



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU Assembly and related meetings

Virtual session
24 – 27 May 2021

Results of the proceedings



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page(s)</u>
Meetings and other activities	
142nd Assembly	
1. Opening of the Assembly	4
2. Participation	6
3. Virtual Event Platform	7
4. Interactive debate	7
5. Debates and decisions of the Standing Committees	8
6. Conclusion of the Assembly	10
207th session of the Governing Council	
1. Adoption of the Special Rules of Procedure for the virtual sessions of the Assembly and Standing Committees	11
2. Vision of the IPU President and report on his activities since the 206th session of the Governing Council	11
3. Annual Impact Report by the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU in 2020	12
4. Elections to the Executive Committee and other IPU bodies	13
5. Financial results for 2020	13
6. Questions relating to the IPU Membership	14
7. Future inter-parliamentary meetings	14
8. Reports of plenary bodies and specialized committees	15
285th session of the Executive Committee	
1. Debates and decisions	15
2. Questions relating to the IPU membership and the situation of certain parliaments	16
3. Financial questions	17
4. Questions relating to the Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Union	18
Forum and Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	18
Forum and Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU	19
Subsidiary bodies of the Governing Council	
1. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians	20
2. Committee on Middle East Questions	20
3. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law	21
4. Advisory Group on Health	22
5. High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)	22

Elections, appointments, media and communications, and membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Elections and appointments

1. Executive Committee	23
2. Vice-Presidents of the Executive Committee	23
3. Sub-Committee on Finance	24
4. Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	24
5. Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians	25
6. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians	25
7. Committee on Middle East Questions	25
8. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law	25
9. High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)	26
10. Working Group on Science and Technology.....	26
11. Bureaus of the Standing Committees	27
12. Rapporteurs to the 144th Assembly	29

Media and communications	29
--------------------------------	----

Membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union	31
---	----

Agenda, resolutions and other texts of the 142nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Agenda	32
--------------	----

President's Summary of the debate on the overall theme of the 142nd IPU Assembly <i>Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments</i>	33
--	----

Resolutions

- *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences*
- *Mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy to achieve the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production*

Reports of the Standing Committees

- Report of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights
- Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

Reports and other texts of the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Statement on the occasion of the 2021 United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS	52
---	----

Statement on Parliamentary action in support of ending statelessness	54
--	----

Statement on Yemen	55
--------------------------	----

Reports, decisions and other texts

- Special Rules of Procedure to regulate the conduct of virtual sessions of the Assembly and Standing Committees
- Cremer-Passy Prize Rules
- Voting: Election Results
- Report of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians
- Report of the Forum on Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

• Report of the Committee on Middle East Questions	66
• Report of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law	68
• Report of the Advisory Group on Health	70
• Report of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)	71
• Statistics of the Gender Partnership Group	74
 Future meetings	
• Future meetings and other activities	76
• Agenda of the 143rd Assembly	79

142nd Assembly

1. Opening of the Assembly

The 142nd IPU Assembly was officially opened on the IPU's dedicated virtual event platform at 14:00 CEST on Wednesday, 26 May 2021. The proceedings began with opening remarks by the IPU President and a panel discussion moderated by Ms. Claire Doole on the overall theme of the Assembly: Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments.

Mr. Duarte Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, welcomed the participants, over 750 MPs from some 135 countries, to the first ever IPU Assembly held entirely in virtual format. Although a virtual Assembly was undoubtedly a historic milestone, the scourge of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic cast a considerable shadow over the occasion, having entailed the loss of more than 3 million lives worldwide, an economic recession on a scale not seen in nearly a century and the reversal of decades of progress in human development.

Only societies that were resilient, equitable, inclusive and fair could successfully confront the unpredictable and complex challenges of the moment. Parliaments, as the custodians of human rights and the rule of law, needed to be at the centre of a response to the pandemic that served people above all else. Over the previous weeks, during meetings of the Standing Committees, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, delegates had discussed how parliaments could play a central role in post-pandemic recovery efforts, and four areas in particular had stood out.

Firstly, many delegates had noted that access to vaccines for COVID-19 was too fragmented, uneven and slow. Efforts were needed to bridge the gaps between vaccination programmes in different countries and regions and to defend vaccine accessibility as a global public good.

Secondly, delegates had observed that public institutions contributed significantly to development and growth. Parliamentarians needed to ensure that such institutions were fit for purpose and met the needs of society. A new social contract was also needed between people and government, grounded in human rights.

Thirdly, delegates had noted that women and youth had borne the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic and the multiple other crises it had provoked. Women and youth therefore had to take their rightful place in the world of politics, where decisions about the future were made.

Finally, delegates had expressed the importance of pursuing an economic recovery underpinned by new ways of thinking about sustainable production, consumption, environmental preservation and the care economy. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals should serve as the foundation for all COVID-19 recovery strategies.

He encouraged parliamentarians to seize the momentum of the virtual IPU Assembly to rethink the foundations of the pre-pandemic world and pave the way for a resilient, equitable, smart, green, inclusive and fair future, by reinvigorating the global multilateral system and continuing to build strong and democratic national parliaments.

The IPU needed to further strengthen its role as the global organization of national parliaments, providing a platform for political dialogue, parliamentary diplomacy and cooperation, in search of solutions for a better tomorrow.

Ms. Anuradha Gupta, Deputy CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, said that the points raised by the President were a timely reminder of the importance of multilateral cooperation and proactive leadership in tackling the COVID-19 crisis. To end the acute phase of the pandemic, countries needed to unite to ensure that vaccination programmes were truly global and that no-one was left behind.

The COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) programme, co-directed by Gavi, was coordinating rapid and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, with a view to ensuring that all countries received sufficient vaccine doses to protect their vulnerable and high-risk populations. COVAX had already delivered vaccines to over 100 countries but had faced numerous challenges.

Countries, particularly wealthy countries, needed to be aware that no one would be safe from the pandemic until everyone was safe. Even small increases in transmission of the virus would lead to new variants, prolonging the pandemic and its impact on the poorest in society. Further efforts needed to be made to scale up manufacturing and distribution, and support was needed for mechanisms to transfer the knowledge and technology required to produce the vaccines. Public trust in vaccines was another urgent issue to address.

The collateral damage of the pandemic also needed to be considered, particularly increasing poverty, disruption to essential health services and a reversal of many years of progress with childhood vaccination. Many children around the world, known as Zero-Dose Children, continued to be deprived of the basic course of childhood vaccines.

The COVID-19 pandemic had pushed the question of equity to the forefront of the policy agenda and thus presented a valuable opportunity to create a more equal world. The IPU's resolution on universal health coverage in 2019 had been a particularly positive and visionary initiative in that regard. Health should not be politicized and parliaments should endeavour to always uphold the principles of equity, fairness and social justice.

Dr. Jomo Sundaram, former chief economist at the United Nations and prominent academic at Columbia University and the International Islamic University in Malaysia, said that the world faced two related but distinct challenges in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic: how to fight the virus itself and how to build economies back better. Parliaments could contribute considerably to the first challenge by reducing barriers to the global distribution of vaccines, tests, medicines and equipment. It was important to recognize that the current range of vaccines would not eradicate COVID-19, but merely reduce the severity of infections and the likelihood of death.

While countries had mobilized considerable resources to address the crisis, their efforts had often been hindered by disruption to global supply chains and trade. At a national level, the measures taken in response to the pandemic had been extremely disruptive to economies and people's lifestyles. Vaccinations were now resulting in a return to normality in some wealthy countries, but a huge divide between richer and poorer countries prevailed. The international community needed to redouble its efforts to ensure that the necessary resources for relief, recovery and reform were in place for all countries.

The International Monetary Fund had recently approved the issue of around US\$ 650 billion in Special Drawing Rights, but they would be distributed according to the relative wealth of countries. A redistribution of those funds via the World Bank and regional development banks was urgently needed. Any delay to economic recovery ran the risk of temporary recessions becoming protracted depressions, which would seriously set back recent progress in reducing poverty and hunger. Parliaments should work together to address both aspects of the problem: improving equal access to vaccines and other medical resources, and redistributing financial resources to kickstart the global economy.

Ms. Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand and current Chair of the PMNCH Board and Co-Chair of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, said that the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response had released a report on 12 May 2021 concluding that most countries had not been prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic despite many years of warnings and recommendations. Considerable time had been lost in the early stages of the pandemic in January and February 2020 due to the hoarding of vital information, the World Health Organization's (WHO) initial investigations being hampered, and the adoption of a wait-and-see approach by many countries for several weeks after the declaration of a public health emergency on 30 January 2020. The response of some countries, often those which had been most affected by the SARS and Ebola outbreaks, had been better than others, thanks to strong leadership, good governance and proactive deployment of public health measures.

The report went on to make two sets of recommendations: those for which implementation was urgently required and those which were longer-term and transformational in nature. In the first category, every country should deploy proven public health measures to stop transmission of the virus. Vaccination should not be seen as a panacea, as the rollout was progressing too slowly. To address the inequitable distribution of vaccines, high-income countries should commit without delay to sharing their surplus orders. At least 1 billion doses should be provided to the COVAX programme in 2021, reaching 2 billion in 2022. A waiver on the intellectual property rights relating to vaccines was urgently required to allow

the necessary knowledge and technology transfer for vaccine production to take place where it was needed. The WHO's Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator needed more funding, which the report called on the G7 and G20 countries to provide. The WHO should elaborate a strategy with appropriate timelines and benchmarks to definitively end the pandemic as a global health threat.

In the longer term, a transformation of the international system was required. A global health threats council should be established at the level of Heads of State in order to maintain and mobilize the current commitment to responding to the pandemic. Such a council should be coupled with a dedicated pandemic financing facility with preparedness funding of at least US\$ 10 billion, which could be rapidly scaled up to US\$ 100 billion if necessary. The ACT Accelerator should be transformed into a durable convention and the WHO should be further strengthened. Finally, the report called for a special session of the UN General Assembly later in 2021 with a view to reaching an agreement on the political declaration needed for such reforms.

The Secretary General said that health should not be politicized; health care was a right, not a favour by governments to their citizens. All States had survived the COVID-19 pandemic but many individuals had lost their lives or their livelihoods, and the focus of the recovery should be people, not abstract ideas. Parliaments had become more relevant than ever in the crisis and had proven their resilience in defending people's rights. It was clear that the post-pandemic period would not be a return to business as usual and thus provided a valuable opportunity to build forward better. Multilateralism was the means to achieve that, but needed to evolve accordingly. A new brand of multilateralism was required, in the service of the people and with the partnerships evoked by the panellists at its core.

In the ensuing discussion, the panellists responded to questions raised by the delegations of **Austria, Canada, Guyana, Togo and the United Arab Emirates**, on the subjects of a potential waiver of the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement for COVID-19 vaccines; the potential implementation of a natural capital system to recognize the link between economic recovery and the environment; the slow speed of approval of the vaccines developed in China and Russia; a suggestion that the IPU should exert more pressure to ensure that vaccines were distributed more equitably worldwide; and support to small- and medium-sized enterprises and young entrepreneurs in the post-COVID-19 recovery.

2. Participation

Delegations from 133 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Assembly:*

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The following five Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), the Parliamentary Assembly of la Francophonie (APF).

* For the complete list of IPU Members, see [page 31](#)

Observers included representatives of:

(i) the World Health Organization (WHO); (ii) parliamentary assemblies and associations: African Parliamentary Union (APU), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR), Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TurkPA), Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia; and (iii) international political party federations: Liberal International (LI), Socialist International; and the Committee to Represent the Union Assembly of Myanmar (CRPH).

Of the 1,073 delegates who attended the Assembly, 755 were members of parliament. Those parliamentarians included 52 Presiding Officers, 38 Deputy Presiding Officers, 288 women MPs (38.1%) and 193 (25.6%) young MPs.

The figure of 38.1% of delegates being women (see [page 74](#)) was a record high. The previous record was 32.9% women delegates, which was reached twice, in 2016 and 2018. In addition, 44 out of 133 delegations (33.1%) were gender-balanced, i.e. they included no less than 40% of members of either sex (see list on [page 75](#)). This was up from 30 gender-balanced delegations (20.1%) at the 141st Assembly. Of the 133 delegations in attendance, 129 were composed of at least two delegates. Among those, eight were composed exclusively of men (6.2%) and two were composed exclusively of women (1.6%). Five delegations were sanctioned at the 142nd Assembly for being composed exclusively of representatives of the same sex for two Assemblies in a row.

3. Virtual Event Platform

In January 2021, the Executive Committee decided that – in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic – the 142nd IPU Assembly would be held in virtual format. The Assembly programme would include meetings of the IPU’s statutory bodies, adoption of resolutions, interactive debates, pre-recorded video submissions, elections for the various IPU bodies, as well as decision-making by the Governing Council. In the same way as the IPU’s in-person meetings, the virtual event had to be accessible, inclusive and offer an equal opportunity for all Members’ voices to be heard.

When the Secretariat analysed the meeting requirements, budget constraints and tight deadlines, it was determined that a combination of platforms would provide the best solution. The smaller drafting committee, Bureau and Executive Committee meetings were held on Zoom. The first Standing Committee meetings were held on a Simultaneous Interpretation Delivery Platform (SIDP), namely Interprefy. Larger meetings, spread over three weeks in May, took place on the dedicated IPU 142 Virtual Event Platform (VEP)

The custom-branded VEP provided registered participants with a single online entry point to the 142nd Assembly. Members of Parliament and guest speakers had access to the WebEx meeting where they could take the floor, use the chat feature, and listen to the debates in their preferred language. Delegates without speaking roles followed the live sessions through the portal, where interpretation was also available. The VEP had a Video on Demand section with recordings of all sessions, as well as a Programme page. The documents section included the CVs and videos of candidates for the vacancies on various IPU bodies.

The ease of access for the user, the centrality of all related information, the integration with the various other tools that the IPU uses such as the Assembly App and WhatsApp, together with the diversity of the content delivery options all made the VEP the right “venue” for the 142nd Assembly. Statistics from the VEP showed that IPU Members whole-heartedly adopted the virtual experience. During the Assembly week itself, more than 300 MPs from over 110 Parliaments connected daily to the WebEx sessions, with another 800 delegates following proceedings through live-streaming.

4. Interactive debate

The IPU President introduced the interactive debate on the overall theme, *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments*, and invited the newly elected President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the newly elected President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians to take the floor.

Ms. Lesia Vasylenko (Ukraine), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, outlined the deliberations of the Bureau and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians on a gender-responsive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting four main points. Firstly, parliaments must strive for complete gender parity in decision-making, ensuring inclusive leadership in both the public and private sectors with a view to setting an ambitious, gender-responsive and green recovery agenda.

Secondly, the gender inequalities in the economy exposed by the pandemic must be addressed, through stronger social protection schemes, affordable childcare services and robust support to the care economy.

Thirdly, parliaments must step up their efforts to prevent and address the shadow pandemic of increasing violence against women, including online.

Finally, parliaments must be models of gender sensitivity, as spaces where women could fully contribute, with family-friendly and anti-harassment policies, free of stereotypes, and where every policy was analysed through a gender lens.

Ms. Sahar Albazar (Egypt), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, spoke on the recent work of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, noting in particular the recently launched IPU campaign *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament*.

With a view to ensuring a youth-responsive recovery from the pandemic, the Forum called on parliamentarians to encourage greater investment in education to ensure no one was left behind; to pay greater attention and increase access to youth health services, notably mental and sexual health; and to increase investment in youth employment, access to credit and stronger social safety nets.

A stronger, more united and more resilient recovery could only be assured if the needs and interests of the young generation were kept high on the agenda.

During the ensuing deliberations, 56 legislators from Member Parliaments, including 16 Presiding Officers and two young parliamentarians, as well as the Presiding Officer of an Associate Member, contributed to the debate. Pre-recorded video messages from 13 Member Parliaments and one Associate Member were also shown. All [speeches and statements](#) submitted to the IPU Secretariat, for the Assembly and the Standing Committees, were made available on the IPU website.

5. Debates and decisions of the Standing Committees

(a) Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held two virtual sittings, on 26 April and 17 May, chaired by its President, Mr. J.I. Echániz (Spain).

During its first sitting, the Committee discussed the general theme of the 142nd Assembly, *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments* from the perspective of peace and security, with a view to contributing to the Assembly's final declaration. After an introduction by the keynote speaker, Mr. O. Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support at the United Nations, 17 parliamentarians from 16 Member Parliaments took the floor to express their views. During the sitting, two videos were shown: one on the work done by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during the COVID-19 pandemic and the second on women, peace and security to celebrate 20 years since UN Security Council resolution 1325.

The resolution *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences* could not be negotiated in plenary session due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In accordance with the Special Rules of Procedure for the virtual sessions of the Assembly and Standing Committees, a drafting committee was mandated to finalize the resolution, which it did in a meeting on 22 April 2021. This drafting committee, composed of the co-rapporteurs and parliamentarians nominated by the geopolitical groups, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians examined 130 proposals for amendments to the resolution submitted by 16 Member Parliaments. 45 per cent of the amendments received before the deadline and numerous sub-amendments were approved. The version thus reviewed by the drafting committee was then submitted to all Member Parliaments for adoption through the silence procedure.

During its second sitting, the Committee was informed of the result of the silence procedure for adoption of the resolution, taking note that it was thus considered adopted. It was also informed of reservations expressed on the resolution in its entirety by India and Turkey and on specific points and paragraphs by China, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Nicaragua, Poland and Thailand. A short debate was then held to allow Members to explain their position on the resolution or how they intended to implement it. The debate was introduced by Ms. C. Roth (Germany), co-rapporteur of the resolution, and gave 10 parliamentarians the opportunity to take the floor. In the afternoon of 27 May, the Committee's resolution was submitted to the Assembly in its plenary session, which adopted it by consensus.

The Bureau of the Standing Committee met on 13 April to discuss the Committee's next subject item and work programme. On the basis of proposals drafted by the Secretariat in the absence of subject item proposals from the Member Parliaments, the Bureau unanimously agreed that the Committee's next subject item would be: *Rethinking and reframing approaches to peace processes with a view to fostering lasting peace*. This subject item was submitted to the Members for adoption via the silence procedure and no objections were received. The President informed the Committee of this decision during its final sitting and announced that Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden) had put herself forward as a co-rapporteur. He added that the designation of the other co-rapporteurs would be left to the IPU President, in accordance with the Standing Committee Rules. In its plenary session on 27 May, the Assembly took note of the choice of subject item, which will thus be the subject of a resolution at the 144th Assembly, and of the nomination of one co-rapporteur.

During its final sitting, the Committee also approved its work programme for the 143rd Assembly on the proposal of the Bureau. It agreed to focus its work on the following activities: a hearing with experts on the theme of its next resolution and two panel discussions. The first of these would be on the role of parliaments in addressing the risks of diversion in arms transfers and the second on the application of traditional and human security concepts in assessing security threats to devise ways to foster peace globally.

A presentation of the process for revising the IPU's five-year Strategy concluded the Committee's work. In particular, the members of the Committee were informed of the various ways in which they could participate in that process. To close the sitting, the video presenting the work of the IAEA during the COVID-19 pandemic was shown again.

(b) Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development held its sittings on 27 April and 18 May with its President, Ms. V. Muzenda Tsitsi (Zimbabwe), in the chair. The first sitting, which was held jointly with the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, debated the overall theme of the Assembly *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments*. Details of the debate are provided in the [report](#) of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs.

Due to the constraints of the virtual format, the draft resolution *Mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy to achieve the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production* was revised by a drafting committee. The drafting committee was composed of members of parliament nominated by the geopolitical groups; the representatives of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians; and the co-Rapporteurs, Ms. S. Dinică (Romania) and Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium). They considered 88 amendments submitted by 12 Member Parliaments. The revised draft was submitted to the Members for adoption through the silence procedure, during which the Parliaments of India and Nicaragua submitted reservations on the text.

In its second sitting the Committee took note that the resolution had been adopted through the written silence procedure. It also took note of the reservations. The Committee held a debate on the theme *How can the IPU resolution inspire and guide parliamentary work and action on digitalization and the circular economy?* Representatives of eight parliaments took the floor. They highlighted the relevance of the resolution and the need for countries to step up their efforts on digitalization and the promotion of the circular economy. It was also emphasized during the debate that issues such as privacy, and challenges related to technology and human rights were becoming increasingly important and should be considered going forward.

The Committee approved the 10 nominations for Bureau membership received from the geopolitical groups. It also approved a second mandate for the Bureau members from Armenia, Netherlands, Pakistan and Thailand, and took note that the Bureau members from Iraq and Morocco had not expressed their wish to continue serving for a second term.

The Committee approved the theme of the next resolution titled *Leveraging Information and Communication Technology as an enabler for the education sector, including in times of pandemic*. The Committee approved the nomination of Mr. S. Patra (India) and Ms. H. Järvinen (Finland) as co-Rapporteurs. It also approved a work plan for the next Assembly, which included a debate on the theme of the next resolution and a panel on the theme *Impact of climate change on natural resources: How can parliaments ensure inclusive water access and availability?*

At the end of the Committee's session, Ms. F. Martonffy (consultant) updated the members on the preparations underway for the next IPU Strategy.

(c) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights held two sittings in the run-up to the 142nd IPU Assembly.

On 28 April, the Committee met to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on democracy and human rights, and on the functioning of parliaments. On 18 May, the Committee held a preparatory debate on the theme of the next resolution *Legislation worldwide to combat online sexual child exploitation*. The Committee appointed a third co-Rapporteur for the resolution, Mr. P. Limjaroenrat (Thailand), to join Ms. A. Gerkens (Netherlands) and Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya), who had been appointed as co-Rapporteurs at the 141st IPU Assembly.

At its last sitting on 18 May, the Committee elected a number of new members to the Bureau, on the basis of the nominations from the geopolitical groups.

(d) Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs met on 27 and 29 April in two virtual sittings: the first sitting was held in cooperation with the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development on the overall theme of the Assembly, and at the second sitting the Committee members considered the implications of the Declaration issued at the conclusion of the September 2020 High-level Meeting to Commemorate the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (UN75).

On 27 April, 75 members of parliament participated in and at least 150 others observed the meeting. Three key messages emerged: the post-COVID-19 recovery must lead to systemic changes; the green, circular and care economies were key to sustainable development with health being the key to true prosperity; the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted governance weaknesses and stark inequalities within and between many nations. Vaccine access inequality affected all humans on the planet, not just those in poor countries.

On 29 April, 45 members of parliament participated along with three prominent United Nations ambassadors and a representative of the UN Secretary-General. The sitting included a live poll on key elements of the UN75 Declaration *Our Common Agenda*. Multilateral approaches were needed to respond to the pandemic and tackle pressing challenges such as climate change. People's trust in governments and in the multilateral regime could only be restored by effectively addressing problems on the ground.

6. Conclusion of the Assembly

Concluding the second and final sitting of the Assembly on 27 May, the IPU President said that the outcome document on the overall theme, *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments* was clear in its call for parliamentarians to work towards a future where no-one would be left behind. The document provided concrete evidence of the success of the virtual Assembly despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Parliamentarians had been able to make the most of the unique opportunity to discuss important issues, find solutions and reach a consensus on tangible actions for the future.

Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union summarized the content of the outcome document, which he believed fully captured the deliberations of the interactive debate, the Standing Committees, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

The Assembly unanimously endorsed the outcome document.

The Secretary General expressed his personal satisfaction with the way in which the virtual Assembly had proceeded, which he believed had shown that the IPU had been able to adapt and successfully transform itself in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He thanked the IPU President and all participants for their contributions, which would be used to inform the ongoing revision of the IPU's five-year strategy.

In his closing remarks, the President expressed his thanks to the Member Parliaments for approving the special rules of procedure, without which it would not have been possible to hold the Assembly and its related meetings in virtual form. The 142nd Assembly had been an important occasion for parliamentarians to demonstrate to the world their tireless work in fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic, reinvigorating the economy and pushing their governments to take the right actions to build a better future for all. Those efforts must continue and in the coming months they would be facilitated by many more virtual meetings and events organized by the IPU. He hoped that as many delegations as possible would be able to attend the in-person segment of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Vienna in September 2021.

A video message from **Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka, President of the Austrian National Council**, inviting delegates to the in-person segment of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, was shown.

Thanking all the participants again for their support and engagement, the IPU President declared the 142nd IPU Assembly closed.

207th session of the Governing Council

1. Adoption of the Special Rules of Procedure for the virtual sessions of the Assembly and Standing Committees

In January 2021, the Executive Committee established a Working Group to propose special rules of procedure to regulate the conduct of virtual sessions of the Assembly and Standing Committees (142nd Assembly as well as possible future Assemblies held in virtual format) based primarily on the Special Rules of Procedure adopted for the virtual session of the Governing Council in November 2020. The Special Rules of Procedure – prepared by the IPU Secretariat in collaboration with an independent legal counsel, Professor G.L. Burci of the Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies – were subsequently approved by the Executive Committee in March 2021.

Following their approval, the Executive Committee submitted the Special Rules to the Member Parliaments. By the specified deadline, no Member Parliament had expressed objections to the Special Rules. Having concluded that there was overwhelming support for the Special Rules of Procedure, the Executive Committee considered them adopted and submitted them to the Governing Council.

The Council therefore formally adopted the Special Rules of Procedure for the virtual sessions of the Assembly and Standing Committees (see [page 56](#)).

2. Vision of the IPU President and report on his activities since the 206th session of the Governing Council

The Governing Council took note of the activities of the new President, Mr. D. Pacheco, since his election in November 2020 and his vision for the future.

The President stressed the necessity of working together as a basis for the successful implementation of the activities of the IPU, and expressed his belief that inclusiveness was critical to that aim. The geopolitical groups should therefore be further involved in the IPU's activities so as to make the Organization more inclusive, as all IPU Members and their contributions were equally important.

The President articulated his vision around the following points: consolidating the principles of good governance; reinforcing the IPU's visibility and status as an important actor in the international arena; strengthening democratic principles and human rights in all geographical regions; consolidating gender and youth equality in politics; and promoting universal membership of the IPU.

The President's activities had been based on that vision, and included attendance at sixty-one meetings and six official visits within the six months following his election in November 2020, despite the restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The President commended the conducive environment put in place by the Secretary General and his team to support him in carrying out his activities.

Representatives of delegations then took the floor to concur with the President on the values his vision conveyed and acknowledge his efforts to give new impetus to the Organization. They pledged support to the implementation of his initiatives during his tenure as challenges were growing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the Governing Council invited him to share his vision with national parliaments on the occasion of more regional visits.

On the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Governing Council approved the creation of the Cremer-Passy Prize. The prize was intended as an incentive and symbolic recognition for significant actions by parliamentarians in favour of citizens.

3. Annual Impact Report by the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU in 2020

The Governing Council took note of the [Annual Impact Report](#) by the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU in 2020, a year of smooth transition that had witnessed the change of the IPU presidency and the holding of numerous virtual meetings due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Governing Council welcomed the specific tools developed by the Secretariat to tackle the pandemic-related challenges that had particularly impacted several areas of interest. These included the guidelines for addressing violence against women, which was growing during the pandemic; and a guidance note for parliaments on human rights and COVID-19.

In the same vein, the Governing Council welcomed the IPU's increasing efforts to promote dialogue, which had proved relevant both to address global challenges and to find lasting solutions, especially for a resilient post-COVID-19 era.

The Governing Council also endorsed several recommendations of the Executive Committee that had already been submitted for approval through the written silence procedure. These included:

- new Memorandums of Understanding with specialized agencies of the United Nations, namely the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict;
- the terms of reference and modalities for the new IPU Working Group on Science and Technology;
- the Report of an independent consultant on a Comprehensive Transparency, Accountability and Openness Strategy for the IPU, regarding which the Governing Council gave its green light to the Secretary General to move ahead with the implementation of the main recommendations.

The Governing Council encouraged the ongoing efforts to promote cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations, considered as two sides of the same coin, which helped to give a parliamentary perspective to discussions on global issues.

The Governing Council was appraised of the progress of the roadmap for the update of the IPU Strategy for 2022 to 2026. In light of the primary parliamentary commitment to defend citizens' interests, the Governing Council concurred that people should be put at the centre of the Strategy and that the necessary arrangements should be made so that the Strategy would be ready for endorsement during the next IPU Assembly in November 2021 as planned. Those arrangements included parliamentarians' contribution to the process through their responses to a recently issued survey.

The Governing Council was thankful to the Secretary General and his team for the valuable support provided to the ongoing process.

The Governing Council acknowledged and commended the resilience shown by both the IPU and its Secretariat despite the major constraints they had faced in 2020. It welcomed and encouraged the close collaboration of the IPU President and the Secretary General, which was testimony of a healthy working environment at the top of the Organization.

The Governing Council also paid tribute to the staff of the Secretariat for their tireless efforts to keep business running especially during the difficult times of the pandemic.

4. Elections to the Executive Committee and other IPU bodies

The Governing Council conducted a number of elections during its 207th session.

Firstly, it elected Mr. Ali Rashed Al Noaymi (United Arab Emirates) of the Arab Group to the Executive Committee for a four-year term ending in April 2025.

It then endorsed the nominations by the different geopolitical groups to the other bodies, as reflected in document CL/207/6-R.1.

The Governing Council then proceeded with a series of votes for the election of the members of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and the Committee on Middle East Questions, for which the members were elected in their individual capacity and in line with the usual gender requirements.

The following members were elected to the:

- (a) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians:
 - Mr. S. Cogolati (Belgium)
 - Mr. S. Spengemann (Canada)
 - Mr. B. Mbuku Laka (Democratic Republic of Congo)
 - Ms. L. Quartapelle (Italy)
 - Ms. C. Urbano de Sousa (Portugal)
 - Ms. C. Asiain Pereira (Uruguay)
- (b) Committee on Middle East Questions
 - Mr. G. Migliore (Italy) and
 - Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey), who was elected unopposed as the only woman MP among the candidates.

5. Financial results for 2020

The Governing Council considered the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2020. The Financial Statements had been prepared in full compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the accounts of the IPU and the closed Pension Fund were consolidated into a single set of financial statements.

The financial results for 2020 were introduced by Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden), Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance. She reported that the new External Auditor had expressed to her that the financial statements were accurate and that he had received constant support from the IPU finance team. The audit was carried out remotely, offsite, due to travel restrictions. The auditors found the IPU to be a healthy organization with strong internal controls. During the year under review, the net assets had increased by CHF 1.7 million due to the COVID-19 pandemic having resulted in the cancellation and postponement of in-person meetings. Investment performance had ended 2020 positively after a difficult period and had continued to increase in 2021. At the end of 2020, the Working Capital Fund stood at 96 per cent of its target level.

Voluntary contributions and related expenditure remained stable and new countries and partners were now bringing their support to the IPU. The Chair of the Sub-Committee drew attention to the fact that three quarters of the 2021 assessed contributions had already been paid and thanked Members for their commitment despite the global crisis. Nevertheless, the number of Members in arrears of their assessed contributions had increased, and twelve Members were currently at risk of potential suspension of their IPU membership rights later in the year. All IPU bodies should work together in making every effort to prevent this.

The Internal Auditor's report was presented by Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium). He conveyed his opinion that the accounts gave a true and fair reflection of the financial situation of the IPU at 31 December 2020 and complied with all current standards and rules. The External Auditor had expressed no reservations on the Financial Statements, noting the good quality of the financial statements and confirming that all previous recommendations had been fully implemented. Two new recommendations were made, to continue to tailor the IPU risk assessment framework to the COVID-19 environment, and to adapt the format of Note 15 to mirror the budget document more closely. The overall result for the year 2020 was to increase the reserves of the IPU. The financial management of the IPU had a strong foundation based on internal controls and its financial position was healthy.

The Secretary General supplemented these reports with a summary of the mobilization of voluntary funds towards implementation of the IPU's Strategy. The voluntary funding base was solid and new partners were coming forward with support.

There were several comments from the floor, congratulating the Sub-Committee on Finance and the Secretariat for the excellent results achieved and for the adherence to strong and effective financial management. The commitment to transparency and accountability in the IPU's financial processes was very much appreciated.

The Governing Council approved the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2020.

6. Questions relating to the IPU membership

The Governing Council was apprised of the ongoing efforts by the President and the Secretary General to ensure universal IPU membership, including the return of the US Congress. However, it noted that it was beholden on Member Parliaments and the geopolitical groups to take appropriate action – namely drawing on their relationship with the leadership of the non-Member Parliaments – to achieve an increase in membership. In this view, the Governing Council was grateful for the efforts of Mr. N. Manzoor, Speaker of the National Assembly of Guyana, as well as the Secretariat of GRULAC with regard to outreach to non-Member Parliaments in the Caribbean. It further welcomed both Australia and New-Zealand's support in encouraging the non-Member Parliaments in the Pacific to join the IPU.

In light of the exceptional circumstances that had prevented Mali and Zimbabwe from paying their arrears, the Governing Council authorized their participation, with full rights, in the 142nd IPU Assembly.

The Council was apprised of the situation of certain parliaments and endorsed the related recommendations made by the Executive Committee, as follows.

Regarding Yemen, the Governing Council endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee to recognize the Parliament of Seiyun, as the representative of Yemen to the IPU, in line with the recognition by the United Nations of the government with which that parliament was aligned. It encouraged the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to continue its review of the cases of parliamentarians in Yemen. It instructed the Secretary General to support the parliament of Seiyun in becoming a fully fledged parliament.

The Governing Council endorsed the recommendation by the Executive Committee to postpone any decision on Venezuela's membership to the next IPU Assembly, when it would be provided with a report containing first-hand information gathered by an IPU mission to the country.

The Governing Council expressed its concern about the ongoing political situation in Myanmar. The Governing Council endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee, to invite, in solidarity with the people of Myanmar, the Committee Representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) as observer to the IPU Assembly. It requested the Secretary General of the IPU to continue monitoring the situation.

The Governing Council endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee to remove Thailand and Burundi from its list of countries of concern, in light of positive developments in those countries, but recommended to continue working closely with and providing technical assistance to the two parliaments concerned.

7. Future inter-parliamentary meetings

The Council approved the list of future meetings and other activities to be funded by the IPU's regular budget and by external sources (see [page 76](#)).

The Council endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee, on the request of the Parliament of Rwanda, to postpone the IPU Assembly due to be held in Kigali in November 2021 to October 2022 in light of ongoing uncertainty with regard to holding the meeting in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this view, the Governing Council asked the Secretary General of the IPU to make alternative proposals for the holding of the 143rd Assembly in autumn 2021 as soon as possible.

In line with ongoing uncertainty due to the pandemic, and considering the benefits of in-person meetings, the Governing Council mandated the Secretary General to explore further the possibilities of holding hybrid meetings.

The Governing Council endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee to hold the 144th Assembly in Indonesia on 20-24 March 2022.

8. Reports of plenary bodies and specialized committees

The Governing Council took note of the reports on the activities of the [Forum of Women Parliamentarians](#), the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the [Committee on Middle East Questions](#), the [Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law](#) and the [Advisory Group on Health](#), the [Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU](#), and the [High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism \(HLAG\)](#)

The Council endorsed the [statement on parliamentary action in support of ending statelessness](#) by the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, the [statement on the occasion of the 2021 United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS](#) by the Advisory Group on Health, and the [statement on Yemen](#) by the Committee on Middle East Questions (page [54](#), [52](#) and [55](#)).

The Council approved [eight decisions](#) concerning 152 parliamentarians submitted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. The Council noted the reservations of the delegations of Egypt, Turkey and Zimbabwe concerning the cases in their respective countries, and the comments by Palestine related to its cases.

285th session of the Executive Committee

1. Debates and decisions

The Executive Committee held its 285th session virtually over seven sittings, on 18 and 22 January, 8 February, 22 March, 9 and 19 April, and 19-20 May 2021 respectively.

The President of the IPU chaired the meetings and the following members took part in at least one sitting:

Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), Mr. G. Gali Ngothé (Chad), Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile), Mr. Chen Guomin (China), Mr. R. Rabbani (Pakistan), Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal), Mr. M. Grujic (Serbia), Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden), Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland), Ms. P. Krairiksh (Thailand), Ms. E. Anyakun (Uganda), Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay), Mr. A. Saidov (Uzbekistan), Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), Ms. S. Kihika (Kenya) in her capacity as President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, and Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname) in his capacity as President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt) was absent.

The Secretary General attended all the sittings, assisted by staff members of the Secretariat where relevant. Ms. F. Martonffy (Consultant for the IPU Strategy) attended the session on 19 April.

The Executive Committee took note of a report by the President on his vision for the IPU, in particular his hopes that a virtual Assembly could be held in the first part of 2021, that the visibility of the IPU could be improved, that links with the United Nations could be further strengthened and that the IPU could reach universal membership.

Members of the Executive Committee concurred with and pledged their support for the President's vision. They recommended that the IPU continue promoting and evolving its core values, including peace, democracy, human rights, gender equality, youth empowerment, multilateralism and achieving the SDGs. They suggested that the Secretariat come up with a programme of meetings for the geopolitical groups and Standing Committees even if a full Assembly could not be held, as it was important to engage parliamentarians locally and regionally with a view to promoting the work of the IPU.

The Executive Committee believed that, in light of the President's vision, the IPU must adopt a people-centred, cost-effective and results-oriented approach. In that view, they suggested that the IPU play a leading role in: fighting the COVID-19 pandemic by mobilizing all resources towards a targeted, science-based response and enhancing international solidarity and cooperation; promoting peace and development; accommodating the needs of developing countries, especially African countries; and turning the diversity of the world into a constant source of inspiration for human progress. The vision for the Organization must be worthy of the people's trust, with all stakeholders working together as a team.

The Executive Committee was briefed on plans for holding the 142nd Assembly in virtual format and convened a working group to examine special rules of procedure for virtual sessions of the Assembly and Standing Committees. The Executive Committee welcomed and further revised the proposals presented by the Chair of the working group, Mr. Mudenda, Speaker of the Parliament of Zimbabwe. The Executive Committee subsequently endorsed the special rules of procedure and recommended to submit them to Member Parliaments for approval through the written silence procedure.

The Executive Committee approved a roadmap for the update of the IPU Strategy for 2022-2026 on 22 January and held an extensive discussion on 19 April with a view to gathering input into the process from members.

The Executive Committee examined and approved a memorandum of understanding between the IPU and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Executive Committee endorsed the proposed terms of reference for the Working Group on Science and Technology.

The Executive Committee approved a proposal by the President to institute the Cremer-Passy Prize, to be awarded annually to a parliamentarian or group of parliamentarians who had made an outstanding contribution to the defence and promotion of the IPU's objectives as well as those who had contributed to a more united, fair, secure, sustainable and equitable world. The Executive Committee endorsed the proposed rules and modalities for the prize and submitted them to the Governing Council.

The Executive Committee discussed the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings and took note of the difficulties encountered with the organization of the 143rd Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda in November 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Committee expressed its desire for a hybrid Assembly to be held in autumn 2021 if the Kigali Assembly could not proceed as planned.

The Executive Committee examined the Impact Report for 2020 and heard a report from the Secretary General on the Organization's activities. The Executive Committee congratulated the Secretary General and the Secretariat on a successful year, particularly given the difficult circumstances of the pandemic.

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

The Secretary General presented the note on the situation of universal membership as it currently stood. The note was intended as a call for more robust action not only by the Executive Committee but also by the Governing Council and the wider membership. Universal membership should not only exist in terms of numbers but also in terms of quality, namely active participation in the Organization's work.

The IPU had seen a substantial increase in its membership in recent years, growing from 155 to 179 Member Parliaments since 2010. The increase could be attributed to the fact that the IPU was being considered more and more relevant by the global parliamentary community. Nevertheless, it was important to further expand the membership and embrace the totality of parliaments around the world. Out of the 193 Member States of the United Nations, the IPU was lacking 14. Among those were a few small island developing States in the Pacific and the Caribbean, and two founding Members: Liberia and the United States. The Executive Committee had discussed the situation of the US Congress at length, stressing the importance of having such a key player in the IPU. Liberia had not been able to engage with the IPU as a result of political instability. However, the IPU had been relentless in its efforts to get the country back. It was hoped that certain actors in the Middle East could help with relations with the Liberian Parliament.

The Executive Committee took note of a number of encouraging actions undertaken in view of supporting universal membership. These included the Parliamentary Solidarity Fund, established by the IPU to support non-Member Parliaments that wished to attend IPU meetings. The IPU also organized regular information seminars to which non-Member Parliaments were invited so that they could familiarize themselves with the benefits of IPU membership.

The Executive Committee welcomed and encouraged the implementation of the list of general recommendations in the note aimed at achieving universal membership. These included: putting universal membership as a standard affair on the agenda of the President and the Secretary General; organizing virtual consultations between the President, the Secretary General and the leadership of those parliaments in arrears; establishing a programme of visits by the President and the Secretary General, with support from the Executive Committee and the Governing Council; organizing specific activities in the countries concerned, including capacity building programmes; and reviewing the modalities of the Parliamentary Solidarity Fund to make it more agile and effective in promoting universal membership.

The Executive Committee extensively discussed the situation in Venezuela over the course of its seven sittings. On 9 April, the Executive Committee agreed to delay its decision on Venezuela's membership of the IPU until a mission to the country could be carried out and the delegation had reported back on its findings. On 19 April, the Executive Committee approved draft terms of reference for such a mission to take place in May.

The Executive Committee subsequently agreed to report to the Governing Council that it had not been possible to carry out the mission before the 142nd Assembly as initially planned, as it needed to be prepared with great care, including in terms of determining the composition of the delegation and identifying experts in elections to join the mission (discussions were under way in this regard with the Kofi Annan Foundation). In the meantime, no delegation from Venezuela would attend the 142nd IPU Assembly. The Governing Council was expected to receive the report of the IPU mission to Venezuela at its 208th session in November 2021.

The Executive Committee discussed the situation in Myanmar and decided not to recommend the suspension of Myanmar's membership in the IPU, as this would intrinsically signify recognition of the military coup of January 2021. The Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), which included freely elected parliamentarians, would be invited to attend the 142nd Assembly as an observer.

The Executive Committee heard a report from the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CHRP) on the various cases under consideration in Turkey, as well as a response from the Turkish delegation to the IPU. The Executive Committee adopted a number of follow-up actions, namely to continue to monitor the situation in Turkey closely, for the CHRP to pursue its efforts with regard to the cases under consideration, and for Member Parliaments to raise the human rights cases in their bilateral engagements or through other appropriate platforms.

The Executive Committee considered the situation in Yemen and agreed to recognize the House of Representatives in Seiyun as the legitimate representative of Yemen to the IPU. The Executive Committee also agreed on several follow-up actions, namely to encourage pluralistic participation by Yemen in the IPU based on the 2003 parliamentary elections, to make efforts to facilitate a resolution to the Yemeni conflict through parliamentary action, to raise the situation of Yemen and human rights cases in bilateral engagements or through other appropriate platforms, and to encourage support for humanitarian efforts in the country.

The Executive Committee further considered the situation of certain other parliaments that were not functioning (Haiti and Sudan), that were experiencing a major political crisis (Chad, Libya and Mali) or that were undergoing other political crises (Bolivia, Burundi, Cambodia, Guinea-Bissau, Kyrgyzstan, Palestine, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Thailand). The Executive Committee agreed that the situations in Burundi and Thailand had improved to the extent that they could now be removed from the list of parliaments being monitored closely.

3. Financial questions

The Executive Committee heard the report of Ms. C. Widegren, Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, who recommended the 2020 financial statements and the external audit report to the Executive Committee for its approval.

The Sub-Committee on Finance had met on 18 May 2021 to prepare and facilitate the Executive Committee's consideration of financial and budgetary matters. It had carefully examined all the financial documents including the financial results, the External Auditor's report, the current financial situation and voluntary funding update. It had been pleased to note from the positive audit opinion and report from the new External Auditor (the Comptroller and Auditor General of India) that the IPU's financial situation was healthy, its internal controls were strong and the IPU's accounts were again fully IPSAS-compliant. Net assets had increased by CHF 1.7 million, with the operational surplus being explained by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel, meeting and operating costs following the cancellation or postponement of certain meetings during the year. Investment performance had ended the year positively and the Working Capital Fund stood at 96 per cent of its target level. The Chair of the Sub-Committee drew attention to the fact that the arrears of assessed contributions from Members were higher than in previous years and asked the geopolitical groups to draw Members' attention to their responsibility to pay their dues.

The Sub-Committee had noted the positive trends in mobilizing voluntary contributions. It looked forward to its preparations for the 2022 budget once the pillars of the new Strategy had been defined by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee thanked the Sub-Committee and the Secretariat for the work performed and recommended that the Governing Council should approve the financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2020.

4. Questions relating to the Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

The Executive Committee was informed of staff movements and promotions.

Forum and Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The 31st session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians was held virtually on 10 and 12 May 2021. It brought together 78 participants, including 57 delegates from 34 countries. There were 53 women and 4 men among the parliamentarians who attended the Forum.

The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. S. Kihika (Kenya), presided over the 31st session of the Forum. The President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. D. Pacheco, opened the session and welcomed the participants.

By way of contributing to the General Debate of the Assembly on the overall theme *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments*, participants engaged in an interactive discussion on the gendered dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic and gender-responsive recovery post-COVID-19. Participants called for the equal participation of women in decision-making and urged parliaments to prioritize parliamentary actions that: included women – of marginalized groups as well – in the design and implementation of pandemic relief and recovery economic policies; aimed at the adoption of measures to reintegrate women in the labour market and addressed the gender pay gap; ensured access to affordable childcare; promoted long-term investment in social protection systems for all women, including those in the informal sector; and ensured prevention of violence against women and girls and the provision of essential services to protect and support survivors.

The Forum also examined the two draft resolutions on the agenda of the 142nd Assembly and the inclusion of a gender perspective in each of them. Ms. C. Roth (Germany), co-Rapporteur of the draft resolution considered by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, gave a brief overview of the draft resolution *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences*. Ms. Kihika, on behalf of the Bureau, further explained how a gender perspective was integrated in the resolution. Ms. S. Dinică (Romania), co-Rapporteur of the draft resolution *Mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy to achieve the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production*, considered by the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, briefed the participants on the resolution. On behalf of the Bureau, Ms. H. Al-Helaissi (Saudi Arabia), gave an overview of how gender was mainstreamed in the resolution. Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya), co-Rapporteur of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, introduced the theme of that Committee's next resolution entitled *Legislation worldwide to combat online sexual child exploitation* to be considered at the 143rd Assembly. Following a discussion on that theme, the Forum proposed to share their first preliminary gender considerations with the co-Rapporteurs of the upcoming draft resolution.

The Forum held a panel discussion titled *Generation Equality in and through parliaments*. The discussion focused on the role of parliaments in achieving gender equality, with emphasis on the empowerment and leadership of youth and adolescent girls. The exchange opened with presentations by: Ms. L. Banerjee (Executive Coordinator of the Generation Equality Forum, UN Women), Mr. H. Vasconcelos (Mexico), Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), and Khesavi (Mauritius), a female youth empowerment advocate. Participants addressed the IPU's role as co-leader of Generation Equality's Action Coalition on feminist movements and leadership, and how parliaments could promote gender parity in politics and ensure the presence of diverse groups of young women leaders in all areas of decision-making. Strategies to repeal discriminatory laws and push for new legislation that guaranteed women's rights and gender equality, as well as to achieve gender-responsive budgeting and the elimination of gender-based violence both in politics and in domestic life were also discussed.

The Forum elected representatives to fill half of the seats of regional representatives and other vacancies on the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. Since, due to the pandemic, elections had not been held in 2020, the Forum decided to extend by one year the term of the regional representatives whose terms were due to end in 2022 in keeping with the Rules of the Forum. The updated list of members of the Bureau can be found on [page 64](#).

Following the Bureau's proposal, the Forum also elected Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) to fill the post of President, and Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain) to the post of First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. The position of Second Vice-President remained vacant and would be filled when the Bureau and Forum met again at the 143rd Assembly.

Forum and Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians convened on 13 and 17 May 2021. The Forum was presided by the President of the Forum Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname). It brought together 46 participants, including 40 delegates from 24 countries. There were 20 women and 20 men among the young parliamentarians who attended the Forum.

Marking the beginning of a new chapter in the advancement of youth participation and in the implementation of the 2010 IPU resolution *Youth participation in the democratic process*, the Forum launched the fourth IPU report entitled *Youth participation in national parliaments* and the IPU campaign *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!*

The participants stressed that young people were a key part of any democracy and that it was their right to be included in political decision-making. They praised the role that young people were playing in supporting the elderly and other vulnerable groups and countering disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to promoting democracy, climate action and combatting racism and exclusion. They considered the Outcome document of the Seventh Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, held on 28 and 29 April 2021, and agreed to have it as the contribution from a youth perspective to the 142nd IPU Assembly. Further, they stressed the importance of stepping up investments in sectors that impacted youth empowerment and rallied behind the central participation of young men and women in decisions both during the pandemic and in its aftermath.

The Forum approved the nominations made by the geopolitical groups for membership of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians for the period 2021–2023 and the election by the new Board of Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt) as the new President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

In preparation for the 143rd IPU Assembly, the Forum appointed Mr. U. Lechte (Germany) to prepare a youth overview report, with the aim of contributing a youth perspective to the draft resolution to be considered by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights entitled *Legislation worldwide to combat online sexual child exploitation*.

The Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians convened on 10 March, 6 May and 14 May 2021. It considered means to keep outgoing members of the Board involved in its work and agreed to propose a revision of the definition of “young parliamentarian” by reducing the age limit currently applied.

Subsidiary bodies of the Governing Council

1. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

The Committee held its 165th session in virtual format on 6, 7, 10 and 11 May for four sittings of three hours each. The Committee continued its exchanges in writing until 21 May, the day on which it adopted its decisions.

Mr. N. Bako-Arifari (Benin), President, Ms. A. Reynoso (Mexico), Vice-President, Mr. A.A. Alaradi (Bahrain), Ms. L. Dumont (France) and Mr. A. Caroni (Switzerland) took part in the Committee's 165th session.

At its session, the Committee examined the situation of 170 parliamentarians (158 men and 12 women) in 13 countries, of which 4 concerned new complaints affecting 22 parliamentarians. The Committee also held five hearings with authorities, complainants and other interested parties.

The Committee submitted decisions to the Governing Council for adoption concerning 152 parliamentarians from the following countries: Egypt, Libya, Myanmar, Philippines, Turkey, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

2. Committee on Middle East Questions

The Committee held two virtual sittings, on 14 April and 10 May 2021. The Committee's President, Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada), Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria), Mr. H. Julien-Laferrrière (France), Mr. A. Al-Ahmad (Palestine), Ms. H. Martins (Portugal), Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland) attended both sittings. Mr. A.A. Jama (Somalia) attended the 14 April sitting. Ms. I. Al Madhy (Iraq) and Mr. A. Dichter (Israel) attended the sitting on 10 May. Also present at the sittings were Mr. M. Chungong (IPU Secretary General), Mr. M. Omar (Senior Advisor to the IPU Secretary General), Ms. J. Vanian (IPU Peace and Security Consultant), and Ms. M. Hermes (IPU CT/VE and Peace and Security Team).

The Committee members examined the situation in the region, with a focus on developments in Libya, Palestine, and Yemen, as well as on the peace and normalization agreements for the region. The IPU Secretariat provided an overview of the communications it had received regarding the situation in the region and on how the IPU had responded to them.

The Committee noted that the humanitarian situation in Yemen was dire and expressed its support for a political solution under United Nations auspices. The Committee emphasized that the IPU must give priority to promoting access to humanitarian assistance in Yemen, expressing its concern about food insecurity in particular. The Committee condemned the continued sale of weapons by many countries to the parties in conflict. With regard to Yemen's representation in the IPU, the Committee recommended that the IPU governing bodies consider recognizing the House of Representatives in Seiyun led by Mr. S. Al-Burkani. It emphasized the need for inclusiveness and involvement of all parliamentarians elected in 2003 in the country's parliamentary processes. The Committee agreed to submit a statement regarding the situation in Yemen for endorsement by the Governing Council.

The Committee welcomed the recent political agreements in Libya and encouraged the implementation of those agreements, as well as the carrying out of the elections announced for 24 December 2021. It condemned foreign interference in the conflict and called for the removal of foreign terrorist fighters. The Committee encouraged all stakeholders to work together and come to a common understanding on a way forward. It also expressed concern about Ms. S. Sergiwa, a parliamentarian who had been abducted from her home in July 2019, and encouraged the relevant parties to shed light on this case. The Committee encouraged the House of Representatives in Tobruk to continue engaging with the IPU.

The Committee welcomed the peace and normalization agreements which Israel had signed with Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates, while noting that it was important for all peace to be inclusive and that the fate of Palestine should not be ignored while fences were being mended with other countries in the region. The Committee encouraged the parties concerned to work towards comprehensive and sustainable peace, and welcomed the desire expressed by Committee members for peace in the region.

On 14 April, the Committee heard an update on the parliamentary elections in Palestine which had been scheduled for 22 May 2021. It welcomed the elections, hoping that they would run smoothly and in keeping with free and equitable electoral standards. The IPU had been invited by the Palestinian Central Elections Commission to observe the elections. The Committee agreed that the IPU should invite its Member Parliaments to do so in their individual capacity. The IPU Secretary General had thus written to all IPU Member Parliaments informing them of the elections and encouraging them to observe the elections in their individual capacities.

On 10 May, the Committee noted that the elections had been postponed and highlighted that the elections were needed for the legitimate representation of the people of Palestine. It reiterated its hope that the elections would take place under free and fair conditions. The Committee agreed that Palestine was entitled to full statehood within the territories agreed by international resolutions. It also expressed its deep concern over the recent alarming escalation of violence and tensions in East Jerusalem, and agreed to produce a statement regarding those recent developments. Both the Israeli and Palestinian Committee members objected to the violence. The Committee stressed the need for restraint and dialogue.

3. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (the Committee) met on 16 April 2021. The meeting was chaired by the Committee's President, Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary).

The Committee pursued the discussions held at its preceding sitting on 2 October 2020 on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees, stateless persons and people fleeing conflict. It heard updates from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The pandemic had turned into a pandemic of hunger, caused an increase in the number of cases of forced marriages, a historic rise in school dropouts within the refugee communities and more intense stigmatization of refugees. The year 2020 had also seen the lowest number of refugee resettlements. The question of access to testing and vaccination remained a priority in 2021. Furthermore, measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic needed to place special attention on stateless people. That included affording them full access to health services, such as COVID-19 testing and treatment, without requiring proof of legal status or identity, and access to services without fear and risk of being arrested or detained. Finally, in order to avoid further instances of statelessness, registration of births should be maintained as an "essential" service.

Challenging conditions also applied to people fleeing conflict or living in conflict situations. Access to services, including health services, remained difficult, especially in regions dominated by non-State armed groups, who would also have to facilitate access to health services. The Committee decided to continue to monitor the situation and would support parliaments in taking the mentioned considerations into account in their daily work and efforts to rebuild societies post-pandemic.

The Committee was briefed on recent developments in combatting statelessness. It noted that several countries had revised their legal frameworks to address discrimination in nationality laws. The Committee agreed to pursue awareness raising efforts and encouraged its regional representatives to open a debate within their geopolitical groups and take the lead in hosting (with the support of the IPU and UNHCR) regional webinars on the issue.

The Committee furthermore noted that 2021 was a key year as it marked the sixtieth anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Committee adopted a statement to that effect (see [page 54](#)) which was endorsed by the Governing Council.

Follow up to the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and Global Refugee Forum (GRF) were also discussed. The IPU Members were invited to follow up on pledges made by their countries (see: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/index.php/>). The Committee decided to carry out a survey of the IPU Members to identify good parliamentary practices in following up on the GRF pledges.

With regard to implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL), the Committee agreed to focus efforts in 2021 and 2022 on ratifying and implementing the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions in view of the celebration of their 45th anniversary in 2022. That would entail developing a mobilization and awareness-raising campaign, in cooperation with the ICRC.

With regard to immediate initiatives, the Committee agreed to organize a panel discussion on the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines, as well as a discussion on humanitarian impacts of conflicts.

Committee members re-elected Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary) as its Chair for another term ending March 2022. Ms. Vadai had been elected as Chair in March 2019. In view of the exceptional circumstances linked to the pandemic and the impossibility to meet during the past year, Committee members agreed to consider the 2019-2021 period as the Chair's first mandate. The Committee also noted the absence of participation in its meetings of the regional representative from Mexico for more than three times in a row. It agreed not to immediately suspend her membership, as allowed for by the rules, pending feedback from the member concerned, on challenges faced regarding participation.

4. Advisory Group on Health

The IPU Advisory Group on Health met on 28 April with 8 out of 11 members in attendance. 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 were also present.

As focal point for parliamentary accountability, the Advisory Group discussed the implementation of the IPU resolution on universal health coverage (UHC). The Group agreed on the importance of UHC in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and praised the efforts of the IPU Secretariat to raise the visibility of that key health issue. More data were needed on the impact of the pandemic on health budgeting and the protection of the right to health in legislation and in practice. The social determinants of health also needed to be taken into account to invest in health prevention. The Group's discussion would inform the 2021 report on the resolution's implementation.

Referring to the United Nations High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS to be held from 8 to 10 June 2021, the Advisory Group reiterated the importance of keeping HIV/AIDS high on political agendas. As a parliamentary contribution to the High-level Meeting, the Group adopted a statement calling on parliaments to use their powers to ensure prevention and access to HIV and health services without discrimination. The statement was presented to the IPU Governing Council and would be transmitted to the High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS.

The Advisory Group noted that the IPU health activities continued promoting and facilitating parliamentary action on global health security, UHC, and women's, children's and adolescents' health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Group members were also active in their parliaments in the COVID-19 response and in ensuring that other health priorities were not sidelined.

The Advisory Group unanimously approved an extension of mandate for a period of one year for its Chair, Ms. G. Katuta Mwelwa (Zambia), and Vice-Chair, Mr. J.I. Echániz (Spain).

5. High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)

The HLAG held the following three sittings: (in-person) fifth sitting on 16 and 17 January 2020, (virtual) sixth sitting on 16 June 2020, and (virtual) seventh sitting on 17 May 2021. The HLAG's Chairperson Mr. R. Lopatka (Austria), the Vice-Chairperson Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya), Mr. Chen Fuli (China), Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary), Mr. G. Migliore (Italy), and Ms. S.J. Marri (Pakistan) attended all three sittings. Mr. S. Chiheb (Algeria), Ms. A. Karapetyan (Armenia), Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt), Mr. J.F. Merino (El Salvador), Ms. A. Husin (Malaysia), and Ms. I. Passada (Uruguay), attended the fifth sitting. Mr. R. del Picchia (France) attended the fifth and sixth sittings and was represented by Mr. L. Vance at the seventh sitting. Mr. O. Tinni (Niger) attended the fifth and sixth sittings. Mr. M. Fawzy representing Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt) attended the sixth sitting. Mr. V. Suárez Díaz (Dominican Republic) attended the seventh sitting.

HLAG members stressed the importance of addressing the situation in the Sahel region, as well as the importance of supporting the victims of terrorism. Members reviewed the IPU Secretariat's work including on: progress made in the development of products to be launched, activities regarding victims of terrorism, the protection of the internet, and cooperation with regional parliaments.

Members emphasized the importance of raising awareness about the situation in the Sahel both nationally and internationally. They decided to hold a parliamentary meeting for the G5 Sahel countries and their international partners and approved the proposal to provide capacity-building for that region. It was agreed to recommend to the IPU governing bodies that the IPU adopt a resolution recommending that parliaments request the executive branches of their governments to lobby the United Nations to increase their financial support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force. Members also recommended to the IPU governing bodies to include in the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (5WCSP) declaration a paragraph calling upon the United Nations to make the fight against terrorism a higher priority, in particular in the Sahel, and to underline the need to defend the victims of terrorism. Members also reviewed work done within the framework of the IPU-UN Joint Programme on countering terrorism and violent extremism on the model legislative provisions for victims of terrorism. Members were also informed of consultations that the IPU Secretariat had had with the Arab Parliament on holding activities with the G5 Sahel countries to strengthen relations on issues relating to counter terrorism.

Members reviewed three projects presented by the IPU Secretariat that were under way: the Global Parliamentary Network, the interactive map, and the mobile application for parliamentarians. HLAG members agreed that the use of such tools had positive aspects, such as accessing shared documentation. The products were being developed with funding from the National People's Congress of China. Collaboration was also envisaged with GRULAC to produce the aforementioned tools in Spanish, and with the Arab Parliament to produce the tools in Arabic, to further ensure robust security of the mobile application and interactive map, and to provide chat and video conference features for users.

HLAG members agreed on the importance of holding the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism immediately following the 5WCSP. The Summit had been approved by the IPU governing bodies in the context of the HLAG's work programme and had been endorsed by the 5WCSP Preparatory Committee. The IPU Secretariat informed the members that during the Summit the Secretariat would launch the tools mentioned above – the model legislative provisions for victims of terrorism, the mobile application, the Global Parliamentary Network, and the interactive map.

HLAG members reaffirmed the Group's founding terms of reference, endorsed by the Governing Council, as the global parliamentary focal point for counter-terrorism related parliamentary activities. Members stressed that there was a need for better coordination between the IPU, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) as parliamentarians lacked clarity on the mandate of UNODC and UNOCT. The IPU Secretariat reported on consultations it had been carrying out with the Arab Parliament on a broader cooperation agreement which would include other fields of cooperation, in addition to activities in countering terrorism (CT) and preventing violent extremism (PVE).

Members were informed that the IPU-UN Joint Programme on CT/VE, which had been launched two and half years ago, would end in June 2021. The IPU Secretariat informed the members that the IPU had not received any direct financial support from the UN for any of its activities. Nevertheless, technical cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU would continue where necessary, and the continuation of CT/VE activities would be ensured.

Elections and appointments

1. Executive Committee

The Governing Council elected the following member to the Executive Committee:

Arab Group

- Mr. A.R. Al Noaymi (United Arab Emirates)

2. Vice-Presidents of the Executive Committee

The following members of the Executive Committee were designated as IPU Vice-Presidents:

- Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada)
- Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal)
- Mr. A.R. Al Noaymi (United Arab Emirates)
- Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay)
- Mr. A. Saidov (Uzbekistan)

The IPU Vice-President representing the Asia-Pacific Group, as well as the Vice-President of the Executive Committee, will be elected at the next sitting of the Executive Committee.

3. Sub-Committee on Finance

Mr. A.R. Al Noaymi (United Arab Emirates) was elected to the Sub-Committee on Finance representing the Arab Group. The mandate of Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) was renewed for a further two years until the end of her term on the Executive Committee.

4. Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians elected Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) as its President and Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze (Bahrain) as its First Vice-President for a term ending in April 2023. The post of Second Vice-President remains vacant.

The new composition of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, which includes the new members nominated by the Geopolitical Groups with a term that ends in April 2025, is as follows:

African Group

- Ms. S.W. Kihika (Kenya) – April 2023
- Ms. O. Sanogo (Mali) *[to fill a vacant position which has a term ending in April 2023]*
- Ms. M. Baba Moussa Soumanou (Benin) – April 2025
- Ms. N. Bujela (Eswatini) – April 2025

Arab Group

- Ms. M. Mohammed Saleh (Syrian Arab Republic) *[to fill a vacant position which has a term ending in April 2023]*
- Ms. M.S. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates) *[to fill a vacant position which has a term ending in April 2023]*
- Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze (Bahrain) – April 2025
- Ms. A. Nassif Ayyoub (Egypt) – April 2025

Asia-Pacific Group

- Ms. P. Maadam (India) – April 2023
- *Vacancy*
- Ms. P.A. Komarudin (Indonesia) – April 2025
- Ms. E. Azad (Islamic Republic of Iran) – April 2025

Eurasia Group

- Ms. Z. Greceanîi (Republic of Moldova) – April 2023
- Ms. E. Vtorygina (Russian Federation) – April 2023
- Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus) – April 2025
- Ms. E. Afanasieva (Russian Federation) – April 2025

Group of Latin American and the Caribbean

- Ms. C. Mix (Chile) *[to fill a vacant position which has a term ending in April 2023]*
- Ms. V. Persaud (Guyana) *[to fill a vacant position which has a term ending in April 2023]*
- Ms. A.F. Sagasti (Argentina) – April 2025
- Ms. W.P. Andrade Muñoz (Ecuador) – April 2025

Twelve Plus Group

- Ms. L. Wall (New Zealand) *[to fill a vacant position which has a term ending in April 2023]*
- Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) – April 2023
- Ms. V. Riotton (France) – April 2025
- Ms. M. Grande (Italy) – April 2025

Members of the Executive Committee (*ex officio*, for the duration of their term on the Executive Committee)

- Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland) – October 2021
- Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) – April 2023

- Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden) – October 2023
- Ms. P. Krairiksh (Thailand) – October 2023
- Ms. E. Anyakun (Uganda) – October 2023
- Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay) – October 2024

5. Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians

The Forum elected the following members to its Board for a two-year term ending in April 2023. Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt) has been elected President of the Board.

African Group

- Mr. R. Miarintsoa Andriantsitonta (Madagascar)
- Ms. T. Jutton (Mauritius)

Arab Group

- Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt)
- Mr. A. Al-Kattan (Kuwait)

Asia-Pacific Group

- Ms. R. Nikhil Khadse (India)
- Mr. I. Sereewatthanawut (Thailand)

Eurasia Group

- Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus)
- Mr. A. Aslonov (Uzbekistan)

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Ms. S. Browne (Guyana)
- Mr. P.P. Kemper Thiede (Paraguay)

Twelve Plus Group

- Mr. U. Lechte (Germany)
- Ms. O. Rudenko (Ukraine)

6. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

The Governing Council elected the following members for a five-year term ending in April 2026 (see results on [page 61](#)):

- Mr. S. Cogolati (Belgium)
- Mr. S. Spengemann (Canada)
- Mr. B. Mbuku Laka (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Ms. L. Quartapelle (Italy)
- Ms. C. Urbano de Sousa (Portugal)
- Ms. C. Asiain Pereira (Uruguay)

7. Committee on Middle East Questions

The Governing Council elected the following members for a four-year term ending in April 2025 (see results on [page 62](#)):

- Mr. G. Migliore (Italy)
- Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey)

8. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

The Governing Council elected **four members**. The Geopolitical Groups have nominated the following members for a four-year term ending in April 2025.

African Group

- Mr. J. Kiarie (Kenya)

Arab Group

- Mr. A. Al-Salihi (Iraq)

Asia-Pacific Group

- Ms. D. O'Neill (Australia)

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Mr. G. Asiskumar (Suriname)

9. High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)

The Governing Council elected **six members, with one vacancy remaining**. The Geopolitical Groups have nominated the following members for a four-year term ending in April 2025.

African Group

- Mr. A. Aly (Mali)
- Ms. H.N. Murangwa (Rwanda)

Arab Group

- Ms. F. Zainal (Bahrain)

Asia-Pacific Group

- Mr. A. Suwanmongkol (Thailand)

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Mr. J. Gandini (Uruguay)
- *Vacancy*

Twelve Plus Group

- Ms. J. Gapany (Switzerland)

10. Working Group on Science and Technology

The Governing Council elected **21 members**. The Geopolitical Groups have nominated the following members for a four-year term ending in April 2025.

African Group

- Mr. F. Tchaou (Benin)
- Ms. S. Kasanga (Kenya)
- Mr. R.B.O. Tovondray (Madagascar)
- Mr. A. Ramdhany (Mauritius)
- Ms. A. Muzana (Rwanda)

Arab Group

- Mr. A. Althawadi (Bahrain)
- Ms. S. Attia (Egypt)

Asia-Pacific Group

- Ms. Tong Yi (China)
- Ms. H. Vijaykumar Gavit (India)
- Mr. C. Wong (Malaysia)
- Mr. K. Wongtrangan (Thailand)

Eurasia Group

- Mr. V. Bologan (Republic of Moldova)
- Ms. L. Gumerova (Russian Federation)

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Mr. F. Ollisco Barrero (Bolivia)
- Ms. R.A. Campain Brambilla (Ecuador)
- Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname)

Twelve Plus Group

- Mr. M. Larive (France)

- Mr. D. Naughten (Ireland)
- Ms. P. Geerdink (Netherlands)
- Ms. S. Dinică (Romania)
- Mr. T. Hurter (Switzerland)

11. Bureaus of the Standing Committees

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

The Standing Committee elected **six members**. The Geopolitical Groups have nominated the following members for a two-year term (renewable) ending in April 2023. A vacancy remains for a representative from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean.

African Group

- Mr. A. Kharchi (Algeria)

Arab Group

- Mr. D. El Idrissi (Morocco)

Asia-Pacific Group

- Mr. B. Mahtab (India)
- Ms. A.Y. Paris (Indonesia)
- Mr. A. Naderi (Islamic Republic of Iran)

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Mr. J. Taiana (Argentina)
- *Vacancy*

Arab Group

- Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates) will replace Ms. A. Al Jassim (United Arab Emirates) to complete the term which will end in April 2022.

Eurasia Group

- Mr. S. Rachkov (Belarus) will replace Mr. S. Rahmanov (Belarus) to complete the term which will end in April 2022.

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Mr. R.M. García (Chile) will replace Mr. J.C. Mahía (Uruguay).

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

The Standing Committee elected **ten members**. The Geopolitical Groups have nominated the following members for a two-year term (renewable) ending in April 2023.

African Group

- Ms. J. Naisula Lesuuda (Kenya)
- Mr. P. Gervais Assirvaden (Mauritius)
- Mr. W. William (Seychelles)

Arab Group

- Ms. I. Ezzedine (Lebanon)

Asia-Pacific Group

- Mr. V.D. Ram (India)

Eurasia Group

- Ms. M. Baratova (Uzbekistan)

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Mr. C.P. Muñoz López (Ecuador)
- Ms. S. Parag (Guyana)

Twelve Plus Group

- Ms. M. McPhedran (Canada)
- Mr. F. Notari (Monaco)

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

The Standing Committee elected **six new members** representing the following Geopolitical Groups for a two-year term (renewable) ending in April 2023. Vacancies remain for representatives from the Asia-Pacific and Eurasia Groups.

African Group

- Mr. E. Uwizeyimana (Rwanda)
- *Vacancy*

Asia-Pacific Group

- Mr. F. Zon (Indonesia)
- Ms. J. Mahmood (Maldives)

Eurasia Group

- Mr. N. Tilavoldiev (Uzbekistan)
- *Vacancy*

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Ms. S. Nane (Uruguay)

Twelve Plus Group

- Mr. D. Larsson (Sweden)

Arab Group

- Mr. D. Al Hamad (Qatar) will replace Mr. Y. Al-Khater (Qatar) to complete the term which will end in April 2022.

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Mr. G. Boric (Chile) will replace Mr. M. Texeira (Venezuela)
- Ms. S. Sapag (Argentina) will replace Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina) to complete the term which will end in April 2023.

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

The Standing Committee elected **eight members**. The Geopolitical Groups have nominated the following members for a two-year term (renewable) ending in April 2023.

African Group

- Ms. S. Abdi Noor (Kenya)

Arab Group

- Ms. E. Al Maksossi (Iraq)
- Mr. M.T. Bani Yassin (Jordan)
- Mr. A. Al-Hamad (Kuwait)

Asia-Pacific Group

- Ms. D. Kumari (India)

Eurasia Group

- Mr. A. Savinykh (Belarus)

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Mr. A. Lins (Brazil)
- Ms. K.M. González Villanueva (Paraguay)

12. Rapporteurs to the 144th Assembly

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security appointed Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden) as Rapporteur for the subject item entitled *Rethinking and reframing the approach to peace processes with a view to fostering lasting peace*. It mandated the IPU President to conduct consultations to identify a second rapporteur.

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development appointed Ms. H. Järvinen (Finland) and Mr. S. Patra (India) as co-Rapporteurs for the subject item entitled *Leveraging Information and Communication Technology as an enabler for the education sector, including in times of pandemic*.

Media and communications

The 142nd virtual IPU Assembly saw solid engagement from participants and parliaments around the world. However, due to the virtual nature of the Assembly, there was less interaction from Members and less media interest than in an in-person meeting.

Live streaming and video

In the lead up to the Assembly, the IPU encouraged Member Parliaments to send video contributions on the Assembly theme for promotional purposes on YouTube and social media. The IPU communications team received 33 [video interventions](#) from delegations – most of them messages although some were also used by Member Parliaments to make political statements. Preliminary figures show that the playlist was viewed over 1,000 times in the space of two weeks and generated good engagement on social media.

The general debate of the Assembly was live-streamed on the IPU website on 26 and 27 May. Hundreds of people were thus able to follow the proceedings including the interactive debate between keynote speakers Ms. H. Clark (former Prime Minister of New Zealand and UNDP Administrator), Ms. A. Gupta (Deputy CEO of GAVI) and Mr. J. Sundaram (former UN Assistant Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs) which generated the most views.

Recordings of the meetings of the Standing Committees were also posted on YouTube as were the opening session and interactive debate of the Assembly.

During the Assembly, to break up the speeches and interventions, 1-minute videos produced by IPU Communications on some of the IPU's key themes (gender equality, youth empowerment and human rights) were shown thus raising awareness of other areas of the IPU's work.

Social media

IPU Communications produced a sustained social media campaign over April and May to support the Assembly. The campaign involved multiple posts every day, in English and in French, on key messages and themes of the Assembly. Posts on the elections of new MPs to the IPU's various governing bodies did particularly well.

The communications team also used the opportunity of the Assembly to launch the [2020 IPU Impact Report](#).

Parliamentarians from over twenty countries shared content on social media platforms promoting the Assembly. The event hashtag [#IPU142](#) featured prominently.

In the two weeks before the Assembly, [@IPUParliament](#) gained 216 new followers on Twitter. Tweets earned 309K impressions over that period. Posts promoting the event pushed 350 people through to the Assembly website and were shared by over 330 followers. Assembly content was liked by more than 600 accounts, with engagement levels peaking between 25 and 27 May.



[LinkedIn](#) posts promoting the Assembly accumulated 3,200 impressions across the platform with an average engagement rate of 8 per cent. Solid engagement on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) was also generated with multiple posts and stories.

Website

In the month leading up to the Assembly, 36,048 users accessed the [IPU website](#) with 134,000 page views. That included 33,000 new users to ipu.org. On average, users spent just under three minutes exploring the content.

Media and general outreach

Two press releases during the Assembly were issued – one for the closure and one on the human rights cases examined by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. The press releases were sent to IPU's database of over 1,000 media outlets around the world in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. The press releases generated some limited media attention around the world.

In the weeks leading up to the Assembly, IPU Communications issued a news flash in English and French which was sent to over 7,000 subscribers to encourage registration. At the end of the Assembly, a news flash in English and in French was also issued to report on the conclusions of the Assembly.

Membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union*

Members (179)

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, the Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras**, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea*, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Associate Members (13)

Andean Parliament, Arab Parliament, Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), European Parliament, Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF)

* As at the close of the 142nd Assembly.

** Non-participating Members (all rights suspended)

Agenda, resolutions and other texts of the 142nd Assembly

1. General Debate on the theme *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments*
2. *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences*
(Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
3. *Mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy to achieve the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production*
(Standing Committee on Sustainable Development)
4. Reports of the Standing Committees
5. Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development for the 144th Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs

President's summary of the debate on the overall theme of the 142nd IPU Assembly

Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments

*Endorsed by the 142nd IPU Assembly
(Virtual session, 27 May 2021)*

In addition to the discussions that took place during the debate on the overall theme at the 142nd Assembly, the present summary draws on the deliberations at sessions that the four Standing Committees of the IPU (Peace and International Security, Sustainable Development, Democracy and Human Rights, and United Nations Affairs) held from 26 to 28 April. The deliberations of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians held on 10 May 2021 and of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians held on 13 May 2021 have also informed this summary. The summary captures the key messages conveyed by panel presentations and interventions from the floor. It is provided as a contribution to the IPU's overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to build a better tomorrow.

The IPU Members were unanimous in their determination to contribute robustly to efforts designed to control and stop the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. They recognized the need for a stronger response in order to save lives and end the pandemic as soon as possible. In this context, MPs recommended bold new steps to advance peace, sustainable development, gender equality, youth empowerment, democracy and human rights.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created social, economic and political crises. It has exacerbated inequalities within and between countries, and stalled progress on sustainable development, youth empowerment and gender equality. Women and youth have been disproportionately affected, with more women than men losing jobs and taking on an even greater share of household work, and many young people being left without access to work or education.

The pandemic has also contributed to an increase in violence against women and girls, including through the internet, giving rise to a need for greater investment in services for survivors as well as more extensive regulatory frameworks for online platforms and tech companies. As reflected in this summary, the particular concerns of women and youth should inform parliamentary action in all policy areas, from peace to democracy and sustainable development. Parliaments must continue efforts to enhance women's leadership and gender parity in all sectors, as well as to increase the representation of women and youth in politics.

Guided by these considerations, participants committed to ensuring that relief efforts reached the most vulnerable groups, and that vaccines, tests and treatments were affordable and accessible to all. They agreed that a crisis of this magnitude demanded a global solution, which multilateralism was best placed to deliver.

Key messages on peace and security

Parliaments are the main venue for managing conflict in a non-violent manner and a central forum for inclusive debates on policies for building resilience, strengthening institutions and improving people's security. In order to build resilience and strengthen capacity so that countries can recover from future pandemics and other shocks, parliaments must focus on emerging risks and preventive action.

The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the need to reduce military spending and shift budget priorities in order to respond to the health crisis and its ripple effects. Official development assistance must be increased and funding must be allocated directly to the COVID-19 recovery.

Parliaments need to support more systematic funding for peacebuilding and conflict prevention, which not only works, but is cost-effective. Including women in peacekeeping efforts is critical to the success of these efforts and to the sustainability of peace agreements. It is also imperative for every government to have a well-funded women, peace and security plan. To prevent instability, parliaments must also focus on youth and ensure they have access to work and education opportunities.

To improve peace and security and build up resilience and human security, parliaments must prioritize emerging risks, act early and strengthen capacities for local response, including that of local law enforcement and the security sector. More attention needs to be paid to tools to respond to such risks that can be scaled up and adapted to different contexts at local, regional and global levels.

Conflict resolution and the maintenance of peace depend on parliaments working together with all stakeholders, including the executive, the private sector, academia and civil society. In keeping with the IPU's support of multilateralism, dialogue among parliamentarians needs to reach further and go deeper at all levels – local, national, regional and global.

There can be no lasting peace, security and development without addressing climate change and securing the environment. Parliamentarians need to deepen their efforts to ensure the implementation of all relevant international commitments in this regard.

Key messages on sustainable development

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that, over and above wealth, real prosperity should be about health. Prosperity should be thought of more in terms of a healthy environment, better quality of life and more time for self-improvement, as well as for the community. The care economy – which includes front-line workers and those who care for children and the elderly – epitomizes this vision and must therefore be better valued and financed. Care workers deserve stronger social protection. Institutions, rules and policies that allow for proper financing of jobs in the health sector, environmental preservation, education and other components of the care economy need to be strengthened.

Parliaments need to better recognize the role of women in the care economy. Women need financial support for their unpaid work, help in finding jobs outside of hard-hit sectors and greatly expanded access to affordable childcare. Cash transfers and other such programmes need to be better targeted at women as a way of distributing benefits to their communities.

Greater investment in decent jobs for youth and incentives for entrepreneurship are also needed to curb the high level of youth unemployment. Access to quality education and vocational training has been disrupted by the pandemic and parliaments should prioritize the building of resilient education systems that allow equality of access to all children and youth.

Caring for people and caring for the planet go hand in hand. Parliaments must support the shift towards the green economy through a more progressive tax system, universal basic income and other innovative policies. The current food system – which leaves millions of people hungry or malnourished, creates enormous waste and relies on vulnerable supply chains – needs to be reimagined. In particular, parliaments need to monitor the food security situation and ensure that countries achieve food self-sufficiency. Food systems need to be more grounded in local communities and access to key agricultural inputs must be more equitable.

Key messages on vaccine access

The COVID-19 pandemic will not end until the vast majority of people in each country are vaccinated. As a public good, vaccines need to be readily accessible to all people on the planet, including the most vulnerable populations, namely refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, stateless people, indigenous people, migrants irrespective of legal status, persons with disabilities, detained persons, and people living in areas under the control of non-state armed groups.

Parliaments must stand against vaccine nationalism and advocate for vaccines to be free and accessible to everyone, not just those in wealthy countries. High-income countries need to step up support to COVAX and other multilateral efforts to tackle the pandemic. It is also essential to strengthen public health infrastructure and communications with the public, including through digital technologies, and take appropriate public health measures to protect people.

With few exceptions, the parliamentarians who spoke on the issue of a temporary waiver of vaccine patents, currently before the WHO, were generally supportive of such a waiver. Enabling generic production of the vaccines could boost vaccine access to developing countries where only a fraction of the population has been vaccinated so far. In settling this issue, claims that patents provide a key financial incentive to research and development of new vaccines should be weighed against public health concerns, as well as the considerable support provided to patent holders through government subsidies, public investment and purchase guarantees.

Key messages on democracy and human rights

By all accounts, the pandemic has put a strain on democracy. Many countries have declared states of emergency, which in some cases have unduly limited personal freedoms. Freedom of expression has been sacrificed under the guise of combating disinformation. There have been restrictions on media integrity, including the incarceration of journalists; as well as restrictions on personal integrity and security, including excessive use of force and arbitrary arrests. In a number of countries, electoral processes have been postponed, some without a new date.

Parliaments need to conduct strong and swift oversight of any emergency measure or restriction on fundamental freedoms and human rights. Measures must be taken democratically, be proportionate, time-limited, necessary and legal. Parliaments must fight against conspiracy theories and misinformation, and confront hate, racism, xenophobia and nationalism, which have been on the rise. Decision-making and political dialogue in general need to be informed by facts and scientific evidence. Taken together, these steps can help build trust between governments and citizens.

The pandemic provides a critical opportunity for parliaments to become stronger. With many parliaments resorting to remote or hybrid ways of working, modernization has accelerated, allowing parliaments to become more flexible and efficient. Still, nothing can fully replace the in-person interactions between parliamentarians and constituents, which are so essential to dialogue, negotiation and compromise.

In reflecting on the many impacts of the pandemic on peace and security, sustainable development and democracy, parliaments and decision-makers everywhere should retain one overarching lesson: there is only one humanity coexisting on one planet.

Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences

Resolution adopted by consensus by the 142nd IPU Assembly
(Virtual session, 27 May 2021)*

The 142nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Recalling the 2015 Paris Agreement, including its goals to strengthen the global response to climate change and to enhance adaptive capacity, increase resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change; the outcomes of the Climate Change Conferences in Marrakesh (COP 22), Bonn (COP 23), Katowice (COP 24) and Madrid (COP 25), emphasizing the appeal in the *Chile Madrid Time for Action* to elaborate and implement measures to avert, minimize and address the adverse impacts of climate change, as well as the IPU resolutions of the corresponding Parliamentary Meetings in Marrakesh, Bonn, Krakow, and Madrid,

Recalling also the IPU resolutions *The role of parliaments in ensuring sustainable development through the management of natural resources, agricultural production and demographic change* (adopted at the 124th IPU Assembly, Panama, April 2011), *Towards risk-resilient development: Taking into consideration demographic trends and natural constraints* (adopted at the 130th IPU Assembly, Geneva, March 2014), *Sustaining peace as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development* (adopted at the 138th IPU Assembly, Geneva, March 2018), *Addressing climate change* (adopted at the 141st IPU Assembly, Belgrade, October 2019), and the Hanoi Declaration *The Sustainable Development Goals: Turning Words into Action* (adopted at the 132nd IPU Assembly, Hanoi, April 2015),

Guided by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize that climate policy, sustainable development, poverty reduction and universal peace are all inextricably linked,

Mindful of UN Security Council resolutions and UNSC Presidential Statements addressing the adverse effects of climate change on international stability, peace and security, such as UNSC resolutions 2349 (2017), 2408 (2018), 2423 (2018), 2429 (2018), 2431 (2018), 2457 (2019) and 2558 (2020), and appreciating the fact that the Security Council has repeatedly discussed the impact of climate change, including of climate-related disasters, on international peace and security,

Mindful also of UNSC resolutions 1325 (2000), 2467 (2019) and 2493 (2019) highlighting the impact on women of war, conflicts and displacement as well as strengthening the role of women in conflict management and women's involvement in peace and security issues; and of UNSC resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020) highlighting the importance of increasing the representation of youth in decision-making on peace and security issues,

Recalling the 1996 UN Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the 2015 *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, which provide an important foundation for sustainable, low-carbon, resilient development,

Welcoming the international community's continuing engagement in numerous global initiatives to address climate change, such as the UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019, the Climate Ambition Summit in December 2020, and the Climate Adaptation Summit in January 2021, which have led to States' affirmation and extension of 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, business corporations, financial institutions and civil society,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the International Covenants on Human Rights and other human rights agreements, and welcoming the discussion on climate change as a rapidly growing, global threat to human rights and to peace at the 42nd session of the Human Rights Council in September 2019,

Emphasizing the recommendations of the 2015 Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disaster and Climate Change being implemented by the Platform on Disaster Displacement, which works towards strengthening the management of disaster displacement risks as well as addressing displacement and migration in the context of disasters and climate change,

Appreciating the contribution of the International Mechanism of Warsaw regarding climate-related losses and damages, their financing, technological transfer and capacity-building in developing countries particularly vulnerable to these adverse impacts, and, in particular, the recommendations of the Task Force on comprehensive approaches to avoid, minimize and manage climate-related displacement,

Aware that the world would face unprecedented challenges and irreversible processes, including the crossing of so-called tipping points, with a temperature rise beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius, as referred to in the 2018 special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,

Recalling that natural resources, such as water and land, shape billions of people's livelihoods, food security, well-being and identity, notably those of Indigenous peoples, and that, therefore, transparency, access to information, inclusive and meaningful public participation, in particular women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in all levels of decision-making, as well as dialogue and cooperation, especially with vulnerable and marginalized groups, are key to equitable and peaceful natural-resource management,

Concerned about the concrete and existential threat to humanity and human security caused by climate change, which adversely affects global peace and stability, and particularly about the severe consequences of sea level rise, drought, desertification, land degradation, changes to the fragile ecosystems of the polar regions, loss of infrastructure and biodiversity, food insecurity, an increasing scarcity of natural resources, including water, and non-economic loss and damages,

Reaffirming its concern about new and/or intensified displacement and migrant movements as climate phenomena increase and parts of the world become uninhabitable, as well as about their effects in particular on young people and their future, while aware that concerted action to mitigate and adapt to climate change and plan countries' development can significantly reduce the number of persons forced to migrate as concluded in the World Bank's 2018 Groundswell report,

Worried about the particular effects of climate change on individuals and groups in already vulnerable situations, mainly women and children, Indigenous peoples and communities, and people living with disabilities, as well as refugees and displaced people including internally displaced people; noting that people displaced for environmental reasons, by disasters or adverse effects of climate change, do not benefit per se from any official refugee status nor from international protection granted by the 1951 Refugee Convention; taking note, however, of the Human Rights Committee's view of 20 January 2020 that countries may not deport individuals who face climate change-induced conditions that violate the right of life,

Concerned that climate-related tensions and disasters may lead to heightened marginalization, discrimination and abuse, including an increase in sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated mainly against women and girls,

Aware of the adverse effect of climate change on existing economic, social and political inequalities as well as distributional conflicts throughout the world; highlighting that, through these negative impacts on human security, climate change increases already existing risks and discriminatory practices – especially when governance structures are already weak; recalling that the negative long-term implications of climate change may lead to an increase in political tensions, both within and beyond national borders; noting that fragile societies, including societies plagued by conflict, tend to have weaker adaptation capacities to climate change than others, and that they lack the capacity to contribute for their part to climate change mitigation effectively,

Concerned that these and other human security impacts such as heightened food and water insecurity may exacerbate existing and create additional risks to national, regional and international security, and that the most vulnerable and marginalized peoples and parts of the world are particularly hit by both the climate crisis and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which is another crisis of global proportion, with one crisis exacerbating the other,

Bearing in mind that access to the resources and means required to cope with situations of dramatic change such as the climate crisis is structurally obstructed by existing forms of discrimination and vulnerability based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, political or other affiliation, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, ability, indigeneity, age, tradition and institutional mistreatment, all of which can intersect and combine and should be duly considered in concepts of peacebuilding and conflict management as well as resilience and adaptation strategies,

Stressing that politics determine long-term sustainable climate action, which is why the responsibility to create a just transition through climate-sustainable policies cannot be shifted onto individuals and their individual choices as consumers, at least not predominantly,

1. *Calls for* immediate and multilateral action to address climate change and mitigate its effects on international stability and security with the same urgency as the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic; and therefore calls on all parliaments to expedite and facilitate the ratification and human-rights based implementation of the Paris Agreement in their respective countries;
2. *Calls on* the IPU Member Parliaments and their governments to invest in climate-resilient development programmes aimed at implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals;
3. *Welcomes* the many and diverse national commitments to address the climate-security nexus, confine climate change, and address climate-induced security threats through mitigation, resilience-building and adaptation; and stresses that measures tend to be more conflict-sensitive if both men and women, as well as marginalized and vulnerable groups, including Indigenous communities, are involved;
4. *Invites* the IPU Member Parliaments to encourage their governments to work with relevant regional and international institutions to advance robust climate-resilience strategies, especially regarding climate-related security risks, including joining and supporting the Group of Friends on Climate and Security established by Nauru and Germany, made up of more than 50 States, which works to ensure that the UNSC considers the relationship between climate and security in all its decisions so that the international community is prepared before conflicts erupt or escalate, wherever climate change threatens peace and security;
5. *Encourages* the IPU Member Parliaments to engage in civil conflict prevention and to support partnerships and meaningful consultations with affected communities in order to anchor risk analysis and forecasts in their policies, with a special focus on security related tipping points in the context of climate change, based inter alia on human rights indicators such as the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence;
6. *Stresses* the need to strengthen opportunities for cooperation among all stakeholders and affected communities to promote research, data collection and analysis of climate-related security risks including displacement resulting from rapid- and slow-onset disasters in the context of climate change, in order to be prepared for future challenges and develop prevention strategies;
7. *Calls on* parliaments to strengthen local and community governance capacities and adaptation capabilities in order to avoid human rights abuses and the destabilization of sub-regions or nations as a result of climate change;
8. *Encourages* parliaments concerned to adopt enabling climate-responsive and gender- and conflict-sensitive legislation, including key budget laws, as well as relevant public policies with due consideration of the effects of climate change on Indigenous communities and other marginalized populations, aimed at advancing the SDGs and sustaining peace agendas so that the climate-security nexus features appropriately in their parliamentary debates; and, in this context, to ensure that all peacebuilding and development efforts are assessed, where appropriate, for climate sensitivity to minimize predictable future destabilizing effects of climate change on security and prosperity; and conversely, that climate mitigation and adaptation programmes and strategies are conflict-sensitive and designed for maximising peacebuilding synergies;

9. *Calls on governments to take concrete measures to mitigate climate risks and promote resilience to climate change, while basing these measures on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in light of different national circumstances; and, in this context, calls on governments and parliaments to support countries affected by climate-related disasters and to provide predictable and sustainable financial, technical and capacity-building assistance, in accordance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement; also calls on parliaments to urge their governments to commit to providing financial support to middle- and low-income economies by contributing to the Green Climate Fund;*
10. *Also calls on parliaments to hold their respective governments accountable for achieving the progress required in addressing climate-related disasters and security risks, and to urge their governments to address funding gaps for activities redressing the consequences of climate change and for adaptive measures to equip the United Nations system, other multilateral institutions, States and other relevant actors to deal with the looming changes regarding food security, displacement, and increased risk of disasters;*
11. *Further calls on parliaments to monitor climate-change mitigation and adaptation processes in line with the commitments made under the Paris Agreement; to promote strong disaster risk governance to help all stakeholders coordinate at the community, regional and national levels in order to manage and reduce disaster and climate-related risks; to pay due regard to marginalized and vulnerable communities, such as Indigenous peoples, particularly affected by climate change; to pursue disaster risk prevention and reduction, as well as long-term financing in support of resilient, climate-proof infrastructure and nature-based solutions; and to effectively control State finances by ensuring full transparency of expenses;*
12. *Urges parliaments and their respective governments to take action to strengthen our common understanding of climate-related challenges; including drawing from traditional knowledge sources such as those held by Indigenous and local communities; to support initiatives that ensure that public awareness campaigns and proper educational programmes are implemented and included in school curricula; and to encourage the development of easily accessible early-warning systems;*
13. *Calls on parliaments to examine all means of enhancing the resilience of people adversely affected by climate change; to develop comprehensive gender-responsive national resilience mechanisms by fully including women and representatives of marginalized communities, such as Indigenous peoples, in the design and implementation of such mechanisms; to strengthen disaster risk reduction and prevention; and to enhance disaster preparedness;*
14. *Urges parliaments to promote and increase predictable, multi-year, unearmarked, collaborative and flexible humanitarian financing, including for disaster displacement; to connect the humanitarian-development-peace nexus with the effects of climate change; and to enable transition aid to cover urgent needs and the possibility of a stronger, faster and more inclusive rebuilding policy, according to the "build back better" approach;*
15. *Calls on parliaments to support partnerships involving civil society in order to strengthen political will to address the adverse impacts of climate change in a constructive, participative and forward-looking manner; and also calls in particular on all parliamentarians to engage in dialogue with youth, as they are the main group to face the consequences of climate change;*
16. *Also calls on parliaments to support the introduction of stronger corporate social responsibility measures in the private sector in order to mitigate tensions between enterprises and local communities over scarce resources;*
17. *Encourages governments to fully support international working groups on climate-related disaster displacement and migration; and to implement, within the architecture of the UNFCCC, the recommendations of the Warsaw International Mechanism's Task Force on Displacement;*

18. *Calls on* parliaments to support safe, orderly and legal migration for those who have to leave their home as a result of climate change; and to enable planned and dignified relocation;
19. *Encourages* governments and parliaments to fully implement the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement; to strengthen rights and local agreements on mobility of migrant workers, nomads and pastoralists; and to take into consideration the objectives and principles of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration;
20. *Also encourages* governments to reflect upon the concept of "climate passports" that would allow people who are existentially threatened by the effects of climate change and have no choice but to leave their home to exercise self-determination in deciding about their migratory options and enjoy the possibility of entering and settling in secure countries; and, in this context, to consider granting full access to civic rights to migrants who, expecting or following the complete disappearance of their country's territory, de facto or de jure lose their citizenship;
21. *Invites* the IPU Member Parliaments to make use of their right to speak at the UN General Assembly to request follow-up on displacement and migration including in the context of climate change as well as on the implementation of the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees;
22. *Recommends* that all States concerned agree on a common position in order to impose an embargo on the export of arms to actors in States suffering from insecurity, fragility and conflicts – including as a result of climate-related disasters;
23. *Encourages* governments to include the attenuation of climate-change-related security risks in all operational areas of peacebuilding, including early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, mediation and peace support operations and post-conflict rehabilitation; to enable the UN system to better recognize, assess and act on climate-security interlinkages; to call on the UNSC to acknowledge the threat that climate-related risks pose to international peace and security; and to support the newly created UN Climate Security Mechanism in facilitating the creation and dissemination of adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by relevant UN actors;
24. *Calls on* parliaments to ensure increased international, regional, and cross-border cooperation on climate-related security risks in a quest to find appropriate collective responses to addressing current and future security risks related to climate change while drawing upon the experiences and good practices of countries;
25. *Welcomes*, in this regard, concrete initiatives to strengthen capacities in the field, that is by establishing the first climate and security advisor at the UN Mission in Somalia;
26. *Reminds* all States that ambitious climate protection, resilience-building and foresighted behaviour that places human beings and their needs at the centre of all political considerations is a prerequisite not only for achieving climate justice, but also for pursuing the sustaining peace agenda;
27. *Also reminds* all States of commitments made in the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples relating, among other matters, to their right to live in peace and security, to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources, to be consulted on priorities for the use of their lands or territories and other resources, and to the just and fair resolution of conflicts and disputes with States or other parties;
28. *Encourages* the IPU Member Parliaments to set up or step up regional "climate parliaments" and follow the examples of initiatives in Asia (Bangladesh, China and India), Latin America (Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru, as well as more broadly the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change), the Middle East and North Africa (Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia), Sub-Saharan Africa (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, Senegal and Tanzania, as well as cooperation with the Pan-African Parliament), and Europe (within the European Parliament) with the aim of educating and empowering parliamentarians in this context;

29. *Urges* parliaments to adopt, implement and monitor national action plans in line with the commitments made under the Paris Agreement and thereby establish strategies that prepare for the above-described challenges, threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences;
30. *Also urges* parliaments as part of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery measures to encourage a shift to cleaner energy alternatives, such as solar and wind energy, and to give priority to investment in clean energy, or to link aid and bank loans to companies to drastic reductions in their emissions, especially in carbon-intensive sectors, which contributes to promoting the concept of "green loans" directed to financing environmentally friendly projects, green stimulation, smart buildings, and green and public transportation;
31. *Invites* the IPU Member Parliaments to reinforce criminal law to prevent and punish widespread, long-term and severe damage to the environment, whether caused in peacetime or war, and to examine the possibility of recognizing the crime of ecocide to prevent the threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences;
32. *Urges* the IPU Member Parliaments and their governments to take stock of lessons learned from how the pandemic has been handled worldwide, as lessons from international cooperation and crisis management could prove to be of a significant value when it comes to meeting climate-related threats or other future threats in general;
33. *Also urges* the IPU Member Parliaments and their Governments to enact and execute policies that will reduce and eradicate non-climate stressors and man-made threats to the environment, such as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the unsustainable and inequitable utilization of water resources, among others, which further contribute to food and water insecurity caused by climate change;
34. *Invites* the IPU Member Parliaments to communicate to the secretariat of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security by the 146th Assembly the measures taken to achieve implementation of this resolution.

* The resolution was negotiated in keeping with the Special Rules of Procedure governing virtual sessions of the IPU Assembly and Standing Committees. Reservations were received from:

India and Turkey, which expressed a reservation to the entire text of the Resolution.

Nicaragua, which expressed reservations to operative paragraphs 3, 8, 11, 12, 13, 18, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33.

Hungary, which expressed reservations to preambular paragraphs 9, 14, and 20, and to operative paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21.

China, which expressed reservations to preambular paragraph 5, and operative paragraphs 9, 23, and 25.

Czech Republic and Poland, which expressed reservations to operative paragraphs 19 and 21.

Thailand, which expressed reservations to operative paragraphs 20 and 22.

Mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy to achieve the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production

Resolution adopted by consensus by the 142nd IPU Assembly
(Virtual session, 27 May 2021)*

The 142nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Fully endorsing the Political Declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit (September 2019), which reaffirms the commitment to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and calls for accelerated action in order to achieve the SDGs,

Recalling the Ministerial Declaration of the 2019 United Nations Environment Assembly, particularly the commitment made by governments worldwide to "improve national resource management strategies with an integrated full life-cycle approaches and analysis to achieve resource-efficient and low-carbon economies", while taking into account national circumstances,

Noting the establishment of the Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency, which aims to support the transition to a global circular economy for more efficient and equitable use of resources so as to achieve sustainable consumption and production, and inclusive and sustainable industrialization,

Underlining that the circular economy and digitalization, and the interplay between them, can make a major contribution to reaching the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production,

Mindful that due to the COVID-19 pandemic we are facing major disruptions that will force us to use our limited means even more efficiently against the background of the crisis,

Stressing that the COVID-19 pandemic has reversed hard-won development gains, particularly in achieving gender equality and reducing poverty, and has exposed the deep economic and social inequalities and the challenges addressed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, thus making the achievement of the SDGs all the more necessary and urgent,

Emphasizing that responsible consumption and production are pivotal and cross-cutting elements of the SDGs, and are crucial means to build back better and greener, as they enable the efficient use of natural resources, minimize environmental degradation, pollution and waste, and consider each stage of the life cycle while creating opportunities for social and economic development, thus contributing to poverty eradication and shared prosperity,

Aware that the pandemic crisis has revealed the precariousness of long and complex value chains, and the flaws of the linear "take-make-use-dispose" pattern of production and consumption,

Noting that the price of products does not always reflect environmental or social costs, such as pollution effects or underpaid labour, which have a negative impact on people's health and quality of life,

Encouraging the disclosure of appropriate product information to consumers, and promoting the development of measures to increase transparency in production chains,

Stressing that circular economy transformation, although predominantly associated with product manufacturing or resource intensive industries and value chains, refers to the economy as a whole, including service dominated industries, thus requiring the engagement of the full range of actors across each industry and sector,

Noting that the world is currently in the midst of the creation of a more circular economy, through policy initiatives such as the European Circular Economy Action Plan, and of the digital revolution, both of which have the power to transform our economy and society,

Noting also that big efforts are currently being made by national and international policymakers to promote and regulate both transitions, and the increasing need to align their efforts or create bridges between policies,

Underscoring that, through the "digital for development" (D4D) policy, consideration is being given to how digitalization could change people's lives and result in inclusive, equitable, efficient, affordable, faster and, above all, sustainable universal growth,

Noting that digitalization gives rise to novel digital platforms, helps create new kinds of markets, which can be based on the virtualization of products and processes, and facilitates easier and more efficient networking, collaboration and co-creation with stakeholders,

Bearing in mind that digitalization helps to cut costs and increase efficiency, including efficiency of resources,

Underscoring the important role of international digital learning and collaboration platforms, often with virtual technologies, for learning, networking and co-creation, while the COVID-19 pandemic poses severe challenges to education across the world due to limited access to infrastructure and technologies,

Aware that digitalization is not a goal in itself but an enabler and an accelerator to effectively achieve all 17 SDGs,

Highlighting the fact that the COVID-19 crisis has accelerated digitalization,

Mindful that because of the restrained mobility of people due to the prescribed health protocol of physical distancing as a result of the pandemic, consumer behaviour towards digitalization has radically changed, especially in terms of transactions of both private and public goods,

Underscoring that any future disaster risk reduction strategy will be (big) data driven,

Paying due regard to avoiding the most vulnerable people becoming victims of the circular economy and digital transition by including solidarity in the recovery process in order to fully seize the opportunities of the current crisis,

Stressing that the shift to a circular economy has the potential to allow countries to decouple growth from resource use and environmental impact, generate economic opportunities, build long-term resilience, protect the environment and human health,

Underlining that the implementation of the circular economy principles in key sectors can play an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and successfully addressing climate change,

Bearing in mind that creating consumer demand for resource efficient products can be a challenge, as environmentally sustainable products may not be easily available, affordable, user-friendly or functional and attractive to consumers, especially at the early stages of their development,

Acknowledging the potential of digitalization to strengthen the circular economy, and stressing that circular economy and sustainability principles should be at the heart of digitalization,

Noting that digitalization and the circular economy are driven by the following "bridging technologies": the internet of things, artificial intelligence, robotics, big data, 3D printing, augmented reality, and blockchain,

Recognizing that the circular economy and digitalization have the potential to contribute to equitable economic growth and enable the economic empowerment of women and vulnerable populations, and youth-led collective action,

Emphasizing that mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy requires ambition, political will and a fundamental change of vision at all levels, which go far beyond the standard digital and environmental political agendas, and must be based on a systemic national approach with the participation of all sectors of society, as well as on enhanced international cooperation,

1. *Invites* parliaments to give digitalization and the circular economy more prominence on the political agenda, as part of their efforts to address the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production;
2. *Calls on* parliaments to mainstream digitalization and circular economy principles into public policies and national strategies, and to adopt an enabling framework for their implementation;
3. *Notes* that reducing existing inequalities in terms of access to digital platforms on the part of women and many vulnerable populations as well as marginalized segments of society, including Indigenous people, racialized communities, and persons with disabilities in order to enhance their full participation in the digital economic transition should be duly regarded;
4. *Encourages* parliaments to promote adequate regulatory frameworks, including economic and financial incentives, with a view to enabling circular economy models to deliver sustainable products and services that are both scalable and competitive in terms of price, quality and convenience;
5. *Calls on* all actors to make the right innovative choices against the background of the pandemic and to prioritize future-proof and sustainable sectors and technologies while benefitting from the huge social, economic and ecological advantages of smart digitalization;
6. *Invites* parliaments to recognize the need for and opportunity of a resilient and low-carbon inclusive recovery from COVID-19, as an enabler for achieving the 2030 Agenda, and calls on them to ensure that recovery plans incorporate responsible consumption and production practices, based on digitalization and circular economy principles, among others, while taking into account national circumstances;
7. *Calls on* parliaments to adopt legislation that addresses food waste and loss at every phase and level of the food supply chain, and to stimulate the use of new technologies for the creation of an integrated agricultural and food system whereby food utilization is optimized and loss and waste of resources are minimized;
8. *Urges* parliaments to support policies that encourage repair, reuse and resource recycling, including the design of products suitable for recycling; the reduction of primary material consumption; and the utilization of secondary resources to facilitate sustainable resource management, and invites them to encourage new business and service models that are not dependent on mass consumption of disposable products;
9. *Requests* parliaments to ensure that the functioning of all public institutions, central and local, takes a more holistic approach to sustainability, while incorporating both digital and circular economy principles, including the adoption of green and sustainable procurement legislative frameworks and monitoring systems;
10. *Invites* parliaments to encourage international policy coordination of standards, regulations and policies for the circular economy;
11. *Calls on* parliaments to create an environment conducive to the development and application of digital solutions, such as the internet of things, artificial intelligence and blockchain, aimed at maximizing the potential of the circular economy;
12. *Also calls on* parliaments, as part of efforts to create an enabling environment for digitalization and the circular economy, to place special emphasis on data policies and common data architecture;
13. *Invites* parliaments to encourage research and development to increase innovation and knowledge-sharing including the transfer of technology, particularly to developing countries on mutually agreed terms for the uptake, upscaling and replication of resource-efficient and clean technologies and innovative business practices based on digitalization and the circular economy;

14. *Encourages* parliaments to promote collaboration with the Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries, established by UN General Assembly resolution 71/251, which has a critical role to play in the digital transformation of the LDCs, to attain sustainable development by facilitating access to and implementation of digital technologies and providing assistance with data management issues;
15. *Calls on* parliaments from donor countries to encourage international development cooperation agencies to mainstream digitalization and circular economy principles in their financial assistance and capacity-building programmes aimed at supporting COVID-19 economic recovery and SDG implementation;
16. *Also calls on* governments to integrate digital skills and a circular way of life in education at the earliest possible stage; and to conduct awareness campaigns to encourage consumers' engagement in sustainable practices;
17. *Invites* parliaments to create an enabling environment for citizens' access to digital solutions for their digital empowerment;
18. *Also invites* parliaments and governments to allocate appropriate financial resources to encourage the development of both digital and circular economy business models, while specifically empowering young and women entrepreneurs;
19. *Further invites* parliaments to promote gender-inclusive education frameworks and policies to boost education opportunities and digital skills development for women and girls in STEAM-subjects to narrow the gender digital divide;
20. *Encourages* parliaments to support efforts by regional and local institutions to foster urban sustainability through the development of inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable smart cities that digitally optimize communication, transport, energy, water and sanitation systems, according to circular economy and digitalization principles;
21. *Emphasizes* the urgent need to work towards a circular built environment by adopting building practices that minimize the use of raw materials to decrease emissions, by increasing the recovery rate of construction and demolition waste, and by improving the energy efficiency and extending the lifespan of existing buildings;
22. *Calls on* parliaments to encourage the integration of circular economy models into the national response to climate change, and invites them to ensure that climate change policies and strategies include measures to optimize the utility of products by maximizing their use and extending their lifespan and enhance recycling (using waste as a resource), while promoting a circular design that reduces material consumption and uses lower-carbon alternatives;
23. *Also calls on* parliaments to encourage full transparency pertaining to all used materials in manufacturing in order to limit any introduction of harmful chemical substances in the production cycle, and furthermore to promote the use of fully recyclable materials;
24. *Invites* parliaments to support the adoption, including through public-private partnerships, of sound environmental and social standards for the extractive industries, as well as of standards and policy frameworks that enhance the sustainable recycling of secondary materials and mitigate challenges associated with the digital economy;
25. *Calls on* parliaments to promote digitalization and circular solutions, including circular procurement, circular design and services instead of products, as a means to develop a more resilient, and economically and environmentally sustainable travel and tourism industry;
26. *Requests* parliaments to ensure that governments invest in adequate digital infrastructure for secure, accessible and affordable internet coverage, connectivity, regulatory frameworks for data protection/privacy, and cybersecurity standards and governance, in order to enable the circular economy and D4D to reach their full potential;

27. *Invites* parliaments to incentivize the implementation of circular business models with long-term benefits, such as changing consumer behaviour, stimulating innovation, and the scaling and diffusion of technologies;
28. *Calls on* parliaments to stimulate national and international networking and collaboration between schools, research institutions and networks, and other relevant stakeholders (for example, companies, NGOs and international organizations) to find digital solutions to challenges related to the circular economy, for example by encouraging co-creation through competitions and hackathons;
29. *Invites* parliaments to ensure that efforts to accelerate the transition to digitalization and the circular economy address potential risks, such as increasing material and energy use, increasing greenhouse gas emissions, deepening the digital gap among and within countries, and increasing the environmental footprint of the IT industry, as well as the transition's negative consequences in terms of security and human health;
30. *Calls on* the IPU to enhance cooperation with Member Parliaments and other organizations in order to gather evidence on the circular economy, environment and digitalization, to map the interplay between them and to promote guidelines for parliamentary action;
31. *Also calls on* parliaments to see to it that digitalization and circular-economy principles, and strengthened goals to this effect, are incorporated while approving future free trade agreements, which require parliamentary ratification;
32. *Invites* parliaments to support the use of standardized, comparable and high-quality digital data which is properly mined, investigated and managed, and stresses that promoting digitalization is an important tool to support efficient and reliable information collection and delivery, which are key elements for a safe and sustainable circular economy;
33. *Requests* parliaments to rationalize the discussion on data sharing by distinguishing between different types of data and to establish fair and functional data regulation based on common sense by securing fair access to data, as well as fair protection of data according to the internationally accepted data protection principles, intellectual property rights and other relevant legal frameworks as per national circumstances;
34. *Encourages* parliaments and governments to engage in dialogue with stakeholders (for example, civil society, companies and administrations) in order to increase their awareness of the importance of providing open data and turn them into active participants of the data economy and co-creators of knowledge when legally possible;
35. *Calls on* parliaments to envisage measures aimed at tackling people's lack of basic digital skills and e-literacy, and at increasing the number of IT, artificial intelligence, blockchain and other digital professionals, as a means to proactively shape a digital transformation centred around sustainable ecological, social and economic development dimensions;
36. *Invites* parliaments to exchange information and best practices and implement capacity-building programmes with a view to increasing awareness and knowledge among parliamentarians about the interplay between digitalization and the circular economy, and its potential in promoting a resilient and green recovery and achieving the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production.

* The resolution was negotiated in keeping with the Special Rules of Procedure governing virtual sessions of the IPU Assembly and Standing Committees. Reservations were received from:

India, which expressed reservations on preambular paragraphs 7 and 29.

Nicaragua, which expressed reservations on operative paragraphs 3, 8, 20, and 28.

Report of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

*Noted by the 142nd IPU Assembly
(Virtual session, 27 May 2021)*

The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights held two sittings in the run-up to the 142nd IPU Assembly.

On 28 April, the Committee met to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on democracy and human rights, and on the functioning of parliaments. With Committee Vice-President Ms. A. Gerkens (Netherlands) in the chair, the Committee heard opening remarks from Ms. L. Thornton (Director for Global Programmes, International IDEA) and Mr. N. Bako-Arifari (member of the National Assembly, Benin), and later from Mr. A. Williamson (Senior Researcher, Centre for Innovation in Parliament, IPU) and Ms. C. López Castro (member of the Chamber of Deputies, Mexico).

During the debate, delegates observed that the pandemic had had a wide range of negative impacts on democracy and human rights. Fundamental rights such as the freedom of association had been restricted in the name of public health imperatives. A number of countries had declared a state of emergency. Delegates observed that restrictions on human rights must be time-limited, specified in law and proportional to the requirements of the situation. The full enjoyment of human rights and practice of democracy must be resumed as soon as the situation permitted.

Parliaments, like all institutions, had been severely challenged by the pandemic. Many parliaments had demonstrated an impressive capacity to find innovative solutions to continue to meet in virtual, hybrid or socially-distanced settings. The long-term impact of the pandemic on parliaments remained to be seen. On one hand, remote working had created new possibilities for parliamentarians to spend more time closer to the people they represented. On the other, it had made it more difficult to hold substantive debates and to discuss solutions to complex political issues.

Like everybody, delegates expressed the hope that the pandemic would soon be brought under control by the rapid and equitable distribution of vaccines, so that the Committee, the IPU and indeed society as a whole would be able to resume their normal functioning.

On 18 May, the Committee held a preparatory debate on the theme of the next resolution *Legislation worldwide to combat online sexual child exploitation*, with the Committee President, Mr. A.Y. Desai (India) in the chair. The debate started a process that would lead to the adoption of the resolution at the 143rd IPU Assembly later in 2021.

The Committee appointed a third co-Rapporteur, Mr. P. Limjaroenrat (Thailand) to join Ms. A. Gerkens (Netherlands) and Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya) who had been appointed as co-Rapporteurs at the preceding Assembly.

Ms. M. F. Singhateh (UN Special Rapporteur on sale and sexual exploitation of children) highlighted that many laws already existed, as well as the difficulty that was frequently observed in implementing them. The internet knew no boundaries, and perpetrators might be in one country, victims in another and images of abuse stored on servers in yet another jurisdiction. Meanwhile, it was very difficult to gather evidence that met the standards required by the courts, suggesting that new approaches would be required. Ms. Singhateh laid out the case for developing model legislation to combat online sexual child exploitation that could be adopted by all countries.

Mr. J. Carr (Technical Adviser to ECPAT International) cited data about the scale of online sexual child exploitation and drew attention to the role of technology companies in taking action to remove abusive images. He reinforced the point that legislation was only one of the steps towards effectively addressing the problem. Parliamentarians could greatly contribute to raising public awareness of the issue, which in turn would increase the pressure on technology companies to step up their efforts.

During the debate, the rapporteurs and delegates shared experience from their countries and sought advice from the experts on possible courses of action. The inputs would help inform the preparation of the draft resolution.

The Bureau of the Committee met on 11 May to exchange perspectives on the major challenges to democracy and human rights, in the context of the revision of the IPU Strategy. Bureau members identified a range of pressing issues, such as online disinformation, hate speech and the fight against discrimination in all its forms, including on the basis of sexual orientation. They expressed the wish that the Committee be able to discuss any issue and thereby play its role in advancing democracy and human rights to the fullest extent possible.

At its last sitting on 18 May, the Committee elected a number of new members to the Bureau, on the basis of the nominations from the geopolitical groups.

Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 142nd IPU Assembly
(Virtual session, 27 May 2021)*

Joint meeting with the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development on the overall theme of the 142nd Assembly (27 April)

This first sitting of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs was held jointly with the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development to debate the overall theme of the 142nd Assembly *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments*.

The President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, Mr. J.C. Romero (Argentina), and the President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Ms. V. Muzenda Tsitsi (Zimbabwe), opened the session. The Committees adopted the agenda and the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs approved the summary record of its session held at the 141st Assembly in Belgrade.

Mr. J.C. Romero chaired the first panel which focused on the main components of the pandemic recovery phase, opportunities to advance towards a green economy, as well as renewed multilateral cooperation and dialogue to tackle global challenges, including new pandemics. Ms. S. Dinică (Romania), member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, moderated the second panel on vaccines accessibility as a public good.

The two panels featured the following speakers: Ms. S. Rehman (Pakistan), Ms. M. Aubry (member of the European Parliament), Mr. T. Jackson (Professor, University of Surrey), and Mr. M. Frick (Deputy Special Envoy to the UN Food Systems Summit). About 75 members of parliament participated in the debate while 150 parliamentary staff members followed as observers.

Panel presentations gave rise to a total of 15 interventions (including two received in the chat line) from representatives of the following parliaments: Bahrain, Burundi, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Iran, Japan, Mongolia, Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates.

The main takeaways from the discussion can be summarized as follows:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic magnified existing problems such as growing inequalities, and unsustainable development patterns nationally and globally. The post-COVID-19 recovery must bring about systemic change in the development model but also in the underlying commitment that people and countries needed to make to each other and to the international community. The development model should refocus on what matters to people most, namely, their health and that of their environment, particularly in developed countries where growth had already reached its limits. The underlying commitment must be centred more on solidarity rather than competition and must affirm the value of multilateralism as the best way for countries to tackle borderless problems such as climate change and pandemics.
2. The green economy and the circular economy were key to making the current development model more sustainable. However, the care economy, which consisted of the services to people (the old, the most vulnerable, the unemployed, etc.) that required relatively little material input but dramatically improved the quality of life and human security, must also be integrated into that model. Prosperity needed to be redefined in terms of good health and more time for oneself and family, rather than in terms of more high-input material production and consumption that involved more carbon emissions and extraction of finite resources. Steps in this direction would require, among other things, a new financial architecture, a more progressive tax system, and new programmes such as a universal basic income.
3. The current dysfunctional global food system that left hundreds of millions of people hungry or malnourished, led to enormous food waste, and caused a host of health and social problems, was a good illustration of what needed to change going forward. The pandemic had shown the vulnerability of global supply chains that also included food and basic staples. The food system needed to be more grounded within national borders and the ownership of key inputs protected from corporate monopolies.

4. A stronger focus on women was key to the post-pandemic recovery and to sustainability in general. Refocusing the development model on the care economy would benefit women in particular as they occupied the greater share of jobs in the service sector. Foreign aid needed to target women better. Women were also key to the food system and to food security in general as they were often the backbone of the informal sector and of rural economies.
5. The way in which the COVID-19 vaccine was being produced and distributed to people and countries around the world evinced a dramatic lack of global solidarity and would ultimately prove self-defeating unless corrective measures were adopted soon. The pandemic would not end until the vast majority of people in each country was vaccinated and herd immunity was reached. That objective was not attainable presently as the supply of vaccines was controlled by a handful of patent-holding pharmaceutical companies with limited productive capacities and more interest in profit making than in global public health. Governments needed to recognize the global emergency as one akin to a state of “war” and from there, act accordingly to deploy every conceivable tool to bring the pandemic under control as fast as possible and everywhere. One such tool should be the temporary waiving of vaccine patents so that every pharmaceutical company in the world with capacity to add to the global supply of vaccines could do so with no penalty. Patent-holding companies should be compensated for sharing their vaccine formula and technical know-how with others. At the same time, other tools already being deployed, such as the Covax facility, needed to be considerably more strengthened.

Discussion on the UN75 Declaration follow-up (29 April)

The second sitting of the Committee on United Nations Affairs considered the implications of the Declaration issued at the conclusion of the September 2020 High-level Meeting to Commemorate the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (UN75).

The UN75 Declaration comprised 12 commitments – referred to as “Our Common Agenda” – on the currently most critical global challenges, from reversing climate change to reforming multilateralism. The Declaration requested the UN Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly in September 2021 with recommendations on how to advance the Common Agenda. As part of that endeavour, the UN was conducting a global consultation with key constituencies via an online facility at <https://un75.online/take-action/>.

Moderated by the Committee President Mr. J.C. Romero, the meeting proceeded in two parts: the first part featured a panel discussion with Ms. M. Joyni (Ambassador, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations), Mr. B. Rae (Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations), and Ms. E. Cousens (President and CEO of the UN Foundation). The second part featured a live poll built on the nine leading questions of the UN global consultation on the Common Agenda. The elements of the consultation were introduced by Ms. M. Griffin (Senior Advisor, Office of the United Nations Secretary-General).

About 45 members of parliament participated in the session while over a hundred observers followed online. Interventions were voiced or submitted in writing from the following 13 Members: Bahrain, Belarus, Burundi, China, Costa Rica, India, Iran, Kuwait, Madagascar, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Turkey.

The panel discussion in the first part of the sitting highlighted the following points:

1. The current pandemic provided a powerful reminder of the value of multilateralism. For the pandemic to end the whole world needed to work together in solidarity toward common solutions. The solutions should also aim at making the response to future inevitable pandemics much more effective than had been the case with COVID-19, when countries and multilateral organizations alike had been caught totally unprepared.
2. The United Nations was not perfect but remained a key pillar of multilateralism. A stronger multilateral system necessarily needed to include all key constituencies, not just governments. Along with the private sector, civil society, and youth, parliaments and parliamentarians must play a greater role in developing innovative policy solutions and in implementing international commitments. Narrowing the digital divide was one important way to bring people together nationally and globally.

3. Putting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) back on track toward implementation by 2030 was critical to restore faith in government and in multilateralism. People's trust in governments and in the multilateral regime could only be restored by effectively addressing their problems on the ground.
4. Parliaments' role in implementing international agreements through the legislative and budget process, as well as by exercising effective oversight was key. The IPU's capacity to bring all political parties to multilateral forums added value to the UN's one-country-one-voice institutional set up.

As noted, the survey exercise with participants during the second part of the session focused on the same nine questions at the heart of the UN global consultation. The IPU had added multiple choice answers to those questions and had invited participants to choose their top two preferences. Additionally, participants could add one or more answers of their own. Top choices from the nine leading questions highlighted the following points:

- Strengthening data collection was key to analysing trends and future projections.
- Introducing a culture of peace curricula into schools was most important to bringing peace to the world.
- Investing massively in renewable energy and green industries was the most important step to curb climate change.
- Global public goods were best defined as all assets and services that must be accessible to all.
- Ensuring that all government documents were publicly accessible was key to restoring trust between people and institutions.
- Decision-making was most effective when the public was well informed of the relevant process in a timely manner.
- Ensuring access to education and health care to all was key to levelling the playing field in society.
- Enabling more parliamentary dialogue around global issues through the IPU was most important to global governance.
- Making the UN more inclusive and representative of the global community required amending the Charter of the United Nations to recognize the role of parliaments in global governance.

At the end of the session, the Committee President Mr. J.C. Romero announced that he had completed his second term as Committee president and wished every success to his successor, who would be appointed after the 142nd Assembly. Mr. Romero thanked the IPU Secretariat for its support and his fellow Bureau members for their work during his four-year tenure.

Statement on the occasion of the 2021 United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS

*Endorsed by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th session
(Virtual session, 25 May 2021)*

The Governing Council,

- *Noting* the Inter-Parliamentary Union's continued support over the years to the global AIDS response and engagement in United Nations high-level meetings on HIV/AIDS,
- *Recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolution 75/260 of 23 February 2021 on the organization of the 2021 High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS inviting the Inter-Parliamentary Union to contribute to the meeting,
- *Recalling also* the United Nations Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted on 27 June 2001 and the political declarations on HIV/AIDS adopted at the high-level meetings of the General Assembly in 2006, 2011 and 2016,
- *Underlining* that the world's governments have set a target to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (in particular Goal 3, target 3),
- *Welcoming* the significant gains achieved in the AIDS response yet noting with concern that progress has been uneven among and within countries, and that gains remain fragile and reversible without renewed commitment, increased investments and accelerated action,
- *Expressing* deep concern that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the world was not on track to meet the time-bound targets set out in the 2016 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, which expired at the end of 2020, and that the modelling of the COVID-19 pandemic's long-term impact on the HIV response shows a setback with an estimated 123,000 to 293,000 additional new HIV infections and 69,000 to 148,000 additional AIDS-related deaths between 2020 and 2022,
- *Noting* that 2021 marks 40 years since the first case of AIDS was reported, 25 years since UNAIDS commenced its valuable work and 20 years since the creation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria, which provides 21 per cent of all international financing for the global HIV response; as well as that a new Global AIDS strategy for 2021-2026 has been adopted,
- *Expressing* concern that 38 million people globally were living with HIV in 2019, that more than 12 million people still do not have access to HIV treatment, and that 1.7 million people became infected with HIV in 2019 because they did not have access to essential HIV services,
- *Noting* that HIV is not only driven by but also entrenches gender inequality, leaving HIV infected women more vulnerable to violence, coercion, stigma and discrimination, including violations of their sexual and reproductive rights, and that they are six times more likely to develop cervical cancer,
- *Noting also* with concern that every week, around 5,500 young women aged between 15 and 24 years become infected with HIV, and that young women in Sub-Saharan Africa are twice as likely as men to be living with HIV,
- *Noting further* that structural, legal, economic and other inequalities that foster stigma and discrimination increase HIV vulnerability, impede access to services and make key populations more likely to die of AIDS-related illnesses, as well as that, as reported by the *Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026*, the risk of acquiring HIV is 13 times higher for transgender people, 26 times higher among gay men and other men who have sex with men, 29 times higher among people who inject drugs, and 30 times higher for sex workers,

Calls on parliaments to:

- Work to have States realize the right to health and implement health targets as part of the Sustainable Development Goals, including ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

- Bring HIV back to the public discourse since HIV continues to be a major public health crisis.
- Respond to the specific health needs of young women and adolescent girls and other groups of people disproportionately affected by HIV, particularly underserved communities such as indigenous and transgender populations, by raising awareness, ensuring prevention and access to treatment, and providing relevant services.
- Use both their mandate and public trust to engage communities and act in the interest of every citizen and every community, including people living with HIV and key populations, to build large scale public awareness and enable community mobilization towards a collective people's movement to achieve the promise of better health outcomes and a reduction in disparities.
- Promote evidence-based, people-centred guidance and tools to promote the autonomy and self-efficacy of people living with and at risk of HIV, including through access to self-care interventions.
- Review existing legislation and repeal or amend laws, including age-restrictive laws, that undermine access to HIV and health services for all, and that criminalize HIV transmission to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Enact laws that protect and promote the human rights of all citizens, including their right to health; that protect people living with HIV, in particular young women and adolescent girls, and key populations against stigma and discrimination; and that ensure access to quality, affordable sexual and reproductive health services and rights.
- Use their oversight and budgetary powers and engage with global partners to enable effective prioritization and more efficient allocation of resources for HIV and health, given the fiscal pressures exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and support gender-sensitive budgeting as a tool for addressing women's, girls' and transgender people's health needs.
- Commit to resume health services disrupted on account of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure equitable access to HIV testing and treatment.

The Governing Council renews its call on all countries to:

- Renew at the 2021 United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS their commitment to global efforts to end the AIDS epidemic and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.
- Protect the human rights of all persons without distinction in law and in practice and ensure all health policies and interventions are in conformity with international human rights standards.
- Strengthen already established strategic partnerships and create new ones that include governments, parliaments, affected communities, civil society, the private sector, academics, scientists and philanthropists.
- Mobilize adequate resources and funds to support the implementation and realize the objectives of the new *Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026*, and also to mobilize all sources, public and private, domestic and international, to reverse the decrease in international support and close the US\$ 7 billion funding gap for the global AIDS response.
- Apply the lessons learned from the colliding HIV epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic and, at the 2021 United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, urge for more investments in global pandemic responses and the adoption of a new set of bold, ambitious but achievable HIV targets to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.
- Use the scientific progress achieved in developing effective mRNA vaccines against COVID-19 for the quick development of an HIV vaccine.
- Ensure that intellectual property rights are not an obstacle for any person living with HIV to receive modern antiretroviral therapy.

Parliamentary action in support of ending statelessness

Statement to mark the 60th anniversary of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness

Endorsed by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th session (Virtual session, 25 May 2021)

Statelessness, or the lack of possession of any nationality, affects millions of people worldwide, often denying them access to fundamental rights such as education, medical treatment, work and travel, and leaving them vulnerable to extreme forms of exploitation and abuse.

Article 15 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that all people have the right to a nationality, which in turn often serves as a gateway to other fundamental rights. The right to a nationality is also enshrined in numerous widely ratified international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Recognizing that 2021 marks the 60th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (1961 Convention),

Recalling that the problem of statelessness has persisted over the years owing to gaps in nationality laws, weak birth registration systems and discriminatory legislation, including nationality laws that prevent women from conferring their nationality on their children on an equal basis to men,

We, Members of the IPU, call for renewed and urgent parliamentary action to help end the plight of stateless persons by:

- Taking appropriate legislative measures, such as reforms to nationality and related laws to ensure that they conform to the international standards that prevent and reduce statelessness and protect stateless persons, in particular by ensuring that nationality laws are free from discrimination and contain the safeguards that prevent statelessness;
- Encouraging relevant States to accede to and implement treaties that contain these international standards, including the 1961 Convention and the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons; and to support universal adherence to and implementation of these Conventions;
- Considering providing necessary support for the implementation of the 360 pledges to address statelessness made at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness and the 2019 first Global Forum on Refugees, as many of these require action to be taken by parliaments;
- Speaking out for stateless men, women, boys and girls in our countries and raising awareness of their situation;
- Making use of the tools produced by the IPU and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), such as the 2005 IPU-UNHCR handbook for parliamentarians *Nationality and Statelessness* (updated in 2014 and translated into 13 languages) and the 2018 handbook *Good practices in nationality laws for the prevention and reduction of statelessness* (available in eight languages); and
- Systematically upholding the right to a nationality for all and supporting efforts to meet the goals of the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024.

With less than four years remaining in the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024, and less than ten years to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and leave no one behind, the time for action is now.

Statement on Yemen

*Endorsed by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th session
(Virtual session, 25 May 2021)*

The IPU Committee on Middle East Questions expresses its strong concerns over the recent escalation in the brutal conflict in Yemen, causing what has become known as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

The Committee strongly condemns the violations of UN Security Council resolutions regarding Yemen, especially as regards the embargo on arms sales to parties to the conflict, and requests the parliaments of relevant countries to conduct oversight of their governments in the implementation of such resolutions.

The Committee is disturbed by the increasing levels of famine in Yemen, adding higher levels of tragedy to this grave crisis, and thus calls upon the members of the global parliamentary community to assume their role in saving Yemeni lives.

Special Rules of Procedure to regulate the conduct of virtual sessions of the Assembly and Standing Committees

*Adopted by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th session
(Virtual session, 24 May 2021)*

I. Special Rules of Procedure for the Assembly (meeting in virtual format)

The Rules of the Assembly shall continue to apply in full, except to the extent that they are inconsistent with these Special Rules of Procedure, in which case the decision of the Assembly to adopt these Special Rules of Procedure shall constitute a decision to suspend the relevant Rules of the Assembly to the extent necessary.

The Rules of the Assembly that shall be suspended are the following:

Rules 4 to 6 with regard to the venue and duration of a physical Assembly
Rule 9 with regard to the Steering Committee
Rules 11,12 and 15.3 with regard to emergency items
Rules 17 to 20 with regard to amendments and sub-amendments
Rules 28 to 32 with regard to voting
Rule 33 with regard to quorum
Rule 34 with regard to majorities

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Attendance by Members, Associate Members and Observers shall be through secured access to videoconference or other electronic means allowing representatives to hear other participants and to address the meeting remotely as appropriate.

1.2 For the purpose of attendance, and voting, the gender inclusiveness of delegations of Members under Articles 10 and 15(c) of the Statutes will be assessed on the basis of the list submitted by each Member for the purpose of registration by the deadline indicated below.

2. REGISTRATION

2.1 Registration shall take place through an online system in accordance with established practice. Each IPU Member participating in the session shall communicate the name, gender, age and contact details of its delegates as well as the scan of an official letter from the Speaker of parliament or the President of the IPU Group concerned.

2.2 The deadline for registration shall be 15 days before the opening of the session. No further changes to the composition of delegations will be possible after that date except in case of force majeure preventing a registered member from attending the session. The existence of such a situation must be certified by the Speaker of the Parliament or the President of the IPU Group concerned through a written communication to the Secretary General.

3. QUORUM

The number of registered delegations at the registration deadline indicated in Rule 2.2 of these Special Rules of Procedure shall be used to establish the quorum.

4. ADDRESSING THE ASSEMBLY

4.1 During the virtual session, statements by delegates shall be limited to two minutes.

4.2 Delegates may also submit written statements in either English or French (the official languages of the Organization) with an indication of the agenda item to which they refer, in advance of the opening of the session of the Assembly. Written statements shall be in lieu of live interventions. These shall be posted on a dedicated web page and shall form part of the official records of the session.

4.3 Delegates may also submit pre-recorded video statements with an indication of the agenda item to which they refer, in advance of the opening of the session. Pre-recorded video statements shall be in lieu of live interventions.

4.4 Any delegate wishing to take the floor should signal their wish to speak. A delegate wishing to raise a point of order in relation to a statement made during the session should signal their intention to do so. The President will rule on the point of order in accordance with Rule 23 of the Rules of the Assembly.

4.5 Observers are invited to submit written statements in either English or French (the official languages of the Organization) with an indication of the agenda item to which they refer, in advance of the opening of the session of the Assembly. Such statements shall be posted on a dedicated web page.

5. DECISION-MAKING

All decisions of the Assembly taken in a virtual session shall be, as far as possible, adopted by consensus. In view of the virtual nature of the session and of technical limitations, resolutions prepared by the Standing Committees and outcomes of the General Debate endorsed by the Executive Committee shall be submitted for adoption by the Assembly through the written silence procedure as outlined in Rule 6 below.

6. WRITTEN SILENCE PROCEDURE

6.1 The following written silence procedure shall apply in respect of any proposal that the IPU President determines, following informal consultations, is suitable for adoption without further discussion by the Assembly.

6.2 At the request of the President, the Secretary General shall transmit to Members any such proposal for consideration under this written silence procedure.

6.3 The communication shall contain the text of the proposal(s) to be considered under this written silence procedure. Any such objection shall be conveyed in writing, including by email, and addressed to the Secretary General. The objection must have been received within 15 days of the date of the dispatch of the communication.

6.4 In the absence of the receipt by the stipulated deadline of written objections from one third or more of Members, the proposal concerned shall be considered as having been validly adopted by the Assembly. Objections shall be reproduced in footnotes appended to the text of the resolution or decision once adopted.

6.5 The Secretary General shall communicate the outcome of the written silence procedure to all Members as soon as possible after the set deadline referred to above. In the case of a proposal that is adopted pursuant to the written silence procedure, the date of the Secretary General's communication to that effect shall be the date of adoption of the proposal.

6.6 Without prejudice to the above, a Member may explain their position in respect of a proposal that is subject to the written silence procedure by submitting a written statement relating thereto, for posting on the IPU website. Written statements should be received by the Secretary General by the date set for receipt of objections. Written statements shall be made available on the IPU website for information purposes only. They shall appear as submitted and in the language(s) of submission. Submission of a written statement in accordance with this paragraph shall not be considered as an objection.

II. Special Rules of Procedure for the Standing Committees (meeting in virtual format)

The Rules of the Standing Committees shall continue to apply in full, except to the extent that they are inconsistent with these Special Rules of Procedure, in which case the decision of the Governing Council to adopt these Special Rules of Procedure shall constitute a decision to suspend the relevant Rules of the Standing Committees to the extent necessary.

The Rules of the Standing Committees that shall be suspended are the following:

Rule 7, paragraph 6, with regard to the election of Bureau members by secret ballot
Rule 13, paragraph 2, with regard to the deadline for submission of amendments

Rule 18 with regard to the deadline for the submission of proposals for subject items
Rules 24 to 26 with regard to the treatment of amendments and sub-amendments
Rule 32 with regard to procedural motions
Rule 33 with regard to public meetings
Rules 35 and 36 with regard to the method of voting
Rule 37 with regard to division of proposals
Rule 38 with regard to interruption and explanation of the vote
Rule 39 with regard to quorum
Rule 40 with regard to the decisions of the Standing Committees and their Bureaux

1. ATTENDANCE

Attendance by Members, Associate Members and Observers shall be through secured access to videoconference or other electronic means allowing representatives to hear other participants and to address the meeting remotely as appropriate.

2. QUORUM

A Standing Committee may meet and deliberate irrespective of the number of members present.

3. ADDRESSING THE STANDING COMMITTEES

3.1 During the virtual session, statements by members shall be limited to two minutes.

3.2 Members may submit written statements in either English or French (the official languages of the Organization) with an indication of the agenda item to which they refer, in advance of the opening of the session of the Standing Committee concerned. Written statements shall be in lieu of live interventions. These shall be posted on a dedicated web page and shall form part of the official records of the session.

3.3 Any member wishing to take the floor should signal their wish to speak. A member wishing to raise a point of order in relation to a statement made during the session should signal their intention to do so. The President will rule on the point of order in accordance with Rule 28 of the Rules of Standing Committees.

3.4 Observers may submit written statements in either English or French (the official languages of the Organization) with an indication of the agenda item to which they refer, in advance of the opening of the session of the Standing Committee concerned. Such statements shall be posted on a dedicated web page.

4. DECISION-MAKING

All decisions of Standing Committees taken in a virtual session shall be, as far as possible, adopted by consensus. Ad-hoc rules shall be established for the adoption of resolutions and subject items, through a transparent and inclusive process.

5. WRITTEN SILENCE PROCEDURE

5.1 The following written silence procedure shall apply in respect of any proposal that the IPU President determines, following informal consultations, is suitable for adoption without further discussion.

5.2 At the request of the President, the Secretary General shall transmit to Members any such proposal for consideration under this written silence procedure.

5.3 The communication shall contain the text of the proposal(s) to be considered under this written silence procedure. Any such objection shall be conveyed in writing, including by email, and addressed to the Secretary General. The objection must have been received within 15 days of the date of the dispatch of the communication.

5.4 In the absence of the receipt by the stipulated deadline of written objections from one third or more of Members, the proposal concerned shall be considered as having been validly adopted. Objections shall be reproduced in footnotes appended to the text of the resolution or decision once adopted.

5.5 The Secretary General shall communicate the outcome of the written silence procedure to all Members as soon as possible after the set deadline referred to above. In the case of a proposal that is adopted pursuant to the written silence procedure, the date of the Secretary General's communication to that effect shall be the date of adoption of the proposal.

5.6 Without prejudice to the above, a Member may explain their position in respect of a proposal that is subject to the written silence procedure by submitting a written statement relating thereto, for posting on the IPU website. Written statements should be received by the Secretary General by the date set for receipt of objections. Written statements shall be made available on the IPU website for information purposes only. They shall appear as submitted and in the language(s) of submission. Submission of a written statement in accordance with this paragraph shall not be considered as an objection.

Cremer-Passy Prize Rules

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th Session
(Virtual session, 25 May 2021)*

PREAMBLE

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (hereinafter "the IPU") is an international organization of the parliaments of sovereign states, which was established in 1889 with the aim of promoting peace, cooperation among peoples and the consolidation of representative institutions by fostering personal relations between the members of all Parliaments, bringing them together in a joint action aimed at maintaining and ensuring the full participation of Member Parliaments.

The IPU advocates for the peaceful resolution of international conflicts through concrete action by parliamentarians globally, engaging in effective parliamentary diplomacy in the following areas of activity: representative democracy, peace and international security, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian law, gender equality, international trade, and education, science and technology.

With a view to encouraging such parliamentary diplomacy and fostering concrete action by parliamentarians in the pursuit and promotion of more lasting peace and effective democratic societies, the IPU Governing Council, on the proposal of the Executive Committee, adopted Resolution no. XX establishing the "Cremer-Passy Prize", to be awarded annually to a parliamentarian or group of parliamentarians who make an outstanding contribution to the defence and promotion of the IPU's objectives as well as those who contribute to a more united, fair, secure, sustainable and equitable world.

Article XX of Resolution no. XX mentioned above provides for the adoption of the criteria and the rules of procedure for awarding the Cremer-Passy Prize.

The Cremer-Passy Prize Rules and criteria are hereby approved as follows:

Article 1

The Inter-Parliamentary Union hereby establishes a parliamentarians' award for excellence entitled the "Cremer-Passy Prize".

Article 2

1. The Cremer-Passy Prize is awarded by the IPU and is intended to reward a parliamentarian or group of parliamentarians who make an outstanding contribution to the defence and promotion of the objectives of this organization and to a more united, fair, secure, sustainable and equitable world.
2. The Cremer-Passy Prize shall be awarded annually, at the second IPU Assembly of each year.

3. The winner of the prize shall be invited to attend the IPU Assembly referred to in Article 2.2 and to address the Assembly in recognition of their achievement and to serve as an inspiration to the work of other Members of Parliament.
4. The Cremer-Passy Prize shall not be awarded posthumously.

Article 3

All parliamentarians from IPU Member Parliaments, who at some point in the year to which the prize relates were sitting Members of Parliament, shall be eligible for the award.

Article 4

1. In accordance with their own rules of procedure, the geopolitical groups shall accept nominations for the Cremer-Passy Prize from their parliamentary delegations, and submit them by 18:00 (CET) on 31 May of each year to the IPU Secretariat by filling in a specific form available at www.ipu.org.
2. Each geopolitical group may submit more than one nomination, stating an order of preference.
3. The nominations shall be accompanied by a cover letter signed by the Chair of the geopolitical group, setting out the reasons why they consider that the parliamentarian or group of parliamentarians deserve to be awarded the Cremer-Passy Prize.
4. Failure to comply with the time limit laid down in Article 4.1 cannot be remedied.

Article 5

1. The IPU Secretariat shall check the content of the nominations submitted by the geopolitical groups within 20 days of the deadline for submitting nominations in order to assess whether the nominees have met the criteria.
2. The IPU Secretariat shall gather all the nominations deemed valid and submit them to the Prize Selection Board, together with a report on the nominations that have been rejected, setting out the reasons for their exclusion.
3. In the event of failure to comply with any of the criteria for the nominations, the IPU Secretariat shall inform the nominee(s) accordingly.
4. Where the geopolitical group does not remedy the non-compliance, the nomination in question shall be rejected by the IPU Secretariat.

Article 6

1. The Prize Selection Board shall be composed of seven members, including the current IPU President, who shall chair the Board without voting rights except for the purposes of paragraph 6.8, and the last President Emeritus from each geopolitical group.
2. Geopolitical groups that cannot be represented by a President Emeritus shall nominate, in accordance with their rules of procedure, a retired Speaker.
3. The Secretary General of the IPU shall attend the Prize Selection Board as a non-voting observer in order to ensure that the proposals are assessed based on up-to-date knowledge of the current Members of the IPU.
4. The members of the Prize Selection Board shall have 30 working days from the date of receipt of the nominations from the Secretariat to consider them.
5. The Prize Selection Board shall meet within a maximum of five days from the expiry of the period referred to in paragraph 6.4 in order to discuss and decide on the prize winner or winners.
6. The Cremer-Passy Prize winner(s) will be decided through a majority vote of the Prize Selection Board members.
7. In the event of a tie, the Prize Selection Board shall hold a second vote between the two nominees with the most votes.
8. Where the tie remains after the second vote count, the Prize Selection Board Chairman shall have a casting vote to determine the winner(s).
9. The Prize Selection Board may unanimously decide not to award the Cremer-Passy Prize in a given year whenever unforeseen circumstances emerge (*force majeure*).
10. The IPU Secretariat shall make all the necessary arrangements to hold the meeting stipulated in paragraph 6.5 above.

Article 7

The prize to be awarded consists of a trophy with an appropriate inscription.

Article 8

All actors involved in the award procedure shall keep all nominations confidential.

Article 9

1. The periods referred to in these Rules shall be counted in working days.
2. In the event that the country of any IPU Member has a public holiday on 31 May, that day, for the purposes of the submission of nominations laid down in Article 4.1, shall be considered a working day.

Article 10

To ensure the implementation of Resolution no. XX, which establishes the Cremer-Passy Prize, it shall be mandatory that the annual IPU Budget has a specific allocation for the Cremer-Passy Prize.

Article 11

Any amendments to the present Rules shall be adopted at the first IPU Assembly in any given year prior to award of the prize at the second IPU Assembly of that year.

Article 12

All these Cremer-Passy Prize Rules contained herein are constituted as the whole Rules of Procedure for the Cremer-Passy Prize.

VOTING: Election Results

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th Session
(Virtual session, 25 May 2021)*

The Governing Council held a remote vote to fill the **vacancies** on the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and the Committee on Middle East Questions. The voting opened at 17:00 CEST on Monday, 24 May and closed at 11:00 CEST on Tuesday, 25 May.

The quorum for the Governing Council session was set at 123.

Election for the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CHRP)

There were nine candidatures for six vacancies to be filled.

Rule 1.4 of the Rules of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians stipulates that "there shall be no fewer than four members of either sex". Taking into account the current composition of the Committee, this means that at least two of the vacancies needed to be filled by male parliamentarians and at least two by female parliamentarians.

A total of 233 votes were cast in this election. The quorum was therefore met.

The candidates and the number of votes they received are listed below in the same order as they were listed on the ballot paper, which was the order in which their candidacies had been received:

Name	Country	Votes
Ms. C. Urbano de Sousa	Portugal	149
Mr. S. Cogolati	Belgium	111
Mr. S. Spengemann	Canada	131
Ms. L. Quartapelle	Italy	148
Mr. F.A. Silva Facetti	Paraguay	76
Mr. B. Mbuku Laka	Democratic Republic of the Congo	96
Mr. H. Traore	Mali	74
Ms. C. Asiain Pereira	Uruguay	125
Mr. Kim Yeat CHHIT	Cambodia	88

The following candidates were duly elected (in order of country name):

Mr. S. Cogolati	(Belgium)
Mr. S. Spengemann	(Canada)
Mr. B. Mbuku Laka	(Democratic Republic of the Congo)
Ms. L. Quartapelle	(Italy)
Ms. C. Urbano de Sousa	(Portugal)
Ms. C. Asiain Pereira	(Uruguay)

Election for the Committee on Middle East Questions

There were two vacancies to be filled. One needed to be filled by a **male parliamentarian, and the other by a female parliamentarian.**

There was only one woman candidate, Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey). Ms. Kavakci Kan was therefore elected unopposed.

Remote voting was held for the one seat to be filled by a male candidate.

A total of 231 votes were cast. The quorum was therefore met.

The candidates and the number of votes they received are listed below in the same order as they were listed on the ballot paper, which was the order in which their candidacies had been received:

Name	Country	Vote
Mr. M.E. Al-Sisi Al-Buainain	Bahrain	41
Mr. G. Migliore	Italy	101
Mr. M.O. Almheri	United Arab Emirates	77

Mr. G. Migliore (Italy) was duly elected.

Report of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th Session
(Virtual session, 25 May 2021)*

1. The 31st session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians was held virtually on 10 and 12 May 2021. It brought together 78 participants, including 57 delegates from 34 countries. There were 53 women and 4 men among the parliamentarians who attended the Forum.
2. The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. S. Kihika, presided over the 31st session of the Forum. The President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. D. Pacheco, welcomed the participants with opening remarks.

Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

3. The President of the Bureau, Ms. S. Kihika, reported on the work of the Bureau at its 44th session held in October 2019 in Belgrade and 45th session held virtually in March 2021. The participants were also informed about the IPU's recent and future activities on gender equality and were briefed on the preparations for the new IPU Strategy (2022-2027).

Contribution to the work of the 142nd Assembly from a gender perspective

(a) Gender-related impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and prioritizing parliamentary action for gender-responsive recovery

4. By way of contributing to the General Debate of the Assembly on the overall theme *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments*, participants engaged in an interactive discussion on the gender dimensions of COVID-19 and gender-responsive recovery post-COVID.

5. In preparation for that discussion, the IPU, in partnership with UN Women, had organized in March and April 2021 a series of three virtual strategic Inter-Parliamentary Dialogues on gender-responsive post-COVID-19 recovery. Reports on the online meetings were presented by: Ms. S. Kihika (Kenya) on parity in political participation; Ms. H. Al-Helaiissi (Saudi Arabia) on women's economic empowerment; Ms. S. Koutra-Koukouma (Cyprus) on violence against women and girls; and Ms. S. Sirivejchapun (Thailand) on gender-sensitive parliaments and gender-responsive legal reforms.

6. The debate in the Forum highlighted the disproportionate impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic had on women and girls. Women were on the frontline of the pandemic response, as they formed the majority of workers in the health sector and care economy. Participants stressed that with lockdown measures and the economic downturn due to COVID-19, women were more affected by job losses, increased unpaid household and care responsibilities, as well as amplified gender-based violence. The shift of health resources to the pandemic response also reduced access to sexual and reproductive health. This situation was even more critical for women with disabilities, adolescent girls, domestic workers, migrant women, women in contexts of conflict and displacement, indigenous women and women members of the LGBTQ community.

7. Participants called for the equal participation of women in decision-making and the full inclusion of their needs and perspectives in a gender-responsive recovery post-COVID-19. Building on an exchange of good practices, regarding the post-COVID-19 response, participants urged parliaments to prioritize parliamentary actions that: included women – of marginalized groups as well – in the design and implementation of pandemic relief and recovery economic policies; aimed at the adoption of measures to reintegrate women in the labour market and addressed the gender pay gap; ensured access to affordable childcare; promoted long-term investment in social protection systems for all women, including those in the informal sector; and ensured prevention of violence against women and girls and the provision of essential services to protect and support survivors.

(b) Mainstreaming gender equality in the draft resolutions under consideration at the 142nd and 143rd Assemblies

8. Participants were briefed on the two draft resolutions on the agenda of the 142nd Assembly and the inclusion of a gender perspective in each of them. Under the special procedure put in place in light of the pandemic, the respective Standing Committees had met in the weeks preceding the Assembly and had endorsed the resolutions through a written silence procedure. Members of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians had taken part as ex officio members in the drafting committees of those Standing Committees, in order to ensure that a gender perspective was integrated in the resolutions.

9. Ms. C. Roth (Germany), co-Rapporteur of the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, gave a brief overview of the draft resolution *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences*. Ms. Kihika, on behalf of the Bureau, further explained that the resolution recognized UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, as well as the specific impact of war, conflict, displacement, and climate-related tensions and disasters on women and girls, which included an increase in sexual and gender-based violence. The resolution also emphasized the need for meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making in the development and implementation of gender-responsive solutions and resilience mechanisms to tackle climate change and climate-related crises and their close connection to sustainable peace and security.

10. Ms. S.M. Dinică (Romania), co-Rapporteur of the draft resolution *Mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy to achieve the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production*, of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, briefed the participants on the resolution. On behalf of the Bureau, Ms. H. Al Helaiissi, noted that the resolution stressed the urgency to reverse losses in hard-won gender equality gains due to COVID-19, in particular in terms of economic empowerment and ending violence against women and girls. The resolution also recognized the potential of the circular economy and digitalization in enabling the economic empowerment of women, in particular through appropriate financial resources allocated to young and, in particular, women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, it called for bridging the gender digital divide through the promotion of gender-inclusive education frameworks, and policies to boost education opportunities and digital skills development for women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics.

11. Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya), co-Rapporteur of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, introduced the theme of the next resolution entitled *Legislation worldwide to combat online sexual child exploitation* to be considered at the 143rd Assembly. Following her presentation, participants expressed great concern at the growing phenomenon of online sexual child exploitation, further exacerbated by isolation and increased internet use during the COVID-19 pandemic. They agreed that the issue required the urgent involvement, at both the national and international levels, of all parliaments, governments, ICT companies but also parents and teachers, to ensure accountability in the physical and psychological protection of children. It was underlined that parliaments must bring national laws on that matter in line with the Convention of the Rights of the Child and its Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. It was emphasized that investments must be made in the protection **and** education of children, including through age-appropriate sex education in schools to empower children to understand their rights, protect themselves, report online sexual exploitation and ask for help. Participants agreed to share their first preliminary considerations with the co-Rapporteurs of the upcoming draft resolution.

Panel discussion: Generation Equality in and through parliaments

12. The panel discussion titled *Generation Equality in and through parliaments* focused on the role of parliaments to achieve gender equality, with emphasis on the empowerment and leadership of youth and adolescent girls. The exchange opened with presentations by: Ms. L. Banerjee, Executive Coordinator of Generation Equality, UN Women; Mr. H. Vasconcelos (Mexico), Senator; Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), member of parliament; and Khesavi (Mauritius), a female youth empowerment advocate. The panellists addressed the IPU's role as co-leader of Generation Equality's Action Coalition on feminist movements and leadership and how parliamentarians could contribute to making women and girls feel empowered to participate in public life and contribute to decisions to build a better future for them.

13. Participants were also briefed on Generation Equality, a unique forum launched by UN Women in partnership with the governments of France and Mexico and civil society groups, centred on intergenerational dialogue and multi-stakeholder collaboration to achieve gender equality. Participants were invited to indicate their commitment to the Action Coalition areas of Generation Equality.

14. In the ensuing discussion, members of parliament shared information about what they did at the national level to promote women's and girls' organizing and leadership. Participants explained how their parliaments engaged in repealing discriminatory laws and pushed for new legislation that guaranteed women's rights and gender equality. They discussed the steps they took to reach gender parity in politics and to ensure the presence of diverse groups of young women leaders in all areas of decision-making. Strategies to achieve gender-responsive budgeting and the elimination of gender-based violence both in politics and in domestic life were also discussed.

Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

15. The Forum elected representatives to fill half of the seats of regional representatives and other vacancies in the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. Since, due to the pandemic, elections had not been held in 2020, the Bureau proposed to extend by one year the term of the regional representatives whose terms were due to end in 2022 in keeping with the Rules of the Forum. It was so decided. The updated list of members of the Bureau is available in [Annex](#).

16. Following the Bureau's proposal, the Forum elected Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) to fill the post of President, and Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze (Bahrain) to the post of First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. The position of Second Vice-President remained vacant and would be filled when the Bureau and Forum met again at the 143rd Assembly.

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COMPOSITION AND OFFICERS OF THE BUREAU OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS (as at 12 May 2021)

PRESIDING OFFICERS (April 2021–2023)

President: Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine)

First Vice-President: Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze (Bahrain)

Second Vice-President: *Vacancy*

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES		Expiry of term
African Group:		
Ms. O. Sanogo (Mali)	Ms. S. Wakarura Kihika (Kenya)	April 2023
Ms. N. Bujela (Eswatini)	Ms. M. Baba Moussa Soumanou (Benin)	April 2025
Arab Group:		
Ms. M.S. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates)	Ms. M. Mohammed Saleh (Syrian Arab Rep.)	April 2023
Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain)	Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt)	April 2025
Asia-Pacific Group:		
Ms. P. Maadam (India)	<i>Vacancy</i>	April 2023
Ms. P.A. Komarudin (Indonesia)	Ms. E. Azad (Islamic Rep. of Iran)	April 2025
Eurasia Group:		
Ms. E. Vtorygina (Russian Federation)	Ms. Z. Greceanii (Rep. of Moldova)	April 2023
Ms. E. Afanasieva (Russian Federation)	Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus)	April 2025
Group of Latin American and the Caribbean:		
Ms. C. Mix (Chile)	Ms. V. Persaud (Guyana)	April 2023
Ms. W.P. Andrade Muñoz (Ecuador)	Ms. A.F. Sagasti (Argentina)	April 2025
Twelve Plus Group:		
Ms. L. Wall (New Zealand)	Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine)	April 2023
Ms. V. Riotton (France)	Ms. M. Grande (Italy)	April 2025

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE <i>(ex officio, for the duration of their term on the Executive Committee)</i>		Expiry of term
Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland)		October 2021
Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal)		April 2023
Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden)		October 2023
Ms. P. Krairiksh (Thailand)		October 2023
Ms. E. Anyakun (Uganda)		October 2023
Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay)		October 2024

Report of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th Session
(Virtual session, 25 May 2021)*

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians convened on 13 and 17 May 2021. The Forum was presided by the President of the Forum Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname).

In the course of the meetings, young members of parliament discussed the key role of youth in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery strategies, in building a future underpinned by representative and inclusive democracies and by a new development model that responded to the needs and interests of all generations. Marking the beginning of a new chapter in the advancement of youth participation and in the implementation of the 2010 IPU resolution *Youth participation in the democratic process*, the Forum launched the fourth IPU report entitled *Youth participation in national parliaments* and the IPU campaign *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!*

In their introductory remarks, the IPU President and the IPU Secretary General reaffirmed that young people were a key part of any democracy and that it was their right to be included in political decision-making. Recognizing youth leadership in mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, they praised the role that young people were playing in supporting the elderly and other vulnerable groups and countering disinformation during the pandemic in addition to promoting democracy, climate action and combatting racism and exclusion.

Participants discussed from a youth perspective the overall theme of the 142nd Assembly. They unveiled initiatives and actions taken at the national level to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on youth in terms of legislation and policies on education, employment, health and youth social services. They shared best practices in furthering youth participation in the democratic process, such as the establishment of caucuses of young MPs and youth national councils, digitalization initiatives to develop new opportunities for youth employment, lowering the age of eligibility to be elected to office, digitalization of election processes, and advancing equality and equity in access to online education.

Equally important were decisions made to support youth participation and leadership in the IPU. In this context, the Forum approved the nominations made by the geopolitical groups for membership of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians for the period 2021–2023. Furthermore, the Forum approved the election of Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt) as the new President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

In preparation for the 143rd IPU Assembly, the Forum appointed Mr. U. Lechte (Germany) to prepare a youth overview report, with the aim of contributing a youth perspective to the draft resolution to be considered by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights entitled *Legislation worldwide to combat online sexual child exploitation*.

The Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians convened on 10 March, 6 May and 14 May 2021. It took decisions on the holding of the 2021 Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in April and on the integration of a youth perspective into the theme of the 142nd IPU Assembly. The agendas of the meetings included the election of the new President of the Board. The Board also considered means to keep outgoing members of the Board involved in its work and agreed to propose a revision of the definition of "young parliamentarian" by reducing the age limit currently applied.

Report of the Committee on Middle East Questions

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th Session
(Virtual session, 25 May 2021)*

Two sittings of the Committee were held virtually, on 14 April and 10 May 2021. This report summarizes the Committee's discussions and decisions made during those two sittings, which built on its discussions in July 2020.

The Committee's President, Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada), as well as Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria), Mr. H. Julien-Laferrière (France), Mr. A. Al-Ahmad (Palestine), Ms. H. Martins (Portugal) and Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), attended both sittings. Mr. A.A. Jama (Somalia) attended the 14 April sitting. Ms. I. Al Madhy (Iraq) and Mr. A. Dichter (Israel) attended the sitting on 10 May. Also present at the sittings were Mr. M. Chungong (IPU Secretary General), Mr. M. Omar (Senior Advisor to the IPU Secretary General), Ms. J. Vanian (IPU Peace and Security Consultant) and Ms. M. Hermes (IPU Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (CTVE) and Peace and Security team).

During these sittings, the Committee heard reports prepared by the IPU Secretariat on the latest developments in Yemen, Libya and Palestine, as well as on the peace and normalization agreements between Israel and other countries in the region.

The IPU Secretariat provided an overview of the communications it had received regarding the situation in the region, and on how the IPU had responded to them. The majority of the communications related to the situations in Palestine and in Yemen, but some also concerned the situations in Iran, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

The Committee agreed that it should meet more frequently to be able to respond in good time to the fast-moving developments in the region and expressed its desire to produce more statements stating the Committee's position on those developments.

Yemen

Regarding Yemen, it was reported that the situation was dire and had been dubbed "the world's worst humanitarian crisis" by the United Nations. Millions of Yemenis were suffering from malnutrition. The humanitarian situation was exacerbated by the cholera epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic. The parliamentarians who had been elected in Yemen's last elections held in 2003 were divided into two

factions: one which had remained in Houthi-controlled Sana'a, and one which was based in Seiyun and was affiliated with the internationally recognized Yemeni Government in Aden. The IPU remained in communication with both factions.

The Committee agreed that the conflict in Yemen had lasted for too long, expressed its support for a political solution under UN auspices, and welcomed the recent efforts of the UN Special Envoy to Yemen to renew the political process. The Committee also emphasized that the IPU must give priority to promoting access to humanitarian assistance in Yemen and encouraged a unified parliamentary approach in that regard, while expressing its concern in particular about food insecurity in Yemen. The Committee condemned the continued sale of weapons by many countries to the parties in conflict. With regard to Yemen's representation in the IPU, the Committee recommended that the IPU governing bodies consider recognizing the House of Representatives in Seiyun led by Sultan Al-Burkani, while emphasizing the need for inclusiveness and the involvement of all parliamentarians elected in 2003, whether in Sana'a or Seiyun, to be involved in the country's parliamentary processes.

The Committee agreed to submit a statement regarding the situation in Yemen for endorsement by the Governing Council, the text of which can be found on [page 55](#).

Libya

Turning to Libya, the Committee heard that in October 2020 the warring parties had agreed to a ceasefire and that in November 2020 it had been announced that elections would take place on 24 December 2021. An interim Government of National Unity had been formed in February 2021. It was endorsed by the House of Representatives in Tobruk, which exercised membership rights in the IPU. Although there had been significant progress politically and a big fall in the number of casualties in the Libyan conflict, the problem of foreign terrorist fighters and militias remained, despite many countries having called for their removal.

The Committee welcomed the recent political agreements that had been concluded between various parties to the conflict. It encouraged the implementation of the agreements and the carrying out of the elections as had been foreseen. It condemned foreign interference in the conflict and called for the removal of foreign terrorist fighters, while emphasizing the need to tackle robustly the scourge of terrorism in Libya. The Committee encouraged both local and international stakeholders to work together and come to a common understanding on a way forward. It also expressed its concern about the case of Ms. S. Sergiwa, a parliamentarian who had been abducted from her home on 17 July 2019, and encouraged the relevant parties to shed light on it. The Committee encouraged the House of Representatives in Tobruk to continue engaging with the IPU.

Peace and normalization agreements

The Committee noted that, since September 2020, Israel had signed agreements with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco.

The Committee welcomed the peace and normalization agreements, while noting that it was important for all peace to be inclusive, and that the fate of Palestine should not be ignored while fences were being mended with other countries in the region. The Committee encouraged the parties concerned to work towards comprehensive and sustainable peace. The Committee further welcomed the desire expressed by its members for peace in the region.

Palestine

In its 14 April meeting, the Committee heard an update on the upcoming parliamentary elections in Palestine, which had been scheduled to take place on 22 May 2021. The Palestinian Committee member informed the Committee that Palestine had sent an official letter to Israel requesting that they not obstruct the elections, especially in East Jerusalem. He noted that the Presidential Decree on elections was based on the Palestinian Liberation Organization's (PLO) by-laws and the Independence Declaration adopted in Algiers by the Palestinian National Council. He also noted that relations were resuming between Palestine and the United States Administration.

The Committee welcomed the elections in Palestine and expressed its strong hope that they would run smoothly and in keeping with free and equitable electoral standards. The IPU had been invited by the Palestinian Central Elections Commission to observe the elections. While the IPU strongly welcomed the prospect of the elections, the Organization did not observe elections unless there was heavy UN involvement. Nevertheless, the Committee agreed that the IPU should invite its Member Parliaments to observe the elections in their individual capacities, which the Secretary General subsequently did in a

letter dated 20 April. The Committee further invited the IPU President and Secretary General to issue an official statement welcoming and reiterating their support for the elections, and encouraging their smooth running and conduct in an acceptable manner without hindrances.

On 10 May, the Committee noted that the elections in Palestine had been postponed. The member from Palestine appealed to the international community to ensure that there were no obstacles to the electoral process in East Jerusalem. He also highlighted the need to respect international legal frameworks, and for a two-state solution to the crisis. The member from Israel emphasized that Israel was not responsible for the postponement of the Palestinian elections, which were an internal matter.

The Committee highlighted that the elections were needed for the legitimate representation of the people of Palestine, and as part of the architecture for the statehood of Palestine, and reiterated its hope that they could take place under free and fair conditions. It agreed that Palestine was entitled to full statehood within the territories agreed by international resolutions. The Committee also expressed its deep concern over the recent escalation of violence and tensions in East Jerusalem, and agreed to produce a statement regarding those recent developments. Both the Israeli and Palestinian members objected to the violence. The Committee stressed the need for restraint and dialogue. The text of the Committee's statement can be found below.

* * * * *

Statement on events in Jerusalem

Having met on Monday, 10 May 2021, the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions decided to continue to closely monitor the developments unfolding in East Jerusalem. It expresses grave concern over the escalation of violence and tensions that have unfortunately cost human life and caused extensive injuries and damage. It firmly condemns all forms of violence, irrespective of who is responsible. It urges all parties to exercise maximum restraint and to refrain from any action that will lead to further damages and loss of human life.

The Committee reiterates its commitment to peace in the region and requests that all parties engage in meaningful dialogue with a view to a resolution of the conflict with full respect for the legitimate rights of all involved.

The IPU Committee on Middle East Questions is made up of 12 members of parliament from around the world with expertise in the Middle East. Its members are elected by the IPU Governing Council for four years. Israel and Palestine are ex-officio members of the Committee.

Report of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th Session
(Virtual session, 25 May 2021)*

1. The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (the Committee) met on 16 April 2021. The meeting was chaired by the Committee's President, Ms. Á. Vadai. Participants included, in addition to the Chair, members from Armenia, Bahrain, Belgium, Ecuador and India representing more than 50 per cent of sitting members. Representatives from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) attended as observers. Special thanks went to outgoing Committee members Mr. S.M. Al-Khathlan (Saudi Arabia), former member of parliament, and Mr. A. Sinmaleza (Ecuador) for their strong participation in the Committee's work.

COVID-19 and displaced and stateless populations

2. The Committee pursued the discussions held at its preceding sitting on 2 October 2020 on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees, stateless persons and people fleeing conflict. It heard updates from the UNHCR and ICRC. With regard to refugees and people displaced by conflict, they often found themselves in a dire and challenging situation. Refugees and displaced persons were particularly at risk during the current coronavirus pandemic, because of their precarious living conditions. They often had limited or no access to water, sanitation and health facilities. Their poor living conditions in crowded camps made it more difficult to implement sanitary measures and offer responses. The pandemic had turned into a pandemic of hunger, caused an increase in the number of cases of forced marriages, a historic rise in school dropouts within the refugee communities and more intense stigmatization of refugees. The year 2020 had also seen the lowest number of refugee resettlements. The question of access to testing and vaccination remained a priority in 2021. A total of 153 States had adopted vaccination policies which included a reference to refugees but actual immunization remained a challenge.

3. With regard to stateless men and women, they did not enjoy the rights and protections of the citizenry and were more likely to contract COVID-19 because they often found themselves in dire living conditions. Moreover, they might not have the same access to health facilities, such as testing and treatment, and might also be reluctant to seek such services for fear of being detained and/or deported. Measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and to protect citizenry needed to place special attention on stateless people. That included affording them full access to health services, such as COVID-19 testing and treatment, without requiring proof of legal status or identity, and access to services without fear and risk of being arrested or detained. Finally, in order to avoid further instances of statelessness, civil records, such as registration of births, should be maintained as “essential” services.

4. Such challenging conditions also applied to people fleeing conflict or living in conflict situations. Access to services, including health services, remained difficult, especially in regions dominated by non-State armed groups, who would also have to facilitate access to health services.

5. The Committee called on the Assembly to pay particular attention to the situation of refugees, stateless men and women, and people fleeing conflict in its work on the management of the pandemic and pandemic recovery efforts. The Committee also called on the need to combat vaccination nationalism and ensure access to all, including the most vulnerable.

6. The Committee agreed to pursue discussions on the impact of the pandemic on refugees, stateless men and women, and people fleeing conflict. It took note that a guidance note for members of parliament on parliaments, the COVID-19 pandemic and people on the move was being prepared. A draft text would be submitted to the Committee for consideration in May.

Parliamentary action to end statelessness

7. The Committee was briefed on recent developments in combatting statelessness. It noted that several countries had revised their legal frameworks to address discrimination in nationality laws. That was a key avenue to reducing statelessness.

8. The Committee discussed strategies to engage parliaments in contributing to efforts to end statelessness. It welcomed the organization of a very successful webinar, organized in cooperation with UNHCR in February 2021, on parliamentary action to end statelessness. The webinar had brought together close to 300 participants. The Committee agreed to pursue awareness-raising efforts and encouraged its regional representatives to open a debate within their geopolitical groups and take the lead in hosting (with the support of the IPU and UNHCR) regional webinars on the issue.

9. The Committee furthermore noted that 2021 was a key year as it marked the 60th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The IPU, in close collaboration with UNHCR, had been engaged in supporting efforts to end statelessness for many years. The Committee felt it was important to mark the 60th anniversary with a renewed commitment to pursuing efforts in this area. It adopted a statement to that effect ([see page 54](#)) and invited the IPU Governing Council to endorse it for onward transmission to the United Nations.

Follow-up to the Global Compact on Refugees and Global Refugee Forum

10. The Committee was briefed on the follow-up to the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) and implementation of the pledges made. IPU Members were invited to follow up on pledges made by their countries (see: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/index.php/>). The Committee decided to pursue raising awareness of IPU Members with regard to the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and its implementation. It furthermore agreed to carry out a survey of IPU Members to identify good parliamentary practices in following up on the GRF pledges.

Implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL)

11. The Committee reviewed the various measures it could take to facilitate greater awareness and to engage parliaments in implementing IHL. That included: translating and disseminating the IPU-ICRC handbook for members of parliament on IHL; organizing debates in parliament on IHL; and reviewing existing national legal frameworks to facilitate implementation and respect of IHL. The ICRC reiterated its commitment to supporting parliamentary initiatives in that regard.

12. The Committee agreed to focus efforts in 2021 and 2022 on ratifying and implementing the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions in view of the celebration of their 45th anniversary in 2022. That would entail developing a mobilization and awareness-raising campaign. The ICRC and the IPU Secretariat were asked to put together a workplan of activities for consideration by the Committee.

13. With regard to immediate initiatives, the Committee agreed to organize a panel discussion on the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines, as well as a discussion on humanitarian impacts of conflicts.

Presidency and membership of the Committee

14. Committee members re-elected Ms. Á. Vadai (Hungary) as its Chair for another term ending March 2022. Ms. Vadai had been elected as Chair in March 2019. Committee members agreed to consider the 2019-2021 period as a first mandate as Chair in view of the exceptional circumstances linked to the pandemic and the impossibility to meet during the past year.

15. The Committee also noted the absence of participation in its meetings of the regional representative from Mexico for more than three times in a row. It agreed not to immediately suspend her membership, as allowed for by the rules, pending feedback from the member concerned, on challenges faced regarding participation.

Report of the Advisory Group on Health

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th Session
(Virtual session, 25 May 2021)*

The IPU Advisory Group on Health met on 28 April with eight out of eleven members in attendance. The Group was also pleased to welcome technical partners from the World Health Organization, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, UNAIDS, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

As the focal point for parliamentary accountability, the Advisory Group discussed the implementation of the IPU resolution on universal health coverage (UHC). The Group agreed on the importance of UHC in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, took note of the findings of the first report on the implementation of the resolution, and agreed that more data are needed on the impact of the pandemic on health budgeting and the protection of the right to health in legislation and in practice. The social determinants of health also need to be taken into account to invest in health prevention.

The Group's discussion will inform the 2021 report on the resolution's implementation but data is also required from Member Parliaments. Parliaments are therefore urged to respond to the survey that the IPU Secretariat has already sent out. The Group wishes to be inspired by Member Parliaments and learn about their work to assist with promoting the implementation of this key IPU resolution.

The Group also discussed parliamentary engagement on HIV/AIDS and its contribution to the United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS that will take place on 8-10 June 2021. The AIDS epidemic can only be ended if it remains high on political agendas. As a parliamentary contribution to the High-Level Meeting, the Group adopted a statement calling on parliaments to use their powers to ensure prevention and access to HIV and health services without discrimination. The Governing Council is invited to endorse the statement for onward transmission to the United Nations (see [page 52](#)).

Finally, the Group praised the IPU Secretariat's tireless work to continue to promote and facilitate parliamentary action on global health security, UHC, and women's, children's and adolescents' health during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Group also thanked its partners for their support and commitment to working with the IPU. Members of Parliament should consider it one of their main tasks to ensure that other health priorities are not sidelined in the COVID-19 response and to continue to deliver for all people without forgetting the marginalized and vulnerable.

At the end of the meeting, the Advisory Group unanimously approved second mandates for the Chair, Ms. G. Katuta from Zambia, and Vice-Chair, Mr. J. Ignazio Echániz from Spain, for a period of one year.

Report of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th Session
(Virtual session, 25 May 2021)*

The High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) had held the following three meetings: an in-person fifth meeting on 16 and 17 January 2020, and two virtual meetings – a sixth meeting on 16 June 2020 and a seventh meeting on 17 May 2021. The present report summarizes the discussions and decisions reached by the HLAG during those three meetings.

The fifth meeting, held on 16 and 17 January 2020, was chaired by the HLAG President Mr. R. Lopatka (Austria), and was attended by: the Vice-Chairperson Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya), Mr. S. Chiheb (Algeria), Ms. A. Karapetyan (Armenia), Mr. CHEN Fuli (China), Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt), Mr. J.F. Merino (El Salvador), Mr. R. del Picchia (France), Ms. Á. Vadai (Hungary), Mr. G. Migliore (Italy), Ms. A. Husin (Malaysia), Mr. O. Tinni (Niger), Ms. S.J. Marri (Pakistan), and Ms. I. Passada (Uruguay).

The sixth meeting, held on 16 June 2020, was chaired by the HLAG President Mr. R. Lopatka (Austria), and was attended by: the Vice-Chairperson Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya), Mr. CHEN Fuli (China), Mr. M. Fawzy representing Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt), Mr. R. del Picchia (France), Ms. Á. Vadai (Hungary), Mr. G. Migliore (Italy), Mr. O. Tinni (Niger), and Ms. S.J. Marri (Pakistan).

The seventh meeting, held on 17 May 2021, was chaired by the HLAG President Mr. R. Lopatka (Austria), and was attended by: the Vice-Chairperson Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya), Mr. CHEN Fuli (China), Mr. V. Suárez Díaz (Dominican Republic), Mr. L. Vance representing Mr. R. del Picchia (France), Ms. Á. Vadai (Hungary), Mr. G. Migliore (Italy), and Ms. S.J. Marri (Pakistan).

Also present at the meetings were Mr. M. Chungong (IPU Secretary General), Mr. M. Omar (Senior Adviser to the IPU Secretary General), Ms. C.E. Castillo (IPU Counter-Terrorism Senior Consultant), Mr. M. Miedico (Deputy Director of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)), Mr. Antonio Luzzi Programme Officer Office of the Chief, Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Ms. J. Vanian (IPU Peace and Security Consultant), and Ms. M. Hermes (IPU CTVE and Peace and Security Team).

During the meetings, the HLAG reviewed the following areas of the IPU Secretariat's work: progress in development of products to be launched; activities regarding victims of terrorism, the protection of the internet and the World Wide Web; cooperation and projects with regional parliaments. Members also stressed the importance of addressing the situation in the Sahel region, as well as the importance of supporting the victims of terrorism, and addressing hate speech.

Sahel countries

Regarding the situation in the Sahel region, the members emphasized that it must be addressed and that it was important to raise awareness about the situation both nationally and internationally in the G5 Sahel countries and with their European partners. It was decided to hold a parliamentary meeting for the G5 Sahel countries and their international partners. Members approved the proposal to provide capacity-building for that region. They agreed to recommend to the IPU governing bodies that the IPU adopt a resolution recommending that parliaments request the executive branches of their governments to lobby the United Nations to increase their financial support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force in keeping with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. It was also agreed that the HLAG would recommend to the IPU governing bodies to include in the declaration of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (5WCSP) a paragraph calling upon the United Nations to make the fight against terrorism an even higher priority, particularly in the Sahel region, and to underline the need to defend the victims of terrorism.

Members were also informed of consultations that the IPU Secretariat had had with the Arab Parliament on holding activities with the G5 Sahel countries on strengthening relations and cooperation between both regions, especially on issues relating to counter-terrorism.

Development of IPU tools and products

The IPU Secretariat presented three projects that it was working on: the Global Parliamentary Network, the interactive map and the mobile application for parliamentarians aimed at enhancing parliamentary work. HLAG members agreed that the tangible use of such tools had positive aspects, such as accessing shared documentation. Members were assured that the IPU would have full control over the products and be solely responsible for their management. The products were being developed with funding from the National People's Congress of China.

Collaboration was also envisaged with GRULAC and the Arab Parliament to produce the said tools in Arabic and Spanish, to further ensure robust security, and provide chat and videoconference features for users.

Protection of the internet and World Wide Web

HLAG members discussed the protection of the internet and the World Wide Web and were informed that the IPU Secretariat had consulted various stakeholders on the topic, including CERN, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNOCT and a cybersecurity company. All participants agreed that the internet was a vulnerable target and protecting it was an urgent priority.

Victims of terrorism

Members highlighted the importance of addressing the issue of victims of terrorism and the role of the global parliamentary community in supporting them, including the marking of the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism on 21 August during the virtual segment of the 5WCSP in 2020. The Group's members also noted UNODC's substantial legislative work and its role in implementing UN counter-terrorism activities.

Members reviewed work that had been done by the IPU Secretariat, UNODC and UNOCT on the model legislative provision for victims of terrorism within the framework of the IPU-UN Joint Programme on countering terrorism and violent extremism (CT/VE). Six expert consultations had taken place from November 2020 to January 2021 with two main objectives: first, to draft model legislative provisions that could serve as examples for the review of existing laws; and, secondly, to promote the exchange of information regarding existing best practices. The final product would be launched at the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism on 9 September 2021 in Vienna, Austria.

Trilateral agreement between the IPU, UNODC and UNOCT on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

HLAG members reaffirmed the Group's founding ToR, endorsed by the Governing Council, as the global parliamentary focal point for counter-terrorism related parliamentary activities. Although the members confirmed their full support for the IPU-UN Joint Programme and the budgeted 2020 activities, they emphasized that the said programme was not the HLAG's only programme. They expressed their willingness to explore topics in the field of prevention of extremism, such as education and radicalization issues, and to do so in collaboration with other UN agencies.

Members stressed that there was a need for better coordination between the IPU, UNODC and UNOCT. Parliamentarians lacked clarity on the mandate of UNODC and UNOCT, making it a coordination issue. The HLAG must send a strong political message to the United Nations to express its commitment and, at the same time, its concerns on the issue of coordination. There was a need for stronger UN support to the development of IPU products, including through financial means. It was important that the HLAG be invited to UN events to provide a substantive contribution as the global parliamentary focal point on counter-terrorism related activities.

Members were informed that the IPU-UN Joint Programme on CT/VE budget, which had been launched two and a half years ago, would end in June 2021. The IPU Secretariat explained that the IPU had not received any direct financial support from that budget for any activities. However, technical cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU would continue where necessary.

Parliamentary Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact (PCTCC) initiative

The IPU Secretariat and the HLAG Chair presented the Parliamentary Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact (PCTCC) initiative, which would mirror the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact (GCTCC) and enable the IPU to consolidate input from regional parliamentary assemblies when representing the global parliamentary community in the GCTCC. The initiative was approved by the members of the HLAG.

Financial situation

Members discussed suggestions on fundraising in light of a need for more resources and took note of the financial arrangements as stated in the IPU-UN Joint Programme: the IPU and UN financial and auditing regulations applied as the programme activities were divided among the three organizations – the IPU, UNOCT, UNODC.

Likewise, the IPU Secretariat reported on consultations it had been carrying out with various regional parliamentary organizations and parliaments with which the IPU Secretariat would sign cooperation agreements. The IPU had been in discussions with the Arab Parliament, which would make available funding for an Arabic version of the mobile application. A broader cooperation agreement would include other fields of cooperation, including activities in counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism. At the same time, the IPU Secretariat informed members of the continuation of its fundraising strategy with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Preparations for the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism

At the seventh HLAG meeting, the importance of holding such a summit had been discussed. The IPU Secretary General informed members that the Summit had been approved by the IPU governing bodies in the context of the HLAG's work programme and had been endorsed by the 5WCSP Preparatory Committee. HLAG members received the draft programme and were encouraged to share their opinions, ideas and comments with the Secretariat.

It was also mentioned that this Summit had originally been programmed as part of the activities of the IPU-UN Joint Programme on CT/VE, and that the UN would have financed it, but that this would no longer be the case as the Joint Programme was ending in June 2021. The IPU Secretariat informed members that it would ensure the development of CT/VE activities and that, bearing in mind the importance of the Summit, would use the Summit as an event to launch a number of tools, including the model legislative provision for victims of terrorism, the mobile application, the Global Parliamentary Network and the interactive map.

Statistics of the Gender Partnership Group

Status of participation of women delegates at the 142nd Assembly of the IPU (at 27 May 2021)

Composition of delegations of IPU members at the last eight IPU statutory meetings (October 2016 - present)

Meeting	Total delegates	Total/percentage of women delegates		Total delegations	Total/percentage of all-male delegations (2 or more)		Total all-female delegations (2 or more)	Total single-sex delegations (2 or more)	Total single-member delegations (male and female)
		Women	Men		Women	Men			
Virtual (05/21)	755	288	38.1	133	8	6.2	2	10	4
Belgrade (10/19)	739	227	30.7	149	15	11.3	0	15	17
Doha (04/19)	721	219	30.3	147	16	11.8	0	16	12
Geneva (10/18)	751	247	32.9	149	17	12.1	4	21	9
Geneva (03/18)	745	227	30.5	148	18	12.7	3	21	6
St. Petersburg (10/17)	829	249	30.0	155	17	11.8	1	18	11
Dhaka (04/17)	612	193	31.5	126	11	9.6	1	12	12
Geneva (10/16)	693	228	32.9	141	15	11.5	3	18	11

Single-sex, multi-member delegations of IPU members attending the virtual Assembly (status on 27 May 2021)

N°	Country	Virtual May 21			Belgrade 10/19			Doha 04/19			Geneva 10/18			Geneva 03/18			St. Petersburg 17			Dhaka 17			Geneva 16		
		Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total
1	Czech Republic	0	2	2	1	3	4	3	3	6	0	3	3	2	3	5	0	4	4	1	6	7	1	5	6
2	Guinea*	0	4	4	0	1	1	absent			2	2	4	0	2	2	0	2	2	1	1	2	0	4	4
3	Israel	0	2	2	absent			absent			1	1	2	1	2	3	1	3	4	absent			1	2	3
4	Jordan	0	2	2	1	6	7	1	8	9	1	6	7	1	7	8	1	5	6	2	6	8	1	2	3
5	Kuwait	0	4	4	1	7	8	1	7	8	1	7	8	1	6	7	1	7	8	0	7	7	absent		
6	Malta*	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	3	3	1	1	2	0	2	2	0	3	3	0	1	1	absent		
7	Republic of Korea	4	0	4	1	8	9	1	3	4	0	7	7	2	3	5	1	7	8	2	6	8	1	4	5
8	Slovenia	2	0	2	1	3	4	2	1	3	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	absent			absent		
9	Turkmenistan*	0	2	2	0	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	2	absent			4	4	8	not affiliated					
10	Yemen*	0	8	8	0	8	8	absent			0	5	5	0	7	7	absent			absent			0	8	8

Single-member delegations of IPU members attending the virtual Assembly (status on 27 May 2021)

N°	Country	Virtual May 21			Belgrade 10/19			Doha 04/19			Geneva 10/18			Geneva 03/18			St. Petersburg 17			Dhaka 17			Geneva 16		
		Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total
1	Côte d'Ivoire	1	0	1	0	3	3	1	8	9	1	2	3	0	3	3	1	2	3	absent			absent		
2	Cyprus	1	0	1	2	3	5	2	3	5	2	2	4	2	3	5	2	3	5	1	0	1	2	2	4
3	Luxembourg*	0	1	1	absent			0	2	2	absent			absent			0	3	3	0	1	1	0	1	1
4	Zambia	0	1	1	2	4	6	2	4	6	2	4	6	2	5	7	3	3	6	2	4	6	2	4	6

* Delegations subjected to sanctions at the 142nd Assembly, pursuant to Art. 10.4 and 15.2.c of the IPU Statutes, for being composed exclusively of representatives of the same sex for two consecutive Assemblies.

Delegations with 40 to 60 per cent of women parliamentarians

The countries are ordered according to the percentage of women parliamentarians in their delegations at the 142nd IPU Assembly. There are a total of 44 gender-balanced delegations out of 133 delegations (33,1%) of IPU members attending the 142nd IPU Assembly (as at 27 May 2021).

Countries with 40 to 49.9 per cent women parliamentarians (11):

- Saudi Arabia (40%)
- Senegal (40%)
- Suriname (40%)
- Togo (40%)
- Portugal (43%)
- Argentina (44%)
- Bahrain (44%)
- Kenya (44%)
- Poland (44%)
- Thailand (44%)
- Uzbekistan (44%)

Countries with 50 per cent women parliamentarians (26):

- Angola
- Armenia
- Belarus
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Comoros
- Djibouti
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- Estonia
- Hungary
- Italy
- Japan
- Latvia
- Lesotho
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Mali
- Mexico
- Montenegro
- New Zealand
- Philippines
- Sao Tome and Principe
- Timor Leste
- Uruguay
- Zimbabwe

Countries with 51 to 60 per cent women parliamentarians (7):

- Kazakhstan (56%)
- Namibia (56%)
- Andorra (57%)
- Sweden (57%)
- Austria (60%)
- Burundi (60%)
- Ukraine (60%)

Calendar of future meetings and other activities

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 207th session
(Virtual session, 25 May 2021)*

Information seminar on the structure and functioning of the IPU, for the parliaments in the Americas	Virtual 7–9 June 2021
Side event on the occasion of the UN High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS	Virtual 7 June 2021
Virtual World e-Parliament Conference <i>Innovation and technology in parliaments after COVID-19</i>	Virtual 16–18 June 2021
Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the UN Food Systems Summit	Virtual 23 June 2021
International or regional workshop for members of Parliamentary Human Rights Committees	Virtual June–July 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary forum at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum	Virtual 12 July 2021
13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament (in-person)	VIENNA (Austria) 6 September 2021
Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (in-person)	VIENNA (Austria) 7–8 September 2021
First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism organized jointly by the IPU and the UN (UNODC and UNOCT)	VIENNA (Austria) 9 September 2021
Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the opening of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly	NEW YORK or virtual 22 or 23 September 2021
Workshop for members of Parliamentary Human Rights Committees from French-speaking countries that have recently or will soon be reviewed by the UN Human Rights Council	GENEVA (Switzerland) 22–23 September 2021
First global parliamentary meeting on achieving the SDGs	Indonesia September 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
Speakers' Summit (P20) on the occasion of the G20	ROME (Italy) 7–8 October 2021
Pre-COP26 parliamentary meeting	ROME (Italy) 8–9 October 2021
Parliamentary meeting at the 2021 World Investment Forum	Virtual October 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary meeting at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26)	GLASGOW (United Kingdom) 1 November 2021
143rd IPU Assembly (hybrid)	November 2021 (to be confirmed)

Parliamentary meeting at the 2021 Internet Governance Forum	KATOWICE (Poland) or virtual 7 December 2021
Interregional seminar on the SDGs	BEIJING (China) (Dates to be confirmed)
Second regional seminar on achieving the SDGs for African parliaments	DJIBOUTI (Djibouti) (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference	Virtual (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary meeting in the context of the WTO Public Forum	Virtual (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary conference on migration in the Mediterranean (organized in cooperation with the Global Council on Tolerance and Peace)	Malta (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary session at the High-Level Meeting on Diplomacy for Health Security and Emergency Preparedness	MARRAKESH (Morocco) (Dates to be confirmed)
Regional workshop on the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration	Republic of Moldova (Dates to be confirmed)
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the G5 Sahel	NIAMEY (Niger) (Dates to be confirmed)
Third regional seminar on SDGs for the parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean	PANAMA CITY (Panama) (Dates to be confirmed)
Third regional seminar on achieving the SDGs for the Twelve Plus group	PARIS (France) (Dates to be confirmed)
Regional workshop on promoting the rights of the child for the parliaments of the East and South Asia region	Venue and dates to be confirmed
Fifth South Asia Speakers' Summit on achieving the SDGs	Venue and dates to be confirmed
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the Eurasia group	Venue and dates to be confirmed
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC)	Venue and dates to be confirmed
Workshop on comprehensive disarmament	Venue and dates to be confirmed

Parliamentary Forum on the occasion of the Fifth UN Conference on the LDCs	DOHA (Qatar) January 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Regional seminar on achieving the SDGs for Asia-Pacific Parliaments	ISLAMABAD (Pakistan) March 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
144th Assembly and related meetings	BALI (Indonesia) 20–24 March 2022
World Conference on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue: <i>Working together for peace and humanity</i>	ST PETERSBURG (Russian Federation) 16–18 May 2022
145th Assembly and related meetings	KIGALI (Rwanda) 19-23 October 2022
Speakers' Summit (P20) on the occasion of the G20	Indonesia November 2022
Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament	Uzbekistan (Dates to be confirmed)
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the African group	Venue and dates to be confirmed

Agenda of the 143rd Assembly

1. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 143rd Assembly
2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General Debate
4. *Legislation worldwide to combat online sexual child exploitation*
(Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)
5. Reports of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security; Standing Committee on Sustainable Development; and Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs
6. Approval of the subject item for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 145th IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs