

**REPORT**

**BY THE NAMIBIAN PARLIAMENTARY  
DELEGATION**

**ON THE**

**148<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY AND RELATED  
MEETINGS OF THE  
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU)**

**HELD IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**23 - 27 MARCH 2024**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATINS**

<b>IPU</b>	<b>- Inter- Parliamentary Union</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>- United Nations</b>
<b>CHRP</b>	<b>- Committee on the Human Rights Parliamentarians</b>
<b>UNHCR</b>	<b>- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</b>
<b>IHL</b>	<b>- International Humanitarian Law</b>
<b>ICRC</b>	<b>- International Committee of the Red Cross</b>
<b>WHO</b>	<b>- World Health Organization</b>
<b>UNRWA</b>	<b>- United Nations Relief and Works Agency</b>
<b>OCHA</b>	<b>- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</b>
<b>WFP</b>	<b>- World Food Programme</b>
<b>UNCTAD</b>	<b>- UN Conference on Trade and Development</b>
<b>CHF</b>	<b>- Swiss Franc</b>
<b>HLAG</b>	<b>- High Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism</b>
<b>CTPVE</b>	<b>- Counter Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism</b>
<b>PMNCH</b>	<b>- Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health</b>
<b>UNAIDS</b>	<b>- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS</b>
<b>COP28</b>	<b>- Conference of Parties</b>
<b>MPs</b>	<b>- Members of Parliament</b>



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- a) The 148<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and Related Meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The IPU Assembly is the main political body through which the IPU's Member Parliaments adopts parliamentary resolutions on global issues. The IPU Assembly plays a pivotal role in addressing the issues which threaten peace, democracy and sustainable development internationally. The Namibian delegation attending IPU assemblies customarily include MPs from all parties represented in both Houses of Parliament, namely National Assembly and National Council. The IPU Assembly meets twice a year, providing participants with an opportunity to dialogue on issues of international and national concern. Hon. Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi, Speaker of the National Assembly and Hon. Victoria Kauma, Vice-Chairperson of the National Council led the Namibian delegation.
- b) The rest of the delegation comprised of the following Members of Parliament and staff:
  - 1) Hon. Leonard Shikulo
  - 2) Hon. Sebastiaan !Gobs
  - 3) Hon. Emma Muteka
  - 4) Hon. Nono Katjingisua
  - 5) Hon. Henny Seibeb
  - 6) Hon. Charmaine Tjirare
- a) Ms. Lydia Kandetu, Secretary to the National Assembly, Adv. Tousy Namiseb, Secretary to the National Council and Mr. Ephraim Jane, Deputy Secretary to the National Council attended the Association of Secretaries General (ASGP) meetings. Parliamentarians were accompanied by Ms. Kathleen Nakutta, (Director of Committee Services, National Assembly), Mr. Petrus Kavhura, (Director in the Office of the Chairperson), Mr. Norbert Uuyuni (Chief Parliamentary Clerk, National Assembly), Ms. Elisabeth Amutenya (Personal Assistant to the Secretary of the National Assembly), Ms. Moringa. Goagoses, (Parliamentary Clerk, National Council), (George Sanzila, Chief Information Officer, National Assembly) and Mr. Bernard Mwira, (Private Secretary to the Vice-Chairperson of the National Council).

## 2. OPENING CEREMONY

*Dr. Tulia Ackson, IPU President*, opened the Assembly on 24 March 2024 and invited delegates to:

- a) Observe a moment of reflection to honour colleagues who had passed away since the last Assembly, notably His Excellency **Dr. Hage Gottfried Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia**, and the thousands of people around the world who had died because of war, humanitarian catastrophe, terrorist attacks, violence and illness. She noted that the 148th Assembly, her first as IPU President, was the first time that an Assembly was being held in Geneva in almost six years and thanked those Member Parliaments who had hosted highly successful Assemblies in the interim.
- b) The choice of parliamentary diplomacy as the theme for the Assembly and of peace and security as the IPU's policy focus for 2024 were timely given the proliferation of conflict around the world, and brought the IPU back to its founding principles as the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue. She cited numerous conflict situations where the IPU was working constantly to bring together parliamentarians, such as the Middle East, Ukraine and the Russian Federation, and the Sahel, to name just a few, and expressed her hope that, during her mandate, the IPU would expand its promotion of parliamentary dialogue to the many other situations where it was sorely needed.
- c) *Mr. M. Chungong, IPU Secretary General*, congratulated the President on her first Assembly and welcomed delegates back to Geneva after an almost six-year absence. The holding of an Assembly in the city of multilateralism and peace would send a strong signal to the world on the IPU's staunch commitment to peace and security. In their deliberations, he was sure that delegates would want to live up to the IPU's motto – "For democracy. For everyone." – and the expectations of their 46,000 colleagues around the world and the people they served. Parliamentarians had great potential to be key stakeholders in peace processes and to bring the voices of the people to the negotiating table. He hoped that parliamentarians would take the opportunity through the many activities planned at the current Assembly to emphasize the importance of reconciliation, of dialogue across political, religious and ideological divides, and of peaceful coexistence. Over 135 years



ago, the founders of the IPU, Cremer and Passy, had recognized the importance of dialogue as a means of resolving disputes and misunderstandings, and parliamentarians around the world should continue to recognize and realize those founding values as their common agenda.

- d) **Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians** said that he was born in 1986, a time when the world had had legitimate fears of the consequences of a catastrophic nuclear attack, but that in the following years, the global consensus had coalesced around a liberal democratic model greatly improving the prospects for peace. In recent years, however, the world appeared to have sunk back into levels of instability not seen since the end of the Cold War. Young people bore the heaviest burden of war, with thousands of young victims in every one of the major conflicts currently raging around the world.
- e) As outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 of 2015, it was vital for young people to participate in decision-making, but particularly in peace processes, as conduits for the voices of youth. War should not be considered an inescapable feature of the human condition, and peace should not be considered unattainable, but rather the only battle worth fighting.
- f) In a keynote video message, **Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians**, expressed her conviction that parliamentarians believed in the potential of parliamentary diplomacy and encouraged them to extend that belief to the huge potential of women to contribute to and lead processes that led to peace and security. She said that 2025 would mark the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, but many countries were still failing to place women at the heart of conflict prevention and resolution.
- g) The women, peace and security agenda, was the tool the world needed to build bridges to sustainable peace, and to progress from exclusion to democratic decision-making and from gender inequality to gender justice. To that end, parliamentarians needed to work towards gender parity in decision-making, the participation and leadership of women in peace

processes, and the elimination of violence against women. She encouraged parliamentarians to pledge their support and allocate appropriate budgets to women's organizations, notably those helping the survivors of sexual violence in conflict.

- h) In a video message, *Ms. M. Robinson, Chair of The Elders, former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights*, said that parliaments played an indispensable role in building bridges for peace and understanding, and in finding a consensus on how to tackle shared challenges. A role that was particularly valuable in the current era of increasing social polarization and geopolitical tensions. As a former parliamentarian and participant in IPU events, she had been heartened to hear that, in addition to parliamentary diplomacy, the Assembly would also focus on the revitalization of multilateralism, in a year in which the United Nations Summit of the Future would aim to chart a new way forward for international cooperation.
- i) The world was facing several existential threats – the climate and nature emergency, pandemics, nuclear weapons, and the risk of unregulated artificial intelligence – but too much decision-making was governed by short-term and self-interested calculations. Faced with the global proliferation of conflicts, the multilateral international peace and security architecture appeared completely ill equipped to cope. This was why The Elders, an organization founded by the late Nelson Mandela and of which she was currently Chair, was advocating for long-view leadership to tackle these threats and build a more resilient and equal society. Such an approach would rely on a determination to resolve seemingly intractable problems, the wisdom to make decisions based on scientific evidence and reason, and the humility to listen to all those affected. In a year in which 40% of the world's population would have the chance to vote in consequential elections, she hoped that parliamentarians would heed her call to adopt a more long-term view.



### 3. PARTICIPATION

- a) Delegations from 144 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Assembly and of the 1,479 delegates who attended the Assembly, 716 were members of parliament (703 from Member Parliaments and 13 from Associate Member delegations), including 51 Presiding Officers, and 48 Deputy Presiding Officers. Member Parliaments' delegations included 252 women MPs (35.85%) and 194 young MPs (27.60%).
- b) In continuation of practices established at recent Assemblies, the 148th Assembly was an in-person event with adaptations for hybrid participation. Nearly all the session rooms were equipped for external engagement and remote interpretation and these technical capacities were well used throughout the Assembly. All official side events, as well as the Executive Committee and the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CHRP), allowed remote participation, with 84 users participating actively online in these sessions. The proceedings of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, Assembly General Debate and all sittings of the Governing Council were live streamed in English and the official language, with 14,805 views.

### 4. CHOICE OF AN EMERGENCY ITEM

On 24 March 2024, the IPU President informed the Assembly that the following six requests for the inclusion of an emergency item had been proposed:

- a) *Raising awareness of the International Court of Justice provisional measures for Israel in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, and of the need for urgent action on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza* (South Africa with the support of the African Group and the Arab Group).
- b) *The immediate release of the hostages in Gaza* (Israel).
- c) *Parliamentary diplomacy for peace in Palestine* (Indonesia and Malaysia).
- d) *Call for urgent action regarding the conflict in the Middle East* (Denmark, France, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom).

- e) *Free, fair and transparent elections without prohibitions: Towards an orderly and peaceful democratic transition in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela* (Argentina, on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Guyana, Peru and Uruguay).
- f) *Call for urgent action to end the aggression and massive violations of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* (Democratic Republic of the Congo). The President also announced that negotiations were under way for a joint proposal by South Africa (with support of the African Group and the Arab Group), and Denmark (and six other countries in the Twelve Plus Group). Eventually, this joint proposal did not materialize.

## **5. DEBATES AND DECISIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND ITS STANDING COMMITTEES**

### ***5.1 General Debate: Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding***

- a) During the three days of deliberations, some 184 legislators from 129 Member Parliaments, including 48 Presiding Officers and 19 young parliamentarians, as well as representatives of 5 Associate Members and 14 permanent observers, contributed to the General Debate. The proceedings of the Debate were livestreamed, and many of the good practices and recommendations that emerged were reflected in the outcome document.
- b) The General Debate included a high-level segment on 25 March 2024 on the theme mitigating the humanitarian consequences of war: The role of parliaments. The debate was organized within the framework of the 75th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The segment featured high-level representatives from leading agencies working on humanitarian issues: namely, Ms. M. Spoljaric Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Ms. P. Patten, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Ms. E. Tan, Director of the UNHCR Division of International Protection.



- c) The debate focused on the humanitarian impacts of war, in particular with regard to displaced populations and sexual violence in conflicts. Ms. Tan addressed the issue of displacement, especially of refugees, as a consequence of armed conflicts, while Ms. Patten highlighted the impact caused by conflict-related sexual violence and the need both to strengthen accountability mechanisms to prosecute this crime and to address its root causes. Ms. Spoljaric Egger stressed the importance of upholding International Humanitarian Law (IHL) norms to mitigate the humanitarian impacts of war, and how the legal framework remains relevant and necessary in tackling the challenges brought about by today's armed conflicts. She also pointed out the importance of ensuring implementation of IHL norms at the domestic level and the crucial role played by parliaments in achieving this goal.
- d) Delegates from IPU Member Parliaments discussed the need for the international community to avoid double standards when it comes to ensuring respect for IHL obligations and how addressing the root causes of violations of these norms could be a way to contribute to conflict prevention. Delegates also discussed the current lack of support provided to humanitarian assistance efforts in crises and the importance of scaling up funding to humanitarian organizations working in these contexts. Delegates acknowledged that IHL still played a major role in tackling the humanitarian impacts of war, but also highlighted the need to advance the law to address the reality of today's armed conflicts, such as in the areas of new technologies and environmental protection. Ms. Spoljaric Egger underlined in her final remarks that the lack of respect for IHL did not challenge its legitimacy.
- e) The IPU President and Secretary General reiterated the Organization's commitment to pursue the mobilization of parliaments to ensure respect of IHL and other legal frameworks of relevance with regard to conflicts and their impacts. They also reaffirmed the IPU's commitment to its existing partnerships with the ICRC, UNHCR and other UN bodies working in this area. Special segment featuring the Director-General of the World Health Organization.

- f) **Dr. T.A. Ghebreyesus**, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), addressed the Assembly in a special segment on 25 March 2024. He emphasized the importance of signing a global Pandemic Accord and invited parliamentarians to counter the misinformation and disinformation that surrounded current negotiations. During a subsequent question and answer session, parliamentarians expressed particular interest in the Pandemic Accord, as well as in women's health, harmful practices, and the linkages between health and climate change. A new memorandum of understanding between the IPU and WHO was signed on this occasion, charting the course of their cooperation for the next five years.

#### ***5.1.1 Address by the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs***

- a) On 26 March 2024, **Dr. F. Paullier**, the first United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, addressed the Assembly on the topic of the General Debate. He emphasized the role of youth as a beacon of hope for peace and described the United Nations Security Council resolution 2250 as a groundbreaking achievement in recognizing the positive role that young people play in fostering peace and preventing violence. However, much more work was needed to ensure the implementation of the agenda set out by the resolution.
- b) Young people, and especially young women, continued to face heavy obstacles to participating in politics and were under represented. He called on parliamentarians to: support the youth, peace and security agenda by holding governments to account for its implementation, including through parliamentary commissions; create youth bodies in parliament to better channel the voices of young people; advocate for national plans and roadmaps for peace; and support the IPU's *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign.

#### ***5.1.2 Address by the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East***

- a) On 26 March 2024, the IPU President and Secretary General welcomed Mr. B. Majekodunmi, Chief of Staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to the plenary. Mr. Majekodunmi noted that, for many years, the IPU had had a strong partnership with UNRWA and, given the



current situation in the Middle East, it was important for parliamentarians to hear first-hand about the realities on the ground. He vividly described the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza, marked by widespread death and destruction, impending famine and the looming collapse of health care services.

- b) Women and children were dying of starvation and disease, and urgent action was needed both in terms of a ceasefire and steps to ensure access for humanitarian aid. He also issued a strong call for parliaments to ensure adequate and continued funding for UNRWA. The IPU President expressed the Organization's strong support for UNRWA's mission to provide relief and essential services, including education, health care and emergency assistance, to millions of Palestinian civilians. All parliaments were called upon to support these efforts, which went well beyond politics and should be rooted in a shared belief in every individual's intrinsic human right dignity and worth.

## **5.2 STANDING COMMITTEE ON PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

- a) The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held three sittings from 24 to 26 March 2024, with its President, Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan), in the chair. The Committee was entrusted with the task of debating the draft resolution *“addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence”*. The two co-Rapporteurs, Ms. M. Stolbizer (Argentina) and Mr. C. Lacroix (Belgium), had prepared the draft resolution and an accompanying explanatory memorandum.
- b) Following the presentation of the draft resolution by one of the two co-Rapporteurs, 34 speakers took the floor to express their thoughts on the matter. During the drafting process, the Committee considered 200 amendments tabled by 22 Member Parliaments and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. Around one-third of the proposed amendments and sub-amendments were taken on board. The Bureau of the Committee gathered on the morning of 26 March 2024. Its main decision was to put forward a subject item stemming from the discussions during the meeting. The Bureau also agreed to continue consultations to establish a full programme of work for the 149<sup>th</sup> Assembly. At the Committee's last

sitting on the afternoon of 26 March 2024, the consolidated draft resolution was adopted by a vote and the subject item proposed by the Bureau was accepted.

- c) On 27 March 2024, the President of the Committee presented the draft resolution at the plenary sitting of the Assembly, and it was adopted by consensus. The delegations of India, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and the Russian Federation expressed their opposition to the entire text of the resolution. The delegations of China and Lithuania expressed a reservation on the entire text of the resolution. The delegations of Australia, Canada, Cuba, France, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Türkiye and the United Kingdom expressed reservations on several paragraphs and, in some cases, on the use of the term “autonomous weapon systems” without mentioning the characteristic of lethality.
- d) The Assembly approved the subject item presented by the Bureau entitled “*The role of parliaments in advancing a two-state solution in Palestine*” and approved the nomination of Mr. M.A. Bouchouit (Algeria) and Mr. J. Buttimer (Ireland) as the co-Rapporteurs for the next resolution. When putting forward the subject item, the Bureau indicated that for reasons of inclusiveness due to the sensitivity of the subject, it should have the possibility to establish a team comprising a co-Rapporteur from each geopolitical group. The President of the IPU will therefore be entrusted with pursuing consultations with a view to appointing these rapporteurs at the earliest possible opportunity pursuant to Rule 13.4 of the Rules of the Standing Committees.

### **5.3 STANDING COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

- a) The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development held its sittings on 24, 25 and 26 March 2024 with its President, **Mr. W. William** (Seychelles), in the chair. The Committee was entrusted with the task of drafting the resolution on “*Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*”. The co-Rapporteurs, Ms. M.S. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates), Mr. S. Patra (India) and Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine), had prepared the draft resolution and an accompanying explanatory memorandum.



- b) Drafting of the resolution was conducted in plenary. The Committee had received 293 amendments submitted by 27 Member Parliaments. The consolidated draft resolution was adopted by consensus. India and Iran (Islamic Republic of) expressed their opposition to the entire text. China expressed reservations on preambular paragraphs 7 and 8, and operative paragraphs 7, 8 and 25. Türkiye expressed reservations on operative paragraphs 24, 25 and 26.
- c) At its final sitting and at the proposal of its Bureau, the Committee adopted its next subject item entitled “*Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts, including armed conflicts, on sustainable development*”. The Committee approved the nomination of Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain), Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia) and Mr. R. Fogiel (Poland) as co-Rapporteurs.
- d) The Committee also approved a work plan for the next Assembly. It includes a debate on the topic of the next resolution; a panel debate entitled the “*role of parliaments in preventing corporate tax avoidance and achieving sustainable development*”, as well as a segment to prepare for the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Azerbaijan (COP29). No candidature was received for the Bureau’s vacant post.

#### **5.4 STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

- a) At its first sitting, held on 25 March 2024 with Vice-President **Mr. A. Torosyan** (Armenia) in the chair, the Committee held a debate on its next resolution, “*The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*”. The debate explored the potential benefits of artificial intelligence while also drawing attention to the multiple risks associated with this emerging technology, with contributions from experts, the rapporteurs (Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) and Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania)) and more than 30 delegates.

- b) At its second sitting, held on 26 March 2024 with Mr. Torosyan again in the chair, the Committee held a debate on “*Sustainable actions to improve the life conditions of people with disabilities, including their chances for education and work opportunities.*” The debate highlighted the important role parliaments can play to advance implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, by ensuring that laws, policies and budgets advance the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community and remove all forms of discrimination and stigma based on disability.
- c) In application of Rule 10.2 of the Rules of the Standing Committees, the Committee declared the position on the Bureau held by Mr. E. Uwizeyimana (Rwanda) to be vacant. An election to fill this vacant position will take place at the next Assembly

### **5.5 STANDING COMMITTEE ON UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS**

- a) The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs held two sessions. The first session featured the new UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, Dr. F. Paullier, who introduced the new Youth Office and its mandate to facilitate youth access to debates and processes across the UN system. Some 48 delegations were present for the vigorous discussion and over 18 interventions were made.
- b) The second session focused on the sustainability of the UN’s humanitarian work. High-level officials from the UN Office briefed the committee for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). These officials shared important information regarding humanitarian crises around the world. Over 34 delegations were present and 16 made interventions.
- c) The Committee adopted a motion to encourage parliamentarians to engage domestically on Security Council reform, foster a debate in their parliaments, discuss the issue with their permanent representative to the UN and be ready to ratify any agreed changes to the Security Council.



- d) On 25 March 2024, the Committee convened a special high-level meeting for Speakers and Deputy Speakers on the crisis of multilateralism. The discussion featured Ms. T. Valovaya, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, and Ms. R. Grynspan, Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

## 6. 213<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

### *6.1 Report of the IPU President*

The Governing Council took note of the report of the IPU President on her first five months in office and expressed its appreciation for her achievements in this short time. It also concurred with the Executive Committee that it was the collective responsibility of the global parliamentary community to create a platform for dialogue between the Parliaments of Israel and Palestine with a view to finding solutions to the ongoing crisis.

### *6.2 Report of the Secretary General*

The Secretary General presented the **Impact Report 2023** covering the IPU's activities in the second year of implementation of its 2022-2026 Strategy. He highlighted numerous areas of impact across the Organization's five strategic objectives and the 2023 priority theme of climate change.

### *6.3 Financial results for 2023*

- a) Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, introduced the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2023. He reported that the 2023 accounts showed a healthy financial situation with an operating surplus of CHF 157,000 at year-end. The surplus had been added to the IPU Working Capital Fund, which was now at 91% of its target level. Expenditures were within budget for each of the Strategic Objectives and the income from the IPU's investments had improved thanks to the favourable market conditions in 2023.
- b) Mr. Al Nuaimi welcomed the strong results yielded by the Secretary General's efforts to mobilize voluntary funds. This demonstrated that donors recognized the IPU as a reliable partner. He also noted that the amount of arrears in Member Parliament contributions had

been increasing steadily in recent years. One main reason for this was the situation of the Parliament of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, whose arrears rose every year and now stood at CHF 662,000. He encouraged the governing bodies to decide how to address this exceptional situation. He also encouraged all Member Parliaments to work with their geopolitical groups to try to reduce the list of other Member Parliaments in arrears.

#### ***6.4 Financial situation of the IPU***

- a) The Governing Council received a report on the financial situation of the IPU as at 31 January 2024 and an updated list of unpaid assessed contributions. Reporting on behalf of the Executive Committee, Mr. Al Nuaimi noted that, as it was still early in the year, the situation was similar to the end of 2023. The Organization's budget performance was on track for the year so far. Investment markets had continued to perform well at the beginning of the year and the IPU's finances remained healthy and stable. The list of Members in arrears had reduced slightly but was still in need of close attention in 2024.
- b) The Secretary General updated the Governing Council on the mobilization of voluntary funding. The IPU's work continued to be supported by grants from a range of parliaments, governments, agencies and foundations across Bangladesh, Benin, Canada, China, Ireland, Micronesia (Federated States of), Qatar, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, the European Union and the United Nations family.

### **7. SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

#### ***7.1 Forum and Bureau of Women Parliamentarians***

- a) The 37<sup>th</sup> Session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians was held on 23 March 2024. It brought together 262 participants, including 141 parliamentarians (129 women and 12 men) from 91 countries. The First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria), chaired the session in the absence of the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico).



- b) In order to contribute to the work of the Assembly, the participants examined, from a gender perspective, the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security on *addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*. The Forum then proposed to the Standing Committee two amendments to the draft resolution, which were included in the resolution.
- c) The Forum also organized a panel discussion on *Women peacebuilders advancing sustainable peace*, during which participants highlighted that to achieve sustainable peace; women must participate on an equal footing in peace processes, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and security efforts. Without the inclusion of women in post-conflict reconstruction processes, there will also be no justice or full reparations. Participants called for women peacebuilders to be present at the negotiating table and participate in decision-making processes on peace and security. By working with parliamentarians, women peacebuilders can also more effectively inform and influence better policies to implement the women, peace and security agenda.

## **7.2 Forum and Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians**

- a) The Forum of Young Parliamentarians was held on 24 March 2024 and brought together 70 young MPs, 41% of whom were women. The meeting was presided over by Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), the President of the Board of the Forum. In their opening remarks, the IPU President and Secretary General reaffirmed the IPU's commitment to elevate youth voices and continue to aim higher in increasing the participation of young MPs at the IPU. The UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, Dr. F. Paullier was also warmly welcomed and participated throughout the meeting.
- b) The Forum's young MPs provided updates on recent developments in their countries. They also contributed youth perspectives to the topics before the current IPU Assembly and held a Q&A session on pledge 2 of the *"I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!"* Campaign, on aligning the age of eligibility for office with the voting age. At its meeting earlier that day, the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians took stock of their achievements in the first year of their mandate. Looking ahead to their second year, they agreed to redouble

efforts to have younger MPs at IPU Assemblies, including through a proposed amendment to the IPU Rules and Statutes to lower the age below which MPs are classified as “young” from 45 to 40.

### ***7.3 Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians***

- a) The Committee held its 174<sup>th</sup> session from 22 to 26 March 2024. Ms. M.G. Odhiambo (Kenya), President, Ms. L. Quartapelle (Italy), Ms. A. Reynoso (Mexico), Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland), Ms. C. Asiaín Pereira (Uruguay) and Mr. H. Kamboni (Zambia) participated in the session. Mr. B. Mbuku Laka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) also participated in the session remotely. Mr. S. Cogolati (Belgium), and Mr. E. Blanc (France) were unable to take part in the session.
- b) During the session, the Committee examined the situation of 350 parliamentarians (34% of whom are women) in 19 countries. New cases concerning 26 parliamentarians were declared admissible in Guinea-Bissau (4 MPs), India (1 MP), Madagascar (1 MP), Somalia (1 MP), Türkiye (1 MP) and Zimbabwe (18 MPs). One case, concerning a parliamentarian from Israel was declared inadmissible and one case concerning a parliamentarian from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was closed. The Committee also held eight hearings (one of which took place online) with national delegations and complainants.
- c) The Committee submitted its decisions to the Governing Council for adoption on the situation of 268 parliamentarians in the following countries: Bangladesh, Egypt, Eswatini, Guinea-Bissau, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Somalia, Türkiye, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Zimbabwe.

### ***7.4 Committee on Middle East Questions***

- a) Since the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Luanda in October 2023, the Committee on Middle East Questions has convened three times, on 5 February, 24 March and 26 March 2024, with consistent attendance. Serving as a unique global forum with representatives from Israel and Palestine, the Committee plays a prominent role in encouraging dialogue, underscoring its significance in the current crisis and the pursuit of peace.



- b) During the 5 February 2024 meeting, the IPU President commended members for their attention to Middle East issues, stressing the need for consensus within the Committee and the IPU towards the shared objective of Middle East peace. Discussions highlighted the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, including widespread destruction, impending famine and limited healthcare services. Committee members emphasized the urgency of inclusive negotiations to address these challenges.
- c) Committee members expressed a strong desire to visit the region to assess the situation first-hand, engage with relevant stakeholders and contribute to tangible peacebuilding efforts. Both Israeli and Palestinian representatives welcomed the prospect of such a mission.
- d) During its sessions on 5 February and 26 March 2024, the Committee heard from a representative of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on recent developments in Gaza and the West Bank, including allegations against UNRWA staff. UNRWA assured full cooperation with investigations but expressed concern over funding suspensions, which jeopardized aid delivery to millions in Gaza and neighbouring regions. Committee members urged countries to reconsider funding decisions, emphasizing UNRWA's critical role in providing stability and humanitarian aid.

### ***7.5 Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law***

- a) The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) met on 26 March 2024. The Committee heard an update on recent developments with regard to specific areas of humanitarian concern. It paid particular attention to three situations: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan.
- b) The Committee called on IPU Members to promote efforts towards the resettlement of Afghan parliamentarians and parliamentary staff currently at risk – an example of parliamentary solidarity in action. It also agreed to continue shedding light on the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons, especially in the DRC, and called on all IPU members to draw attention to these situations in their parliaments and consider providing

support to humanitarian organizations working in crises, such as in Sudan. It also decided to include the situation of the Al-Hawl refugee camp in the Syrian Arab Republic on the agenda of the Committee's next session in October 2024.

- c) The Committee also turned its attention to several key IHL, human rights and other international legal frameworks which need to be universalized and more strongly implemented. These are the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons. It called on IPU Member Parliaments to look at their country's ratification status with regard to these instruments, and open discussions in their parliaments, explore the reasons why they are not yet parties, and consider accession. It also invited IPU Members to review their national legal frameworks in place and assess whether these frameworks need to be revised or strengthened for enhanced implementation. The Committee invited all IPU Members to speak out against anti-personnel mines, statelessness and non-respect for IHL.
- d) The Committee also agreed to hold its open session at the next IPU Assembly in October 2024 on the topic of disability and armed conflict, to mark the 25th anniversary of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

#### ***7.6 Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine***

- a) On 25 March 2024, the Task Force met for the twelfth time. The Task Force reiterated its commitment to pursuing parliamentary diplomacy and focusing on small steps that could eventually lead to dialogue and better understanding between the parties, as well as possible humanitarian outcomes beneficial to their civilian populations.
- b) Five topics had been selected for discussion in previous meetings: nuclear safety, food security, access to and exchange of prisoners of war, protection of environmentally vulnerable sites, and the situation of conflict-affected children. The Task Force proposed to focus on engagement with the Ukrainian and Russian delegations, more specifically, the Task Force sought to explore ways to promote family reunification for displaced children



who found themselves stranded across the Russian Ukrainian border or along the lines of military control in the conflict zone without their parents or legal guardians.

- c) Attending the meeting in separate hearings, the delegations from both Ukraine and the Russian Federation welcomed the work of the Task Force and agreed to deepen cooperation with the IPU on the issue of conflict-displaced children, share further information as requested, and work to develop more concrete and structured procedures to support family reunifications. Two years after its first field visit to Ukraine and the Russian Federation, the Task Force also discussed the possibility of conducting a second mission to Kyiv and Moscow, a proposal which was welcomed by both parties.

### ***7.7 High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism***

- a) On 23 March 2024, the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) held its sixteenth meeting. The IPU Secretary General emphasized the HLAG's crucial role in addressing terrorism, particularly in the Sahel region. The Group elected Mr. M. Karlsson from Sweden as Chairperson and Ms. M. Guerra Castillo from Mexico as Vice-Chairperson. The discussions mainly focused on the implementation of the outcomes from the Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, particularly the creation of an ad-hoc mechanism within the HLAG. This ad-hoc group will consist of five members of the HLAG as facilitators, and will be responsible for working on the five priority areas of communities, security, environment, development and education, and for overseeing initiatives in the region.
- b) The Group also highlighted other outcomes of the Summit, including the need to focus on fostering development and economic growth to create opportunities for youth employment in the Sahel. Noting the abundant natural resources in these countries, they agreed to promote investment to support development efforts in the Sahel. The Group was provided with updates from several countries concerning the funding of the IPU programme on Counter-Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism (CTPVE); some countries will renew cooperation agreements with the IPU, and others will be new Programme funders.

Members were also urged to collaborate with the IPU Secretariat to seek funds for the CTPVE programme.

### ***7.8 Gender Partnership Group***

- a) The Gender Partnership Group held its 49<sup>th</sup> Session on 26 March 2024. In attendance were the Chair, Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), Ms. N.B.K. Mutti (Zambia), Ms. S. Mikayilova (Azerbaijan) and Mr. A. Almodóbar (Spain). As per its mandate, the Group reviewed the state of women's participation in national parliaments, as well as in IPU bodies and Assemblies. It examined the composition of delegations at the 148<sup>th</sup> Assembly. As of 27 March 2024, 35.8% of the delegates at the Assembly were women, slightly less than the total at the last Assembly in Luanda (October 2023) and lower than in Nusa Dua (March 2022) and Madrid (November 2021). In Geneva, 43 delegations out of 142 (30.3%) were gender-balanced, a slightly lower percentage than at the last Assembly in Luanda. In terms of participation by region, the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean is the regional group with the highest proportion of women delegates (45% women) followed by the Twelve Plus Group (42%), the Eurasia Group (38%), the Arab Group (33%), the Asia-Pacific Group (31%) and the African Group (30%).
- b) Of the 142 delegations present, 132 were composed of at least two delegates, of which only 15 were all male (11.4%). In addition, two delegations of two or more delegates were composed entirely of all in all, eight delegations were subject to sanctions at this Assembly. The Group held a dialogue session with a delegation from Sri Lanka to discuss how to improve women's participation ahead of the country's 2026 parliamentary elections.
- c) Sri Lanka ranks 176<sup>th</sup> in the IPU's global ranking of women in national parliaments with only 5.3% of seats held by women. After an exchange on strategies and challenges, the delegation indicated that capacity building to empower women at the local and national levels would be very useful, as well as the provision of resources for campaigning and outreach. The IPU's support in these endeavors would be of great value. The IPU and its Gender Partnership Group reiterated their support to the Sri Lankan Parliament in its efforts to facilitate the election of more women.



### ***7.9 Advisory Group on Health***

- a) The IPU Advisory Group on Health met on 23 March 2024, with five out of nine members in attendance, as well as technical partners from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and UNAIDS. The new memorandum of understanding signed by the IPU and WHO during the Assembly and a cooperation agreement with PMNCH were presented to the Group.
- b) The Group was briefed by the WHO on the ongoing negotiations on an international instrument on pandemic preparedness. The discussion highlighted the importance of reaching an agreement and of engaging stakeholders in the process. The Advisory Group further noted the current challenging context, with many crises affecting national health systems and limiting countries' capacities to respond to emergencies.
- c) The Group discussed the preliminary results of a study looking at parliamentary strategies and practices to make parliaments more responsive to the health needs of women, children and adolescents. It recalled its visit to WHO on 22 March 2024 and noted the shrinking political space for addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Group committed to engaging parliaments and parliamentarians during IPU Assemblies on key issues affecting gender equality and the right to health.
- d) As the focal point for accountability for implementation of the 2019 IPU resolution on universal health coverage, the Advisory Group called on its technical partners to provide monitoring tools to better track progress and gaps in the implementation of universal health coverage at the national level. Upcoming activities include a series of podcasts to communicate and raise awareness on the Advisory Group's priority themes. The Group agreed to work with the WHO to hold an event during the World Health Assembly in May 2024, and to hold a side event at the 149th IPU Assembly. The organization of a field visit to Cuba would be further explored.

## 8. OTHER ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

### *8.1 Talks between the Speakers of Armenia and Azerbaijan at IPU headquarters*

- a) On 22 March 2024, the IPU hosted high-level delegations from the National Assemblies of Armenia and Azerbaijan, led by the Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly, Mr. A. Simonyan, and the Speaker of the Azerbaijani National Assembly, Ms. S. Gafarova. The meeting followed a mission to Armenia and Azerbaijan by the IPU Secretary General in February 2024, which had laid the groundwork for the IPU to offer its good offices to the two sides to promote dialogue and help pave the way toward normalizing relations. These discussions marked the first time the National Assemblies had officially met at their highest levels.
- b) IPU President Dr. T. Ackson and IPU Secretary General Mr. M. Chungong welcomed the delegations to IPU headquarters and applauded both parties' willingness to employ parliamentary diplomacy to reduce tensions, build confidence, and complement governmental peace negotiations. This was followed by a private tête-à-tête meeting between the Speakers of the National Assemblies and a subsequent debrief with the IPU Secretary General, in which both sides agreed to continue their dialogue to rebuild trust and support peace efforts through parliamentary diplomacy under the neutral auspices of the IPU.

### *8.2 Joint meeting with the Chairs of the geopolitical groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees*

- a) On 23 March 2024, the IPU President and Secretary General met with the Chairs of the geopolitical groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees. The IPU President gave a summary of her main projects and activities since the last Assembly, including reinforcing peace and security through dialogue and strengthening the IPU's visibility. She had conducted a visit to the Middle East (Israel and Palestine) in November 2023, participated in numerous summits, forums and seminars, and supported the implementation of the IPU Strategy through her work on the occasion of the high-level segment of COP28, the 2024



Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, and the annual IPU-UN Women Parliamentary Meeting at the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

- b) The IPU Secretary General gave an update on progress regarding the implementation of the IPU Strategy, including new IPU policies to enhance accountability at all levels. He presented an overview of the annual reporting exercise by Member Parliaments, encouraging the Chairs of the geopolitical groups to remind their Members scheduled to report in 2024 to participate in the exercise. As the IPU was marking the 10-year anniversary of its Common Principles for Support to Parliaments, the Secretary General invited the few remaining Parliaments who had not yet endorsed these principles to do so as soon as possible. The Secretary General gave a summary of the new *Code of Conduct for IPU Governance Officials* and the *IPU Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*, and he encouraged the Chairs of the groups to raise awareness of these important policies among the broader membership.
- c) Mr. B. Boughali (Algeria), Chair of the Arab Group, stated that efforts were being made to translate all IPU documentation into Arabic and, to that end, requested that documents be sent further in advance. Ms. S. Carvajal Isunza (Mexico), Chair of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, said that she had been making efforts to bring non-Member Parliaments into the Organization, such as Belize. She highlighted that the Parliament of Mexico had recently passed a resolution to request that Spanish be adopted as an official language of the International Court of Justice and requested the IPU's support for this initiative. Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), Chair of the Twelve Plus Group, stated that multiple meetings had been organized within the Group since the last Assembly, including a seminar in Paris on the Sustainable Development Goals.
- d) In preparation for the 148th Assembly, the Group had discussed the ongoing process of amending the IPU Statutes, the resolutions being considered by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, and the potential proposal of an emergency item. Mr. W. William (Seychelles), President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development,

highlighted that his Committee's leadership had played an important role in the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) and was preparing for the following COP in Azerbaijan in November 2024. The Committee was expected to adopt a resolution on affordable green energy.

- e) Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, shared that the Committee had held a virtual meeting in November 2023 to discuss priorities for the Assembly. He also noted that the United Nations Summit of the Future draft outcome document did not contain any references to parliamentarism, something that had been flagged to officials from Germany and Namibia, co-facilitators of the Summit.

### ***8.3 High-level meeting on The crisis of multilateralism: Root causes and possible solutions***

- a) On 25 March 2024, the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs convened a special high-level meeting on *The crisis of multilateralism: Root causes and possible solutions*. The meeting was designed to provide input to the preparatory process for the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in July-August 2025 and perspectives on the Summit of the Future with regard to the goal of reinvigorating multilateralism.
- b) The President of the Standing Committee, Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), introduced the topic of the crisis of multilateralism, identifying the root causes, and emphasizing the role of parliaments in making the multilateral system more democratic, accountable and effective in delivering for the people. In considering solutions, he stressed the need to keep the concerns of young people in mind.
- c) The IPU President illustrated the various manifestations of the crisis of multilateralism: the UN's record of support being obscured by political impasse, double standards in international law, and the undermined principle of *one country, one vote* within the UN. She highlighted the weakened state of democracy and people being left behind by globalization as root causes, resulting in a lack of faith in the UN's ability to solve global challenges. She expressed her hope for a multilateral system that could deliver on the promises of justice, development and peace to restore faith in multilateralism, and emphasized the role of parliaments, supported by the IPU, in making the multilateral



system more effective and credible through their oversight and legislation functions. Parliaments also needed to be more representative of the people, especially the most vulnerable, women and youth, so as not to leave behind those who feel forgotten by the system.

- d) The IPU Secretary General highlighted that, although imperfect, multilateralism cannot be done away with; instead, the tools and practices need to be tuned to the needs of the world. He recalled the foundational aspiration of the UN, rooted in the idea of *We the People*, and stressed that this is where parliaments play a crucial role. He recounted the challenges the IPU still faces in bridging the gap between the local and the global, particularly the lack of understanding as to why parliaments should be involved in UN processes. He called on the UN to connect more to the local, and for dialogues at the international level to reach institutions at the national level. Finally, he stressed the need for more intergenerational dialogue to create a more democratic multilateral system that is inclusive of stakeholders that the UN has historically not incorporated in its decision-making, such as young people, the scientific community, and civil society organizations.
- e) Ms. T. Valovaya (Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva) elaborated on the roots of the crisis of multilateralism, noting that the multilateral system, created in 1945 as an answer to the challenges of World War II, could not be considered fit for the modern world. Modern challenges – mistrust, growing inequalities, unprecedented geopolitical tensions, and lack of faith in the current system – require a UN 2.0, as described in the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report. In considering how to fine tune the system, she stressed the need for inclusive multilateralism, in which all countries have an equal voice and actors, including civil society, non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector, have a seat at the table. She stressed the IPU's crucial role in fostering more inclusivity. As the voice of the world's citizens and an institution that has seen the transformation of the multilateral system over time, the IPU can help turn the UN into an organization that is relevant and fit for the 21st century.

- f) Ms. R. Grynspan (Secretary General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)) delivered a keynote address, in which she underscored the global system's inability to keep up with the rate of technological, geopolitical, economic and ecological changes around the world. She highlighted the triple deficit in: economic growth for small and medium countries, trust in the multilateral system, and hope, particularly among young people. She also highlighted opportunities, giving the example of how regional trade agreements and multilateral development banks can improve countries' access to the international financial system. She acknowledged that there is a risk of decentralization in global decision-making turning into a fragmentation of the multilateral system and warned against the danger of isolationism. She further reiterated the need to keep the Secretary-General's proposed reforms in his *Our Common Agenda* report central to discussions on universality and inclusion.
- g) Ms. Grynspan warned that reforms would fail unless supported by parliaments. She identified the IPU as a vital link in the global governance chain, a bridge between the global and local, with the power to translate international commitments into actions that make a real difference in the lives of constituents. She stressed that creating a multilateral system fit for the 21st century would depend on leaders inspiring hope in societies and revitalizing the idea of a collaborative, inclusive global community working towards a shared future.
- h) All the Speakers in attendance welcomed the discussion on the crisis of multilateralism as an important and timely topic. Delegates from Bahrain, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malta, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Tonga and Zambia made remarks. Their main points are summarized as follows:
- 1) Cooperation is lacking in the multilateral system. Speakers highlighted the need for the system to strengthen democratic principles and serve as a forum for dialogue focused on shared responsibility for the global community.
  - 2) There is a difference between talking and truly listening to each other. Speakers highlighted the need to promote women's participation at decision-making levels for more listening to occur.



- 3) Not all solutions to global problems can be advanced in coalitions of the willing. There was consensus that revitalizing multilateralism's universality and the consideration of multiple viewpoints is required for countries to work towards collective action.
  - 4) It is necessary to remember the crises the world's populations are facing. Member States to look at the local realities of individual countries to understand each other's challenges, foster a sense of international solidarity, and create a global system that is a supportive platform for all.
  - 5) Parliaments have a role in bridging the global and the local, and holding UN Member States accountable for their responsibility to make the multilateral system better. Speakers also stressed the role of parliaments in ensuring institutions are transparent, responsive and accountable, to restore trust in local and global governance systems.
  - 6) There was concern about youth disengagement from democratic processes. Speakers recognized a disconnection between past and present generations, the problem of short-term thinking, and the lack of spaces for intergenerational dialogue.
  - 7) Some delegates said there was a need to better listen to younger generations and understand their disappointments. Others highlighted the need to restore hope by better communicating the opportunities that exist in the face of global challenges. They supported the creation of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the Future Generations dialogues.
- i) Mr. McGuinty closed the meeting by emphasizing the importance of conversations that will help reshape the multilateral system into one fit for the purpose it needs to serve. He reiterated the crucial roles of the IPU and parliaments in supporting good governance, investing in people, prioritizing the rule of law, and restoring hope in societies.

He concluded with the reminder that, although not everything will be solved at the Summit of the Future, it will be critical for parliaments and the UN to show movement and ambition beyond repeating what has already been agreed upon to restore faith and trust in the effectiveness of the multilateral system.

## **9. CONCLUDING SITTING OF THE ASSEMBLY**

- a) At the concluding sitting on 27 March 2024, the IPU President introduced the Geneva Declaration on Parliamentary Diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding and invited the youngest male and one of the youngest female MPs in attendance at the Assembly, Mr. A. Tongjaisod (Thailand) and Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia), to present the Declaration. The Assembly unanimously endorsed the Geneva Declaration.
- b) Recalling that it had not been possible to reach a consensus on the choice of an emergency item earlier in the week, the IPU President reported that she and the Secretary General would imminently be issuing a leadership statement on behalf of the global parliamentary community, on urgent action to address the situation in Gaza
- c) Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan), President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, presented the resolution addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence. The Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus, with opposition to the resolution expressed by India, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and the Russian Federation, and reservations expressed by Australia, Canada, China, Cuba, France, Lithuania, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Türkiye and the United Kingdom.
- d) Mr. W. William (Seychelles), President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, presented the resolution Partnerships for Climate Action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity. The Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus, with opposition to the resolution expressed by India and Iran (Islamic Republic of), and reservations expressed by China and Türkiye.



- e) The Assembly took note of the Reports of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, presented by its Vice-President, Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia), and of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, presented by its President, Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada).
- f) The Assembly approved the subject items for the resolutions to be drafted by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development for adoption at the 150<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, together with the rapporteurs that would be working on the draft resolutions. At the conclusion of the Assembly, the representatives of the geopolitical groups took the floor: Ms. S.S. Chaudhury (Bangladesh) on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, Mr. B. Boughali (Algeria) on behalf of the Arab Group, Mr. M. Bouden (Algeria) on behalf of the African Group, Ms. S. Carvajal Isunza (Mexico) on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, Ms. V. Riotton (France) on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group and Mr. T. Vardanyan (Armenia) on behalf of the Eurasia Group.
- g) The geopolitical groups representatives thanked the President, Secretary General, the staff of the Secretariat, and the Swiss hosts for their tireless work in ensuring another hugely successful Assembly, and echoed the Secretary General's gratitude and congratulations, expressed at the Governing Council earlier in the day, to Ms. S.A. Sader, Conference Services Officer, who would be retiring in the coming months. They deplored the failure of the membership to find a consensus on an emergency item for the second Assembly in a row but thanked the President and Secretary General for their initiative to release a leadership statement on the situation in Gaza. Even without an emergency item on the subject, the situation in Gaza had been brought to the fore in many discussions during the Assembly, and they expressed the hope that the revision of the IPU Statutes and Rules currently in progress would give rise to improved processes to allow the IPU membership to convey its position on such important issues. In his concluding remarks, Mr. M. Chungong, IPU Secretary General, congratulated the President on her efficiency in presiding over her first Assembly. Noting that 2024 would mark the 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the IPU, he said that the Organization's founding fathers, Cremer and Passy, would have been extremely gratified to see over 700 MPs participating in the present Assembly and the

high quality of the debates and outcomes. He hoped that Member Parliaments would use the opportunity of the 135th anniversary to rededicate their efforts to find peace around the world. He further highlighted the ongoing digital transformation of the IPU, which was in evidence at the Assembly through the increasing acceptance of a paperless approach, with many delegates now consulting the documents of the Assembly on their own digital devices. He looked forward to welcoming delegates back to Geneva for the 149th Assembly in October 2024.

- h) In her concluding remarks, Dr. T. Ackson, IPU President and President of the 148th Assembly, expressed her gratitude to all those who had played a pivotal role in the organization of the Assembly, and in particular to the Swiss authorities for their warm welcome to Geneva. The robust level of participation at the Assembly and its strong focus on parliamentary diplomacy would send a signal to the international community that parliamentarians would support and contribute to efforts to reinvigorate multilateralism with a strong parliamentary dimension and a focus on inclusive dialogue as the only way to achieve long-lasting peace.
- i) She thanked delegates for their active participation, insightful contributions and unwavering commitment to the IPU, which had provided a strong foundation for the Assembly's numerous successful outcomes. She invited those present to take the Geneva Declaration back to their parliaments and consider organizing a special event on parliamentary diplomacy to mark the IPU's 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 30 June 2024, the International Day of Parliamentarism.



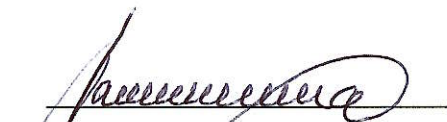
## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Article 7 of the Union's Statutes of the IPU states that *"It is the duty of Members of the Union, to submit the resolutions of the Union within their respective Parliaments, in the most appropriate form; to communicate them to the Government; to stimulate their implementation and inform the Secretariat of the Union, as often as possible, particularly in the annual reports, as to the steps taken and the results obtained"*


It is against this background that, the IPU National Group (Namibia) recommends that the Parliament of Namibia discussed and support the report and inform the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the following:

- 1) Action taken and/or that will be taken in Parliament to follow up on the recommendations contained in the resolutions of this report;
- 2) Plenary or Committee debates on the resolutions in Parliament;
- 3) Indicate that recommendations contained in the resolutions have been considered or influenced and / or will be considered in the Parliament's legislative work and programme;
- 4) Information on any legislative or other measures that have been adopted or that will be adopted by Parliament or by any of its committees, which conform to the recommendations in the resolutions.


**SIGNATURES:**

  
Hon. Victoria Mbawo Kauma  
Vice Chairperson: National Council

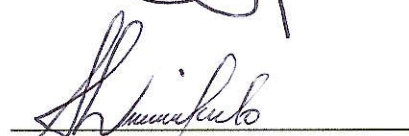
20/05/2025  
Date

  
Hon. Emma Muteka, MP

20/05/25  
Date

  
Hon. Sebastian !Goos, MP

20/05/25  
Date

  
Hon. Leonard Shikulo, MP

20/05/25  
Date