase in food demand by 2050 due to the projected growth in the global population to 9.7 billion people;
6. Encourages IPU Member Parliaments to take immediate action to ensure that sustainable forest management is more beneficial to generating income than deforestation and that such incomes are regular and high enough for people to sustain a living and compete with income derived from other land uses, while emphasizing that sustainable forest management and green value chains prevent the conversion of forest into agricultural land and support the transition to carbon-neutral economies, and that responsible forest management can counteract the underlying drivers of deforestation including poverty, unsustainable production practices and consumption patterns, and can enhance the adaptability and resilience of forests to the impact of climate change while creating green jobs, especially in developing countries;
7. Recommends that IPU Member Parliaments create shared value from collective efforts through experience-sharing and technological transfer



to promote the following: application of the principles of the circular economy in the use of wood; reforestation to expand the use of sustainable wood; substituting non-renewable or emissions-intensive materials, such as cement and concrete, in construction with sustainably grown wood products; increasing the lifespan of wood products to address growing demand; reducing waste through more efficient processing and the cascading use of forest products; advancing green technology; changing consumption patterns; and facilitating a transition to more circular and green economies;

8. Invites IPU Member Parliaments to review and improve forest-related legislation, strengthen forest law enforcement, and promote good governance at all levels in order to support sustainable forest management, and to combat and eradicate illegal practices in forest-related sectors;
9. Calls on IPU Member Parliaments to: adopt strategies and a systematic review and self-monitoring system that will allow governments to increase the value of the conservation and restoration of forests, especially of rainforests and boreal forests; emphasize the global value of the ecosystem services and natural resources of forests; and highlight that national, regional or international emissions trading schemes, such as the European Union Emissions Trading System or the Kyoto Protocol emissions trading scheme, are beneficial instruments for mobilizing private capital to finance forest protection and afforestation, including the use of removal units on the basis of land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) activities such as reforestation, with an emphasis on maintaining the highest environmental and climate integrity of such schemes;
10. Invites IPU Member Parliaments to call on their governments to consider ecological fiscal reforms, to introduce policy initiatives to promote responsible consumption and production of forest-related goods, and to repurpose agricultural subsidies to include agroforestry and sustainable forestry, keeping in mind that policy instruments can be used strategically to create market incentives for responsible and sustainable forest management and to reorient incentives to boost green markets and financing;
11. Encourages IPU Member Parliaments to ensure that the objective of net zero emissions is incorporated in national economic, environmental and climate strategies, reaffirming the goals agreed upon in the Paris

Agreement to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, largely through ambitious efforts to: reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum, and remove residual emissions from the atmosphere by, inter alia, protecting and restoring natural sinks like forests, soil and peatlands or through negative emission technologies such as direct air capture, and bioenergy with carbon capture and storage;

12. Recommends that IPU Member Parliaments: scale up action to phase down unabated coal power and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, especially for lignite and coal, which often require extensive logging; bear in mind the principle defined within the UNFCCC, and reconfirmed in the Paris Agreement, of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the light of different national circumstances; and direct global development policy in supporting developing countries that plan to construct coal-fired power plants to instead consider renewable energy power plants allowing the same energy production while also protecting energy, job security, climate and forests;
13. Calls on IPU Member Parliaments to intensify efforts to reduce the use of charcoal as an energy source and to promote sustainable, cost-effective, viable, renewable and carbon-neutral alternatives such as solar, hydro, geothermal, wind and nuclear power, bearing in mind the considerable forest loss and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions resulting from charcoal being the major source of energy in many developing countries with limited access to energy;
14. Urges IPU Member Parliaments to: take into account the needs and knowledge of local communities, including forest dwellers, forest-dependent people and Indigenous people, as per national norms in sustainable forest management, which are integral to the fight against climate change; acknowledge that indigenous peoples and local communities have been sustainably managing forests for millennia, using practices based on indigenous knowledge systems, enabling them to fulfil their needs without undermining the capacity of the ecosystems and forests in which they live; reaffirm that land-tenure rights for Indigenous peoples and local communities should be protected and enforced as appropriate; and emphasize that forest restoration preserves the territories and resources of indigenous people

and lowers the pressure on declining forests in terms of firewood extraction, illegal logging and charcoal production;

15. Also urges IPU Member Parliaments to ensure that forest conservation practices and other nature-based climate solutions promote and respect the inherent rights of Indigenous people related to their traditional territories, including their right to be consulted and accommodated when measures and actions might adversely impact them, their lands or their resources;
16. Invites IPU Member Parliaments to: take action to strengthen their common understanding of forests, their sustainable management and climate protection, taking into account national and regional conditions, including as a matter of intergenerational equity and solidarity; engage the educational sector and local communities in reforestation, through a multi-level strategy and multi-stakeholder approach, as a key to sustainable and inclusive economic growth; make sure that appropriate educational programmes on forests are implemented and included in school curricula; promote educational efforts with young people and include future generations in climate protection measures so that they are aware of the need to protect forests and the environment and the ways in which it can be done, keeping in mind that it is the children and young people of today and tomorrow who will bear the consequences as climate change intensifies and who thus wish to actively engage in efforts to address climate change; and ensure that gender-sensitive approaches and tools are mainstreamed to provide men and women with an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from sustainable forest management while also ensuring the engagement of young people in forest-related decision-making;
17. Urges IPU Member Parliaments to set up mechanisms for agricultural extension services as intermediaries between researchers and farmers to explain the devastating effects of deforestation, train local populations in good agricultural practices, encourage farmers to adopt new, improved methods of farming, help farmers in their decision-making, and ensure that appropriate knowledge is implemented to obtain the best results with regard to sustainable production and rural development, while stressing the need for further investment in agronomy in tropical areas so that inputs like seeds and nutrients as well as training and access to markets can be provided;

18. Recommends that IPU Member Parliaments use their legislative powers to support incentives for local people and entrepreneurs in green economic employment and investment, as well as to enhance the balance of economic development at all levels, namely for individuals, families, communities and societies, and to pursue green growth strategies and the benefits of the sharing economy by taking into consideration social, cultural and environmental contexts for life-long learning, resilience and inclusive growth;
19. Requests that IPU Member Parliaments allocate a sufficient national budget in terms of investing in research and development for leveraging technology like cross-breeding of trees that are high-performing, have fast-growing roots and possibly promote forest rejuvenation and regeneration, and hence CO2 storage capacity and climate resilience or the diversification and combination of tree varieties in forest plantations, in order to take advantage of the existing complementary characteristics of different species;
20. Encourages IPU Member Parliaments to provide an appropriate national budget to ramp up efforts to mobilize and invest in digital technologies and broadband services that provide access for households in rural and remote areas to online information about sustainable land use and forestry income opportunities, bearing in mind the importance of creating awareness about the need for sustainable forest management;
21. Strongly urges IPU Member Parliaments to maintain peaceful relations among themselves, to respect State sovereignty and State territory, and to take concerted and united action, despite political, economic and social differences, to bring a rapid end to wars of aggression around the world, bearing in mind that violent conflicts and wars, as well as mines, may lead to the destruction and contamination of ecosystems such as forests that are important not only for the people living in them but also for humankind as a whole;
22. Urges IPU Member Parliaments to foster enhanced coherence, collaboration and synergies among themselves and with national and international bodies and partners in working towards the common goals set out in this resolution, and to facilitate enhanced support and partnerships, including in terms of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building, in order to assist developing countries


in promoting forest ecosystems, sustainable afforestation and agroforestry, as well as people's well-being;

23. Requests that the IPU Secretary General transmit the present resolution to IPU Member Parliaments, the United Nations Secretary-General and all relevant institutions;
24. Encourages IPU Member Parliaments to take suitable measures as per national circumstances to achieve the implementation of this resolution.

### M. RECOMENDATIONS BY THE KENYA DELEGATION

The Kenya Parliament Delegation to the 146<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly and related meetings, pursuant to Article 7 of the IPU Statutes, urges the two Houses of Parliament to-

1. Note this Report; and
2. Follow up on the implementation of the Declaration and Resolutions of the 146<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and Related meetings.

 THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PAPERS LAID	
DATE:	14 JUN 2023
	BY: WEA
TABLED BY:	HON JOHN KIARIE MP
CLERK AT THE TABLE:	ESTHER NGUNJO