



**The Parliament of the  
Commonwealth of Australia**

**Australian Parliamentary Delegation**

**United Nations and other International  
Agencies in Europe**

(7-18 October 2009)

**and**

**121<sup>st</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union  
in Geneva**

(19-24 October 2009)

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# PREFACE

## Members of the Delegation

Leader	The Hon. Roger Price, MP Member for Chifley, New South Wales Australian Labor Party
Deputy Leader	Senator the Hon. Judith Troeth Victoria Liberal Party of Australia
Members	Senator Trish Crossin Northern Territory Australian Labor Party
	Mrs Sophie Mirabella, MP Member for Indi, Victoria Liberal Party of Australia

The delegation was accompanied by Mr Neil Bessell, Secretary to the Delegation, (Department of the Senate), Mr Eric van der Wal, Adviser, (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade–IPU only). Mrs Robyn Price, Mr Mark Crossin and Mr Gregory Mirabella also accompanied the delegation.

The delegation would like to place on record its appreciation of the professional support provided to the IPU over many years by Mr Neil Bessell from the Department of the Senate, and his assistance and guidance to the delegation prior to and during the IPU Assembly, especially the contribution that the delegation made to such a positive outcome.

Delegation member, Mrs Sophie Mirabella, was unable to review this report as she was on maternity leave during the report consideration stage.

## Briefings, assistance and acknowledgements

Prior to departure, the delegation received comprehensive and informative briefings from officers of DFAT on its visits to UN and other international agencies in Europe. In relation to the meeting of the IPU, DFAT and other agencies provided excellent assistance on the delegation's proposal for an emergency item on global food security, as well as advice on matters considered at the IPU. In particular, the delegation thanks Mr Bruce Soar for his work on the draft memorandum and resolution that the delegation lodged with the IPU on global food security. The delegation also

recognises the advice and support provided by Mr van der Wal during the IPU Assembly in Geneva. The delegation thanks Ms Fiona Way, Parliamentary Relations Office, for her invaluable administrative support and assistance, the staff at HRG Travel and Mr Tony Styles, Finance Section, Department of the Senate.

ROGER PRICE



# Chapter 1

## Visits to United Nations and other International Agencies in Europe and to the Parliaments of Italy, Austria, Slovakia and France

### Italy

#### *Briefing with Australia's Ambassador to Italy, HE the Hon. Amanda Vanstone and Embassy staff*

1.2 Discussions with Australia's Ambassador, HE the Hon. Amanda Vanstone, focused on contemporary issues facing Italy's economy and recent political developments surrounding the Berlusconi government. The delegation, in particular, was advised that while Italy's financial sector had withstood the Global Financial Crisis, there was concern that the GFC would affect Italy through a decline in exports to its main European trading partners, Germany and France.

1.3 The delegation also noted that the Berlusconi government appeared to be facing significant pressure over a number of sensitive issues, especially over its relations with the church and the Vatican.

#### *Meeting with Honorary IPU President, Hon Pier Ferdinando Casini, MP and Ms Angela Napoli, MP*

1.4 The committee found discussions with IPU President, Hon. Pier Ferdinando Casini, MP, and Ms Angela Napoli, PM, to be wide-ranging. Mr Casini pointed out that the stability like Australia's political system was extremely difficult to achieve in Italy, mainly due to the frequency of national elections and the rate of change of national government.

1.5 Ms Angela Napoli was first elected to the Chamber of Deputies with the National Alliance (right wing party) in 1994 and has been a member of Prime Minister Berlusconi's People of Freedom Party since April 2008. Discussions with Ms Napoli focused on the future of Italy's relations with the United States, increasing parliamentary diplomacy abroad through the G8 and G20, and small island state membership of the IPU.

#### *United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)*

1.6 WFP is the world's largest international food aid organisation and the frontline United Nations agency endeavouring to eradicate world hunger.

WFP's Strategic Plan for 2008-2011 sets out five objectives for the organisation:

- to save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies
- to prevent acute hunger and invest in disaster preparedness and mitigation measures;

- to restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods in post-conflict, post-disaster or transition situations;
- to reduce chronic hunger and under-nutrition; and
- to strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger, including through hand-over strategies and local purchase

1.7 These objectives reflect the changing nature of food aid and hunger, and WFP's history, experience and comparative advantages. The plan marks a shift from WFP as a food aid agency to WFP as a food assistance agency. Its overarching goal is to reduce dependency and to support governmental and global efforts to ensure long term solutions to the hunger challenge.

1.8 WFP has four types of operations, namely:

- Emergency Operation (EMOP) responds to a sudden onset natural or man-made disaster, and normally last for three to six months;
- Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) the next phase following on from the EMOP and may last up to three years;
- Country Program which is a development phase and may cover a five-year period; and
- Special Operations which covers the non-food side of WFP operations.

1.9 In line with its mandate, WFP uses food aid to support economic and social development, meet refugee and other emergency food needs, and the associated logistics support; and promote world food security in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations and the FAO. In addition, WFP uses its Vulnerability Analysis Mapping capabilities to incorporate food security training and practical methods in its programs.

1.10 The delegation noted that Australia has supported the World Food Programme since 1963 when the agency became operational. To date, Australia has provided well over \$1 billion in resources for WFP's food aid operations and is consistently in or around the top ten donors to the agency. In 2008-09, Australia provided over \$95 million through WFP, supporting food aid operations in 18 countries.

1.11 In 2008-09, Australia provided \$35 million of "core funding" and will provide the same level of funding in 2009-10. In addition to core support, funds are provided for specific emergency appeals from humanitarian relief funds and through bilateral country programs. Australia also provided support of \$10 million to 'non-food item' projects, including \$4.4 million in Pakistan to fund the costs linked with transport and distribution of locally produced wheat flour.

1.12 Australia is a member of the Food Aid Convention, has signed a treaty under the Convention to provide 150 000 wheat-equivalent tonnes of food aid annually and consistently meets its obligation, notwithstanding the rising prices of food and fuel.

1.13 WFP has recently developed a new index to help assess the potential impact of the Global Economic and Financial Crisis on the most vulnerable. The tool is being used to identify countries which are likely to be the most severely affected in terms of the incidence and depth of food insecurity, and to develop appropriate responses.

1.14 While in Rome the delegation noted that Ms Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of the WFP would be visiting Australia on 25 and 26 October 2009 and, on its return to Australia, the delegation welcomed the following statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Stephen Smith, MP on Australian initiatives to strengthen its partnership with the WFP arising from the Executive Director's visit:

## **Media Release**

26 October 2009

### **Australia strengthens partnership with the World Food Programme**

Australia and the United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) are strengthening our partnership in the fight against global hunger, which affects more than one billion people.

Today, Ms Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of the WFP, and I signed a new, \$180 million four-year Strategic Partnership Agreement.

The agreement provides the WFP with a guaranteed four-year funding commitment from the Australian Government. This is the first such agreement with any donor.

Australia's total contribution to the WFP has been at or above this level for the past decade but the provision of a guaranteed base level of funding through the Strategic Partnership Agreement will further strengthen WFP's planning and effectiveness.

The WFP is the largest and most effective international food aid organisation working to overcome world hunger and deliver life saving assistance in the most difficult circumstances.

Australia is proud to be one of the top ten partners supporting the essential humanitarian work of the WFP. The signing of a new partnership agreement confirms our ongoing support and confidence in the WFP.

Australia's four year \$180 million contribution includes \$40 million for dedicated school feeding programs in Asia, Africa and Latin America to reduce the number of school children who suffer hunger, and at the same time improve school attendance and educational results.

Ms Sheeran described Australia as a 'model donor' and expressed the hope other countries would follow Australia's lead on prompt, generous and flexible responses to global hunger.

Australia will also continue to provide further funding for WFP for food aid emergencies as they arise.

This financial year Australia has provided more than \$11.5 million in emergency food aid through the WFP to Zimbabwe (\$5m), Kenya (\$2.5m), The Philippines (\$2m), Yemen (\$1m) and Syria (\$1m).

***Briefing with Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See, HE the Hon. Tim Fischer***

1.15 Discussions with the delegation focused on Mother Mary McKillop and the current process leading towards canonisation. It is expected that between four and five thousand people will visit Rome for the canonisation in 2010. It was pointed out that this would be Australia's first saint.

***Global Crop Diversity Trust***

1.16 The delegation was pleased to meet with:

- Dr Cary Fowler, Executive Director;
- Mr Julian Laird, Director of Development and Communications; and
- Ms Melissa Wood, Director of Programme Development.

1.17 The delegation was advised that the mission of the Global Crop Diversity Trust is to ensure the conservation and availability of crop diversity for food security worldwide. The Trust has created an endowment fund that aims to provide a sustainable flow of funds for the conservation of crop diversity by national and international institutions. Up until July 2009, 33 major donors have contributed over \$US125 million towards the endowment fund, including contributions from foundations and private sector corporations.

1.18 The delegation noted that the Australian Government, through AusAID, was an inaugural and now is a leading donor to the Trust. Currently, Australia is the fourth biggest contributor (behind the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Kingdom and Norway) having contributed \$A17.5 million to the Trust's endowment fund since 2003. Future funding support to the Trust of \$3.5 million, \$1.5 million in 2011-12 and \$2.0 million in 2012-13 was announced in the 2009 Federal Budget. Apart from the contribution made to the Trust by the Australian Government, Australia's Grain Research and Development Corporation has pledged \$US 5 million to the Trust, of which \$ US 3.25 million has been paid to date.

1.19 The delegation understands that, in addition to funding the Trust's endowment fund, AusAID funds a three year seconded position to the Secretariat of the Trust (Ms Melissa Wood from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, in the role of Director of Programme Development). The secondment is due to end in January 2010.

1.20 Australia is also represented in the Trust through AusAID's Mr Peter Waddell-Wood (Chair of the Trust's Donor's Council) and Professor John Lovett (Board Member of the Trust). In March 2009, the Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, the Hon. Bob McMullan MP, visited the Trust in Rome

1.21 The Trust along with the Norwegian Government, funded the high-profile Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway, opened in February 2008. The delegation noted that the international media coverage associated with the opening of the Global Seed Vault and food security issues since 2008 has given the Trust an international

profile which it aims to build on in the future, both in terms of further fundraising and underlining the relevance of its work.

1.22 The delegation was advised that the Trust's highlights include:

- initiating probably the quantitatively largest biological resource project in history by funding (until 2012) mostly developing country partners to rescue 100,000 distinct crop varieties that would otherwise face extinction;
- signing long-term (essentially never-ending) contracts with the holders of some of the most important collections of priority food crops. These contracts help defray conservation costs by providing \$US 2 million per year to those collections in the world which are the best managed and are the main source of genetic resources for the world's plant breeders; and
- opening of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in February 2008. The vault will eventually store virtually every variety of almost every important food crop in the world and is essentially the world's agricultural insurance policy against disaster so that food production can be restarted should it be threatened by a regional or global catastrophe.

### **Recommendation**

**1.23 The delegation is of the view that Australia could be doing more to ensure the safety and protection of its seed bank. The delegation recommends that the Australian Government work cooperatively with state governments to ensure that their stock of seeds are securely held in seed banks, and are duplicated and safely lodged with the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway.**

### ***Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)***

1.24 The delegation was pleased to meet with:

- Mr Hafez Ghanem, Assistant Director, General Economic and Social Development Department;
- Mr Jose Sumpsi, Assistant Director, General Technical Co-operation Department; and
- Ms Jutta Krause, Director, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department.

1.25 The delegation was advised that the FAO was founded in October 1945. As one of the first of the United Nations Specialised Agencies it is now the largest autonomous agency within the United Nations system. Its membership has expanded from an original 42 nations to 191 member nations in 2009.

1.26 The FAO is the lead United Nations agency for food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry issues. Its mandate is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy.

1.27 The delegation noted that the FAO is a key player in developing a global response to the 2008 food security crisis and works closely with a range of other humanitarian agencies such as the World Food Program and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

1.28 The FAO addresses its mandate through its technical work which includes technical cooperation, development of norms, standards, methods, information, databases and statistics.

1.29 The delegation noted, in particular, that the FAO is recognised as a unique source and provider of world statistics and data on agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Its core functions include monitoring and assessing long-and medium-term food and agriculture trends: its Global Information and Early Warning System was amongst the first to predict the impact of high food prices on food security crises.

1.30 Australia's annual contribution to the FAO, based on the UN scale of contributions, amounting to \$A10.321 million in 2008-0, is 1.796 per cent of its overall aid budget.

1.31 As a major agricultural commodity producing and exporting country, Australia participates fully in FAO activities. This is particularly the case in the areas of its normative work, that is, global public good activities such as:

- international standards setting, international treaties, and global conventions (including food, plant protection, pesticides, genetic resources, forestry and fisheries);
- policy development and guidance; and
- databases and statistics (including on crops and livestock, commodity and trade, early warning systems and food insecurity) and other comprehensive global databases related to many aspects of natural resources (land, water, forests, aquatic resources).

1.32 The delegation understands that, of these activities, Australia has a particular interest in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission on Food Safety (Codex), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the plant and animal disease emergency response and a range of fisheries and forestry agreements. International standards setting is an increasingly important area of work for FAO members as levels of economic development continue to improve in ensuring an internationally harmonised approach to achieve scientifically-based standards that underpin trade in food, animals, plants and their products.

1.33 Officials of the FAO advised the delegation that major reform of the FAO is being implemented to improve the management, efficiency, accountability and

transparency of the FAO. A comprehensive Independent External Evaluation (IEE) was conducted in 2004 to assess the FAO's institutional performance against its mandate. The IEE made more than 100 recommendations regarding the role and objectives, governance arrangements, and structure and management of the organisation. In November 2008, members approved the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA) to implement major strategic, governance and organisational reforms over a three-year period. Implementation of the reforms commenced in 2009, to which Australia made a voluntary contribution of an additional \$A150,000 toward the \$21.8 million implementation trust fund.

1.34 Reform initiatives include enhanced evaluation, devolved decision-making, a restructure of the FAO headquarters and a move to results-based planning. In accordance with the IPA, the FAO is developing a new Strategic Framework, Medium-Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget for the 2010-2011 biennium. These will be considered at the FAO Ministerial Conference to be held in Rome in November 2009.

1.35 Australia was a founding member of the FAO and, through the efforts of Frank McDougall, Australia was influential in establishing the FAO as an international organisation dealing with food and agriculture issues. An eminent person delivers an annual lecture in Mr McDougall's honour at each FAO Conference.

1.36 Australia has been an active participant in the FAO's governing bodies and is permanently represented in Rome through its Ambassador and a Minister-Counsellor (Agriculture). Australia is co-chair with New Zealand of the South West Pacific regional group of member countries and represents the region on the FAO Council and Committees and other working groups.

## **Vienna**

### ***United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime–Scientific Programs***

1.37 The delegation's visit to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) gave it a good understanding of the UN's activities to combat human trafficking. This included an overview of the "success story" in the South East Asian region, with fewer reported incidents in the Malacca straits. UNODC said this was largely the result of regional cooperation. However, Executive Director, Antonio Maria Costa, noted that the fight against crime and drugs in Africa was very different. He praised the work being done by Australian Federal Police Officer, Mark Duthie, and requested that his term be extended for six months.

### ***International Atomic Energy Agency***

1.38 The delegation received a senior-level briefing from members of the IAEA Secretariat, including Mr Tariq Rauf, Head, Verification and Security Policy Coordination; Mr Peter Colgan, Head, Detection and Response to Malicious Acts, Office of Nuclear Security; Mr Dominique Delattre, Head, Safety Standards and Application Unit, Safety and Security Coordination Section; and Mr Malcolm Nicholas, Senior Safeguards Analyst, Concepts and Approaches, Division of Concepts and Planning.

1.39 The Secretariat briefed the delegation on the Agency's activities and future roles with reference to the 20/20 process, including IAEA resourcing. The delegation was also provided with a detailed overview of initiatives in the area of nuclear safeguards and verification, and nuclear security.

### ***Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)***

1.40 The Provisional Technical Secretariat for the CTBTO Preparatory Commission briefed the delegation on technical issues associated with treaty verification and gave them a tour of the control room. In the absence of the Executive Secretary, Mr Tibor Toth, the delegation was greeted by Dr Lassina Zerbo, Officer in Charge of the CTBTO and Director, International Data Centre Division.

### ***Parliament of Austria***

1.41 In Vienna, the delegation saw the Austrian "democracy workshop" parliamentary education process and had a good exchange of views with several members of parliament about parliamentary education processes in both countries. Discussion also covered Austria's decision to lower the voting age to 16 years and the effect of migration on voting patterns. The delegation was particularly impressed by the idea of school participants producing a radio or news item as an outcome from the workshop.

### ***Slovakia***

1.42 The delegation's visit to the National Council of the Slovak Republic was the first by a parliamentary delegation to Slovakia. It therefore provided an opportunity to build on the Australian-Slovakian bilateral relationship. The delegation had an opportunity to meet with two of the four Deputy Speakers, members of the Education, Youth, Science and Sports Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee and members of the Australia-Slovakia Parliamentary Friendship Group. The delegation noted that while a number of Slovak politicians expressed a desire to visit Australia, this was unlikely until after the general elections in June 2010.

1.43 In wide-ranging discussions, the delegation learned much about the Slovak Parliament's committee system, particularly with respect to Slovakia's unicameral parliamentary system, the law of parliamentary privilege and the parliamentary education system in Slovakia. The delegation was particularly interested in Slovakia's role, as a member of NATO, with the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

1.44 Since becoming a member of NATO in 2004, Slovakia has taken an active role in NATO operations. In June 2009, the Slovak parliament voted to increase the upper limit of its troop commitment in Afghanistan from 246 to 262. The delegation noted that some of the Slovak personnel deployed alongside Dutch forces are providing operational mentoring and training to Afghan National Army forces in Oruzgan province, which is the focus of the ADF contribution.



1.45 Other issues raised in discussions included the threat posed by climate change, problems associated with the privatisation of industry and land, the provision of labour, tailoring education to the workforce and accrediting educational institutions.

## **France**

### ***Visit to the French Parliament***

1.46 The delegation met with members of the French National Assembly and Senate and received a briefing by Ambassador to France, Mr David Ritchie. The delegation also met with Senator Dominique Leclerc, President of the France-Australia Senate Friendship Group, and the French delegation to the IPU.

### ***Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development***

1.47 The OECD is an organisation of 30 countries that accept the principles of representative democracy and a free market economy. Australia is a financial contributor to the OECD's budget (currently 2.3 per cent), participates fully in its forums and is able to access the experience and expertise of other member countries.

1.48 The OECD has a broad agenda covering most areas of national policy such as health, education, migration, taxation, finance and investment, trade, development and governance. Unlike other economic multilateral institutions, it relies on input from officials and experts under a network of committees serviced by the Secretariat. The OECD is headed by Secretary-General, Mr Angel Gurría. Mr Gurría commenced his five-year term as Secretary-General on 1 July 2006.

1.49 During its discussions with several officials of the OECD, the delegation noted that the organisation is well known and respected for its expert analysis and provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice, and co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

### ***OECD and the Global Economic Crisis***

1.50 The delegation was interested in the work that the OECD has done in relation to the Global Economic Crisis and was advised that the organisation has engaged actively with member countries and other international organisations. The OECD Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM) and OECD Global Forum took place in June 2009 with the theme "*The Crisis and Beyond: Building a Stronger, Cleaner and Fairer World Economy.*"

1.51 The delegation understands that the agenda of this meeting focused on the effects of the crisis and on the policy response – assembling and coordinating economic stimulus packages and exit strategies, promoting green growth and moving towards a sustainable low-carbon economy. Australia's Minister for Trade, Mr Simon Crean, led discussions on concluding the Doha Development Round, fighting protectionism and promoting global trade and investment.

1.52 The OECD released its Interim Economic Assessment on 3 September 2009, noting that economic conditions have improved since June 2009 and that an earlier recovery is possible. Highlights were improvements in financial markets, international

trade and the US housing market. Strong and well-coordinated policy responses by governments and central banks were seen as underpinning the strengthening economy. The OECD assesses that the recovery will be slow and characterised by further rises in unemployment and weak consumer confidence.

#### *Taxation*

1.53 Members of the delegation were interested to be advised that the OECD has been at the forefront of Tax Transparency and Exchange of Information policy reform since 2000. The organisation has pursued an ambitious tax agenda which has resulted in successful take up of transparency measures by 90 jurisdictions around the world.

#### *Enhanced Engagement*

1.54 During discussions with OECD officials the delegation was told that a high priority for the OECD is to strengthen enhanced engagement with emerging economies and that the global recession has underlined the importance of this work. This follows the decision by OECD Ministers in 2007 to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with China, India, Indonesia, Brazil and South Africa, as well as to boost cooperation with South East Asia under an “enhanced engagement” program. Australia chairs the Committee on Enhanced Engagement. The OECD hopes that these outreach and engagement efforts will enhance the value of the OECD’s contribution to economic and policy analysis and boost the quality and relevance of its advice on responses to the global economic crisis.

#### *Development Assistance*

1.55 The delegation noted the OECD’s work program on aid effectiveness and, in particular, programs focused on the environment, governance, gender and aid-for-trade. The delegation understands that Australia has committed \$A 400 million in 2009-2010 towards aid-for-trade, including funds for a number of technical assistance projects aimed at increasing developing countries’ participation in the global trading system.

#### *OECD Regulatory Review*

1.56 The delegation was advised that the OECD is currently conducting a Regulatory Review of Australia. The draft report will be considered in late September 2009. A large number of Australian government agencies have participated in the Review.

## **Part Two**



## **121st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**



# **Chapter 2**

## **Inter-Parliamentary Union**

### **IPU Council and Assembly**

2.1 The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the international organisation that brings together representatives of the Parliaments of sovereign states.

2.2 At its Assemblies, which are held twice a year, members of national delegations participate in the following:

- the Assembly itself, being a focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue on political, economic, social and cultural issues of international significance;
- the Inter-Parliamentary Council, comprising three delegates from each affiliated group; and
- specialist committees established by the IPU and specific meetings such as the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

2.3 A 17-member Executive Committee advises the IPU and supervises its annual program and budget.

### **Geo-political meetings**

2.4 The Rules of the IPU specifically recognise the role and function of geo-political groups. These groups are Africa, Arab, Asia-Pacific, Eurasia, Latin America and Twelve Plus.

2.5 The Australian delegation participates in the meetings of the Twelve Plus Group (the geo-political group centred originally on membership of the European Union but now including several other countries) and also the Asia-Pacific Group. In accordance with the Rules, the Australian National IPU Group has resolved that it will seek election to any position in the IPU, under the auspices of the Asia-Pacific group, including participation on drafting committees and, specifically, the Executive Committee of the IPU.

2.6 Nevertheless, the delegation attends and participates actively in the work of the Twelve Plus Group.

2.7 The meetings of the Twelve Plus and Asia-Pacific groups foster multilateral contact and provide the delegation with an important opportunity to put its point of view in a relatively informal atmosphere, and to cement friendships with other countries.

## Membership of the Union

2.8 The 152 members of the IPU are as follows:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, 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, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

2.9 There are 8 associate members, namely:

Andean Parliament, Central American Parliament, East African Legislative Assembly, European Parliament, Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, Latin American Parliament, Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

## Delegation report

2.10 This report is based on the official *Results of Proceedings of the IPU Meeting in Geneva – 2009* produced by the IPU Secretariat.

# Chapter 3

## 121st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

### Agenda of the Assembly

3.1 The agenda of the Assembly was as follows:

1. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 121st Assembly
2. Consideration of possible requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. Panel discussions on the subject items chosen for debate during the 122nd Assembly (Bangkok, 27 March - 1st April 2010):
  - (a) Cooperation and shared responsibility in the global fight against organised crime, in particular drug trafficking, illegal arms sales, human trafficking and cross-border terrorism  
*(First Standing Committee)*
  - (b) The role of parliaments in developing South-South and Triangular Cooperation with a view to accelerating achievement of the Millennium Development Goals  
*(Second Standing Committee)*
  - (c) Youth participation in the democratic process  
*(Third Standing Committee)*
4. Report of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs
5. Parliamentary action to ensure global food

### Opening of the Assembly and Election of the President

3.2 The 121st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union opened its proceedings at the Geneva International Conference Centre in the morning of Monday, 19 October 2009. The President of the IPU, Dr Theo-Ben Gurirab, welcomed the participants and declared the 121st Assembly officially open. He was subsequently elected President of the Assembly and the Vice-President of the Executive Committee, Ms Elissavet Papademetriou (Greece), was elected Vice-President.

### Participation

3.3 Delegations from the parliaments of the following 123 countries took part in the work of the Assembly:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador,

Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

3.4 The following Associate Members also took part in the Assembly:

East African Legislative Assembly, Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Latin American Parliament and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

3.5 Observers included representatives of:

- (i) the United Nations system: United Nations, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Labour Organisation (ILO), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO);
- (ii) World Bank, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Preparatory Commission for Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) and World Trade Organisation;
- (iii) League of Arab States, African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU), Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA), Confederation of Parliaments of the Americas (COPA), Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC), Inter-Parliamentary Commission of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), Maghreb Consultative Council, Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and the Russian Federation, Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUOICM), Southern African Development



Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum, Transitional Arab Parliament (TAP);

- (iv) Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and International IDEA.

3.6 Of the 1 154 delegates who attended the Assembly, 519 were members of parliaments. The parliamentarians included 24 presiding officers, 41 deputy presiding officers and 164 women (31.6 per cent).

### **Choice of an emergency item (Agenda item 2)**

3.7 The Assembly had before it three proposals, consisting of a consolidated request for the inclusion of an emergency item submitted by the delegation of Australia and the delegation of Uganda, on behalf of the African Group, entitled *Parliamentary action to ensure global food security*, and a consolidated proposal presented by the delegation of Oman, on behalf of the Arab Group and with the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran, entitled *The critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and particularly in Gaza*. Following a vote, the proposal presented by the delegation of Australia and the delegation of Uganda, on behalf of the African Group, received the required two-thirds majority and was added to the agenda as Item 5. The delegation notes that Mr Price was selected as co-rapporteur for the emergency item.

3.8 Acceptance of the emergency item submitted by Australia was a significant outcome of the delegation's visit to the Assembly.

### **Panel Discussions (Agenda item 3)**

3.9 Three panel discussions were held as follows:

#### ***Panel discussion (First Standing Committee subject item at 122nd Assembly):***

*Cooperation and shared responsibility in the global fight against organised crime, in particular drug trafficking, illegal arms sales, human trafficking and cross border terrorism*

3.10 The panel discussion took place in the morning of 20 October. It was chaired by Mr T. Boa (Côte d'Ivoire), President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security. The co-Rapporteurs, Ms M.T. Ortuño (Mexico) and Mr A. Wiriyachai (Thailand), presented their draft report, which focused on the current situation of organised crime in the world, the existing and developing international legal framework, the challenges ahead, and the role and responsibility of parliaments and parliamentarians.

3.11 Participants also heard keynote presentations from Mr P. Lapaque, Chief of the Organised Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Unit of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Mr A. Steen, Chairman of the British All-Party Parliamentary Group on Trafficking of Women and Children.

3.12 The panel was opened with a video presentation, which highlighted the sheer magnitude of organised crime around the world and the devastating effect it had on hundreds of thousands of innocent victims. Moving testimonies by victims of human trafficking underscored the extent of their suffering, but also the indifference with which their plight was treated by society at large. As Mr A. Steen pointed out, hundreds of conferences were being held to discuss human trafficking, but few parliamentarians had actually ever met or talked to a victim of human trafficking. This was indicative of a certain disconnection between the work of public officials and lawmakers and the brutal reality on the ground.

3.13 A substantive discussion followed, with some 40 legislators from as many parliaments, as well as the representative of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), taking the floor. Participants presented their national experiences in combating the various forms of organised crime. They recognised the need for more concerted and intense action in dealing with that growing phenomenon in practically all countries. As one participant observed, national legislation and response mechanisms were moving at a snail's pace, compared to the speed with which new and ever more aggressive forms of organised crime were being developed.

3.14 Public opinion was all too often unaware of the organised nature of human trafficking, a modern-day form of slavery. One participant drew attention to statistics according to which there were twice as many victims of human trafficking today than there were slaves in shackles during the 350 years of slavery. New or re-emerging forms of organised crime included piracy, abduction of children, domestic slavery and bartering, such as oil for weapons. The nexus between organised crime and political life also needed to be carefully examined.

3.15 Women and children tended to be the choice victims of the various networks of organised crime. With tighter security measures in place, more and more women were being used as shields to defend the real perpetrators of organised crime. They were the ones going to jail for prostitution instead of the main ringleaders, and they were used as pawns to carry out cross-border acts of terrorism and drug trafficking, roles traditionally reserved for men. All of those facts had a devastating impact on the world's most vulnerable sectors of society, as well as on families and communities.

3.16 Victims needed to be protected, assisted and rehabilitated and under no circumstances treated as criminals. While in many societies good laws were in place, much more needed to be done in terms of real and effective implementation. The experience of the UK Parliament showed how a small group of legislators could take very effective action, overseeing the government response and demanding more robust measures to tackle organised crime. A regional network of parliamentary action

groups against human trafficking had been set up, as the phenomenon knew no boundaries. The importance of other regional initiatives, such as joint databases and shared information and monitoring systems, could not be underestimated.

3.17 Participants agreed that in order to combat organised crime it was necessary to: overcome the widespread indifference towards the victims of organised crime; draw inspiration from the good practices and bold legislation that had been developed by many parliaments; and develop joint action and a strategic approach to the fight against organised crime.

3.18 Senator Crossin participated in the panel discussion.

***Panel discussion (Second Standing Committee subject item at 122nd Assembly):***

*The role of parliaments in developing South-South and Triangular Cooperation with a view to accelerating achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (Item 3(b))*

3.19 The panel discussion took place in the morning of 20 October, with Mr. P. Martin-Lalande (France), President of the Second Standing Committee, in the Chair. The co-Rapporteurs, Mr F.-X. de Donnea (Belgium) and Mr G. Lubinda (Zambia) presented a draft report on the item with a view to fostering a more formal debate during the 122nd IPU Assembly in Bangkok. They pointed out that the subject of South-South cooperation was so vast that any attempt to make a comprehensive presentation would necessarily be lengthy.

3.20 That opinion was echoed by Mr V. Yu, Coordinator of the Global Governance for Development Programme at the South Centre, who addressed the panel as an invited expert. The Centre was one of the leading intergovernmental think tanks of developing countries, providing quality technical analysis based on a political message of South-South solidarity and justice-based ideology.

3.21 Following the three introductory statements, an exchange of views took place, with a total of 36 delegates taking the floor, nearly one third of whom were women. The delegates agreed that South-South cooperation was an essential ingredient in the new development agenda and that it offered viable opportunities for developing countries to pursue the objective of sustained economic growth. That was all the more true in the context of the global economic crisis, when the South was facing additional constraints and challenges.

3.22 Parliaments of both developed and developing countries should be proactive in building support for the innovative North-South development partnership models that had been agreed by the United Nations in Monterrey in 2002 and reaffirmed in Doha in 2008.

3.23 Regional integration as a specific form of South-South cooperation was examined. The free movement of goods, services, capital and people stimulated

investment, spurred economic growth and increased South-South trade. The right mix of regional competition and measured protection was crucial to smooth integration into the global trading system. It also helped make regional integration an effective vehicle for growth and accelerated poverty reduction. The weaker countries especially encountered difficulties associated with globalisation, which made regional integration a mandatory and unavoidable approach.

3.24 Both the draft report and the panel discussion served as reminders that legislative support for South-South cooperation by parliaments was indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular as they related to poverty reduction.

3.25 Senator Troeth participated in the panel discussion.

***Panel discussion (Third Standing Committee subject item at 122nd Assembly):***

*Youth participation in the democratic process (Item 3(c))*

3.26 The panel discussion took place in the afternoon of 20 October with Mr Y. Zhumabayev (Kazakhstan), First Vice-President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, in the Chair. The co-Rapporteur, Ms M. Lugaric (Croatia), presented her draft report and invited participants to make proposals to enrich the final rapport and the draft resolution, which she was currently drafting. The participants also heard presentations by Ms N. Shepherd, Chief of the United Nations Programme on Youth, Mr A. Guerrero, Director of Partnerships at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Mr R. Amalvy, Director of External Communication, World Scout Bureau. During the course of the debate, 37 delegates took the floor.

3.27 Young people had a right to participate in decision-making. One quarter of the world population should not be excluded from decision-making processes. The challenge was not only to guarantee youth the right to participate but also to guarantee the effective and efficient enjoyment of that right. Education that fostered participation was important. So were promoting a culture of inclusion from an early age, building capacity, providing youth with the means to take action and youth representation in executive bodies.

3.28 Participation by youth in policy and decision-making and in the management of public affairs allowed them to contribute with a fresh perspective and make sure that their needs were taken into account and that laws, policies and programmes met those needs. Contrary to what young people often heard, youth were not only the future, they were also the present. Parliamentary action should centre on both the fight against the exclusion of youth from political life and the apathy that they displayed towards the political process.

3.29 While the age group that corresponded to the category "youth" as defined by the United Nations ran from 15 to 24 years, preparations for youth participation

should start much earlier and participation extended much longer. Efforts to strengthen youth participation in politics could draw inspiration from the policies and strategies implemented to strengthen women's participation in politics. Young women faced discrimination on two fronts - as youth and as women.

3.30 Ensuring greater participation by youth in parliament could be achieved by making sure that the minimum age for voting and the minimum age of eligibility for running for office were one and the same. If young persons were considered able to vote, they should also be considered able to take up a seat in parliament. Quotas could also be adopted to guarantee a minimum number of young people in parliament.

3.31 Regarding parliamentary structures, the establishment and proper functioning of parliamentary bodies dealing with youth issues was an important means of ensuring that their needs were taken on board. Parliaments must guarantee the participation of youth in the work of their committees. A sound and modern communication strategy, based on new communication tools, should be adopted by parliaments with a view to informing and consulting youth. Cooperation should also be forged among parliaments, youth parliaments and youth associations.

3.32 The IPU was urged to incorporate youth participation in its activities, along the lines of the measures that had been taken to promote women's participation. It should require parliaments to include youth in their delegations. Moreover, it should set up a mechanism, as had been done for women, that would allow youth parliamentarians to meet and make a contribution to the work of the Organisation for example by holding an alternative Assembly of Young Parliamentarians in the wings of statutory IPU Assemblies.

3.33 Mrs Mirabella participated in the panel discussion.

#### **Report of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs (Item 4)**

3.34 The subject of food security was taken up once again in the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs. The Committee received Mr. J. Diouf, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and heard a comprehensive presentation on the current food crisis and preparations for the World Summit on Food Security, scheduled to take place in Rome in November.

3.35 In the context of the Rome Summit, the IPU and the Italian Parliament would be holding a parliamentary meeting on 13 November, which members were encouraged to attend. The Director-General's presentation was followed by a question and answer session, which included suggestions for possible action and cooperation by parliaments.

3.36 The Committee began its work by taking stock of the responses received to the IPU Questionnaire on how parliaments organise their work vis-à-vis the United Nations. The survey, mandated by the Committee following its previous session in

October 2008, aimed to determine the manner in which parliaments related to the UN system, special meetings and major negotiating processes at the United Nations, and in UN country offices.

3.37 To date, 65 responses had been received, and a preliminary examination had already identified a series of good practices and recommendations that should be shared with the full IPU membership. All IPU member parliaments were encouraged to urgently submit their responses so that the review could be finalised and circulated. That evaluation would feed into the preparatory process for the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

3.38 The Committee began a discussion about cooperation between regional parliamentary organisations and the United Nations. It was recalled that in the 2005 Declaration of Speakers of Parliaments, the IPU was invited to cooperate more closely with regional parliamentary associations and organisations with a view to enhancing coherence and efficiency in global and interregional parliamentary cooperation. Although there were various activities at the national and regional levels, the Committee believed that there was scope for closer cooperation on policy with both regional and subregional parliamentary organisations.

3.39 The Committee heard a presentation on the status of United Nations reform and the report of the mission by its Advisory Group to Viet Nam earlier in the year. Such IPU missions to pilot countries undertaking One UN reform had enhanced the role of parliaments in developing national strategies and had established better mechanisms for parliaments to engage in international assistance and cooperation. The Committee welcomed the report, underscoring the need for a more coherent approach to aid delivery, which in turn should lead to greater effectiveness, transparency and accountability of UN operations. The Committee urged its Advisory Group to continue with such field missions and to report on progress.

3.40 The Committee heard a briefing from the Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat on the negotiations on climate change which, it was hoped, would lead to a firm agreement at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP15) in Copenhagen. Parliamentarians pledged to engage with the authorities of their country to tackle remaining hurdles and join their national delegations to the COP15. A parliamentary meeting would also be convened by the IPU and the Danish Folketing in Copenhagen on 16 December.

3.41 The Committee reviewed the implementation of the IPU's recent resolution on *Parliamentary oversight of State policies on foreign aid*, and discussed the IPU's involvement with the Development Cooperation Forum established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council. A senior United Nations official and the Director of the International Budget Partnership joined the Committee. The latter presented the results of the recent study on the role of parliaments in budget transparency and accountability.

3.42 The Committee recommended that: parliaments ensure that national budgetary accounts were made public and follow up annual audit reports; strategic partnerships were developed between parliaments, civil society and supreme audit institutions; parliaments should contribute to a gradual change in donor practices, with a view to incorporating international aid in the regular budgetary exercise; and parliaments should be involved in drafting codes of practice for greater budget transparency.

3.43 The Committee welcomed recent IPU initiatives in the area of aid effectiveness. These included the IPU's contribution to a regional initiative in Asia, called the Capacity Development for Development Effectiveness Facility, which aimed to build knowledge and capacities for greater development effectiveness. An expert study commissioned by the IPU to review parliamentary involvement in development policies and programmes in Zambia and the United Republic of Tanzania had also yielded promising results.

3.44 The IPU should prepare a handbook for parliamentarians on aid effectiveness. It was also suggested that additional case studies, representing wider regional representation, would be useful. Moreover, the IPU should assess the needs of parliament more systematically to measure the training they required in order to better analyse public finances, budgets and development programmes.

3.45 As the United Nations was approaching its 65th anniversary, the Committee reiterated its strong support for the mission, principles and objectives of the United Nations, in particular the need for all Member States to ensure full compliance with international law.

### **Consideration of the emergency item (Item 5)**

3.46 As noted above the Assembly adopted as its emergency agenda item the joint proposal of Australia and Uganda on:

#### *Parliamentary action to ensure global food security*

3.47 The debate on the emergency item took place in the afternoon of Monday, 20 October. It was chaired by the Vice-President of the Assembly, Ms E. Papademetriou (Greece). A total of 29 speakers from 28 parliamentary delegations and one observer took part.

3.48 During the debate, speakers expressed their concern over the various factors that directly affected food security, underlining the consequences of land degradation resulting from desertification and floods, and environmental degradation caused by climate change. They took note of the importance of the forthcoming Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (COP15) and invited parliamentarians to be present at the event organised by the IPU on that occasion.

3.49 Many speakers underlined the importance of investment in scientific research to support agriculture in facing the growing food demand. Others drew attention to the danger of distorting agricultural policies. There was a need to help the rural poor, men and women alike, to acquire technology, and gain access to a fair and open banking system, including micro-financing.

3.50 The broad range of concerns expressed during the debates were reflected in the draft resolution prepared by a drafting committee, composed of members of the delegations of Australia, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Germany, India, Malaysia, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay and Venezuela. Mr Price participated in the work of the drafting committee and also spoke in the general debate in the Assembly.

3.51 The drafting committee appointed Mr J.P. Winkler (Germany) as its president and Ms N. Ahmad (Malaysia) as its rapporteur.

3.52 Following an amendment moved by the delegation of Venezuela, the draft resolution was adopted by consensus by the Assembly on Wednesday, 21 October. A reservation was entered by the delegation of India. The final text of the resolution appears at Appendix 1.

### **Statements by the IPU**

3.53 At its last sitting, the Assembly endorsed two statements: one on the H1N1 virus and another on the situation in Honduras. These statements appear at Appendix 2.

### **Other meetings**

3.54 During the IPU Assembly, four panel discussions were also held as follows:

#### ***Panel discussion on HIV/AIDS – Universal access to prevention, treatment and care***

3.55 The panel discussion provided an opportunity for members of parliament to discuss the challenges they faced in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care. The Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS, Mr. P. De Lay, presented the latest global epidemiological trends and shared his views on ways in which parliamentary action could help efforts to contain HIV. The report by the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on AIDS - *The Treatment Timebomb* – was presented by the Group Chair, Mr. D. Borrow, who talked about the role of pharmaceutical manufacturers and the daunting challenges awaiting the legislator in the gradual shift from first- to second-line drugs.

3.56 Under the chairmanship of Mr W. Madzimore (Zimbabwe), the parliamentarians discussed problems associated with the provision of HIV drugs in



their countries, with a particular focus on funding and distribution challenges in countries with poor infrastructure. Some warned of rising infection rates in their countries despite prevention programs.

3.57 The need for improved testing services was singled out. The participants agreed that political will was crucial to achieving universal access and appealed to the IPU to continue to provide opportunities for parliamentarians to exchange share experiences, learn about best practices and support each other.

***Panel discussion on Our World at war: Challenges for international humanitarian law***

3.58 The year 2009 marks the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, which were at the core of international humanitarian law (IHL).

3.59 The panel discussion on *Our world at war: Challenges for international humanitarian law* was jointly organised by the IPU's Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law and the ICRC.

3.60 It aimed to take stock of achievements regarding respect for IHL and highlight challenges for national implementation.

3.61 The debate was moderated by Ms R. Green (Mexico) and presentations were made by Ms C. Beerli, Vice-President of the ICRC, Ms B. Gadiant, a Swiss MP and President of the IPU's Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law and Mr C. Jennings, a War Correspondent. Discussions focused on the role of members of parliament in ensuring proper enforcement and respect for IHL through the adoption of appropriate legislation, policies and programs and adequate budgets.

3.62 The need to sensitise parliaments to IHL and engage them in more widespread communication efforts with civil society and constituents in general was raised.

3.63 In addition to the panel discussion, celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the anniversary of the Geneva Conventions included the organisation of ICRC photo exhibition entitled *Our World - At War*, which provided an overview of the effects of war on populations around the world.

***Panel discussion on human rights and the Universal Periodic Review***

3.64 Some 30 parliamentarians participated in the panel discussion on the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which took place in the afternoon of 21 October.

3.65 In March 2006, following increasing criticism of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the UN General Assembly decided to establish the Human Rights Council. It was precisely to avoid such criticism that the newly established Council had been entrusted with the task of undertaking a universal

periodic review of each State's compliance with its human rights obligations and commitments with a view to ensuring universal coverage and equal treatment of all States. The modalities for that review - known as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) - were adopted by the 47 Council members in June 2007.

3.66 The panel discussion provided an opportunity for members of parliament to familiarise themselves with the modalities of the UPR and encourage parliamentary involvement in the process. They were also able to take stock of the UPR and the contribution that parliaments had made to it thus far.

3.67 The panel discussion was led by Ms J. de Rivero, Geneva Advocacy Director of Human Rights Watch. Ms M. Tebourbi, Human Rights Programme Officer, Universal Periodic Review Section, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, provided a historical background to the creation of the UPR and explained how it functioned. Mr M. Traoré, former Speaker of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso and Deputy-Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (IPCWAEMU), elaborated on ways in which parliament could contribute to making the UPR a success, gauged by the extent to which human rights had improved at the domestic level.

3.68 Mr M. Traoré highlighted the crucial contributions that parliaments could make at different stages of the process. First, parliament should discuss national country reports before they were submitted to the Human Rights Council. Second, parliamentarians should be part of the delegation that presented the report to the Council in Geneva. Third, parliament's role was critical in ensuring that the UPR recommendations were followed up at the national level. The last two panellists provided insights and lessons learned regarding the examination of their own countries under the UPR process. Mr A Neve, Secretary-General, Amnesty International, Canadian Section, stressed the need for broad national consultations to be held with all stakeholders in the UPR process and the strong participation of parliament. Mr J.J. Mwiimbu, a member of the Zambian Parliament, elaborated on the content of Zambia's national report and the recommendations adopted by the Human Rights Council.

3.69 Senator Crossin participated in the panel discussion.

***Review and follow-up session on action taken by parliaments and the IPU to give effect to the resolutions adopted by the IPU on the global crisis***

3.70 The session, the first of its kind held within the framework of an IPU Assembly, was designed to review implementation of the two emergency resolutions on the global financial crisis, adopted respectively at the 119th and 120th IPU Assemblies. It was also an opportunity to take stock of measures taken to follow up the Parliamentary Conference on the Global Economic Crisis, held in Geneva on 7 and 8 May 2009 under the auspices of the IPU.

3.71 The session was chaired by Mr P. Martin-Lalande (France), President of the IPU's Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade. At his request, the Committee Secretary enumerated the multiple initiatives taken by the IPU in connection with the global economic crisis. A detailed analysis of current trends in the field of employment was then presented by Mr R. Torres, Director of the International Institute for Labour Studies, a centre established by the International Labour Office (ILO). His presentation focused on the Global Jobs Pact launched by the ILO as part of its campaign to mitigate the effects of the crisis. A discussion followed, during which the ILO representative fielded questions from the audience, providing detailed explanations on the expected long-term consequences of the crisis, in particular for labour markets.

3.72 The participants agreed that the IPU should maintain its focus on the manifold economic and social effects of the current crisis, working in close cooperation with the United Nations system, in particular with the ILO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

### **Post-assembly meetings**

3.73 These were two other events, held during the Assembly, that were of interest. These were:

#### ***Launch of the Missing Persons Handbook for parliamentarians***

3.74 The IPU and the ICRC launched their latest joint product: a handbook for parliamentarians on Missing Persons. The Handbook was presented to members of parliament by the Vice-President of the ICRC, Ms C. Beerli, and the IPU President, Dr T.-B. Gurirab.

3.75 The Handbook represented the culmination of a process initiated by the IPU and the ICRC in 2005, which had led to the adoption in 2006, by the 115th IPU Assembly, of a resolution on missing persons. Since then, both organisations have worked to support parliaments in taking action to prevent disappearances, elucidating cases of missing persons and providing assistance to families of missing persons.

3.76 The Handbook is one element of the common IPU-ICRC strategy to assist parliaments in that field. Delegates were invited to make use of the practical tool, translate it into their national languages disseminate it and transform its recommendations into concrete initiatives that would make a difference to missing persons and their families.

3.77 The Handbook is available in English and French and can be downloaded from the IPU website at: [www.ipu.org/english/pblctns.htm](http://www.ipu.org/english/pblctns.htm)

***IPU campaign on violence against women***

3.78 An information stand was set up during the Assembly to showcase the IPU's campaign *Parliaments take action on violence against women*.

3.79 Members of parliament were able to obtain information and campaign material to support their own actions aimed at putting an end to that type of violence. Video images were shown of Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament, including the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ms Anna Burke, talking about their efforts to implement measures to eliminate a scourge that spared no culture, region or country.

3.80 The IPU's campaign places the onus on men and women parliamentarians and counts on the support of parliaments and political leaders to drive change. It also aims to heighten awareness about the contribution of parliaments to the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign *UNite to End Violence against Women*.

3.81 The Assembly urged IPU Members to mark the 10th anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, on 25 November 2009, by organising a special event in parliament on that day with a view to making the issue a national priority. Further information on the IPU's campaign is found at [www.ipu.org/vaw](http://www.ipu.org/vaw)

# Chapter 4

## 185th Session of the Governing Council

### Membership of the IPU

4.1 At its sitting on 19 October, the Governing Council suspended the Parliament of Niger. It condemned the unconstitutional dissolution of the Parliament, deplored the persecution and arrest of its members and requested the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to examine their situation.

4.2 At its sitting on 21 October, the Council decided that unless payments were received before the end of the year, the membership of Papua New Guinea and Somalia would be automatically suspended, effective 1 January 2010, for the accumulation of arrears in contributions.

4.3 Mr Price, on behalf of the Australian delegation, advised the Assembly that Australia and other countries were concerned that very few, if any, Pacific Island nations, and in particular, small island states attended and participated in the work of the IPU. It was therefore of real concern that the membership of Papua New Guinea was in question. He noted that Australia's concern was shared by the President and the Secretary-General of the IPU and called on them to consult with these nations in order to identify the any impediments to attendance and participation at the IPU.

4.4 There were no requests for affiliation and the IPU thus currently comprised 152 Member Parliaments.

4.5 At its second sitting, the Governing Council, seeking to dispel uncertainties about the representation at the Assembly of the Parliament of Palestine, endorsed a statement by the President that, pending any major developments in the Occupied Territories, the Palestine National Council would be treated on a par with any other IPU Member in all matters relating to its status as representative of Palestine at the IPU.

4.6 The Governing Council agreed that the Secretariat should write to all those observers which had rarely or never participated in IPU meetings to gauge their interest in remaining observers.

### Financial results for 2008

4.7 The Governing Council was presented with a comprehensive written report on the financial situation of the IPU and a list of unpaid contributions as at 30 June 2009. Four Members had significant arrears and were subject to sanctions. The Secretary General projected an operating surplus of CHF 432,000, mostly due to vacant posts, savings in the areas of transportation, translation, editing and publishing for the 120th Assembly, as well as to a favourable exchange rate with the US dollar.

4.8 On the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Council agreed that the following activities be carried out within the approved budget ceiling for a total amount of CHF 150,000:

- (a) for the Human Rights Programme, the organisation of a seminar in Bogotá, Colombia, to contribute to solving the conflict between the Colombian Congress and other State powers, and a mission to Madagascar to help solve the cases of certain parliamentarians;
- (b) for the Gender Equality in Politics and Children's Rights programs, the organisation of a regional seminar on violence against women and migration in Europe, a national seminar in Rwanda on CEDAW, the production of a document contributing to the Beijing + 15 appraisal to take place early in 2010, the assistance of a senior Canadian judge for the gender equality program for a period of three months, and the organisation of a meeting on violence against children.

### **Program and Budget for 2010**

4.9 The Council received the budget proposal for 2010 and a summary of planned activities and requirements for 2010-2012. The Secretary-General, reporting on the discussions of the Executive Committee, which had unanimously endorsed the document, noted that the budget was essentially a zero-growth budget considering the increases in expenditures the organisation was to incur during 2010 in relation to the organisation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and the increased security measures required for the Geneva Assembly.

4.10 Council members commented on the need to carry out more realistic budgeting, particularly in relation to activities funded through voluntary contributions. They also made several suggestions for greater savings in IPU operations and requested more detailed estimates of expenditure.

4.11 The Governing Council also heard the recommendations of the Executive Committee following the re-convening of the Working Group on Assessed Contributions (Composed of representatives of the Parliaments of Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Egypt, France, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay and Zambia) which had been mandated to undertake a mid-term review of the IPU scale of contributions to ensure its alignment with the UN scale and to examine steps that could be taken to reduce the burden of the parliaments of least developed countries and small island developing States (SIDS).

4.12 The new scale of contributions presented to the Council included the immediate implementation of the contribution targets approved by the Council for 2012 for least developed countries and the weakest SIDS, thereby substantively reducing the level of their contributions. The cost of implementing that decision was to be borne by the Working Capital Fund. The contributions for the remaining

Members reflected percentages which had been approved previously by the Council for 2010. The Working Group was to reconvene in 2011 in order to review the scale of contributions for the period 2011-2012.

4.13 At the end of the debate, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Governing Council approved the new scale of contributions and the 2010 budget as submitted by the Secretary-General. It approved gross operating expenses of CHF 18,692,300, which required an overall increase of 2 per cent in assessed contributions, and capital expenditures of CHF 100,000. As in previous years, the Council authorised the offsetting of carbon emissions related to heating and staff travel and noted that the Secretary General had submitted a proposal in October 2009 to the IPU's main donors to offset carbon emissions from activities funded through voluntary funds.

### **Cooperation with the United Nations System**

4.14 The Governing Council took stock of recent developments in IPU-United Nations cooperation, and was informed of a variety of activities carried out in collaboration with or in support of the United Nations.

4.15 The Council received a presentation on the work and objectives of a recent UN initiative, the Alliance of Civilizations, which aimed to improve understanding across cultures and religions and help counter polarisation and extremism. The Council approved the proposal for the IPU to strengthen its cooperation with the Alliance of Civilizations, which *inter alia* invited legislators to attend the 2010 Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in Brazil (28-29 May 2010) and convene a parliamentary session during the Forum.

4.16 The Council was informed of the status of the IPU Questionnaire on how parliaments organised their work *vis-à-vis* the United Nations. All Member Parliaments were urged to submit their response as soon as possible so that a comprehensive report could be presented to the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and the 2010 debate at the United Nations on cooperation between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU.

4.17 All Member Parliaments were encouraged to attend the 2009 Joint Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, to be held on 19 and 20 November at UN Headquarters in New York, under the chairmanship of the President of the IPU and the President of the UN General Assembly. The Hearing would examine the topic *The Way Forward - Building political support and implementing effective responses to the global economic crisis*.

4.18 The Council was also informed of forthcoming parliamentary meetings, held in cooperation with the United Nations or in the context of major UN events : the World e-Parliament Conference (Washington, D.C., 3-5 November), the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the World Summit on Food Security

(Rome, 13 November), and the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Copenhagen, 16 December).

### **Consolidation of the reform of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

4.19 The Governing Council heard reports from the geopolitical groups on their deliberations regarding the reforms carried out at the IPU. Several suggestions were made on improving the second Assembly of the year. Members also proposed measures to make the discussions more interactive.

4.20 Several of the members commented on the Committee on United Nations Affairs. While some felt that it was too soon to draw any conclusions, others suggested that the work of the Committee could be carried out better by its Advisory Group. The full set of recommendations submitted during the discussions would be considered by the Executive Committee, which would report back to the Governing Council at its next session.

### **Preparation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference of Speakers of Parliament**

4.21 The Governing Council was informed that the President of the IPU had established a Preparatory Committee of some twenty Speakers of Parliament to assist in organising the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. The Preparatory Committee had held its first meeting at IPU Headquarters in Geneva on 16 and 17 July.

4.22 The Preparatory Committee had decided that the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament would take place at the United Nations Office in Geneva from 19 to 21 July 2010. The theme of the Conference would be:

Parliaments in a world of crisis: securing global democratic accountability  
for the common good.

4.23 The next meeting of the Preparatory Committee was scheduled to take place at UN Headquarters in New York from 16 to 17 November, just prior to the Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations.

### **Recent conferences and specialised meetings**

4.24 The Governing Council took note of the results of the regional meeting for Twelve Plus parliaments on the rights of persons with disabilities (see <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/disabilities09.htm>), the Parliamentary Conference on the Global Economic Crisis (see <http://www.ipu.org/splze/finance09.htm>), the Fifth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament (see <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/mws09.htm>), the Regional Seminar for Latin American countries on *The role of parliaments in confronting violence against children* (see <http://www.ipu.org/splze/costarica09.htm>), the Regional Conference on the



contribution of parliament to the national reconciliation and institutional reform agenda (see CL/185/10(c)-R.1), the Parliamentary Conference on Democracy in Africa (see <http://www.ipu.org/splze/gaborone09.htm>), the Fourth Conference for members of parliamentary committees on the status of women and other committees dealing with gender equality (see <http://www.ipu.org/splze/gender09.htm>), and the Parliamentary Panel within the framework of the Annual WTO Public Forum (see <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/wtoforum09.htm>).

### **Reports of plenary bodies and specialised committees**

4.25 At its sitting on 21 October, the Governing Council took note of the reports on the activities of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the Committee on Middle East Questions, the Gender Partnership Group, and the Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS.

### **Future inter-parliamentary meetings**

4.26 The Governing Council approved the venues for the two Assemblies of 2012, which, in a break with usual practice, would both be held away from Geneva. The April Assembly would be held in Kampala, Uganda, and the October Assembly in Quebec City, Canada.

### **Election of the Secretary-General**

4.27 On the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Governing Council decided through a secret ballot to reappoint the incumbent Secretary-General, Anders B. Johnsson, for a fourth mandate from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2014.

4.28 The Governing Council also took note of the proposal of the Executive Committee to prepare an amendment to the Rules spelling out the procedure for electing the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The amendment would be submitted to the Council at its next session.



# Chapter 5

## 255th Session of the Executive Committee

### Work of the Executive

5.1 The Executive Committee held its 255th session in Geneva on 16, 17 and 20 October 2009. The President chaired the meetings.

5.2 The following titular and substitute members took part in the session: Ms E. Papademetriou, Vice-President of the Committee (Greece), Ms Z. Drif Bitat (Algeria), Mr G. Versnick (Belgium), Ms J. Fotso (Cameroon), Mr M. Nago (Benin), Mr J.A. Coloma (Chile), Mr R. del Picchia (France), Mr A. Alonso Díaz-Caneja (Mexico), Ms M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia) substituting for Ms P. Cayetano (Philippines), Mr Chin Young (Republic of Korea), Mr A. Kozlovskiy (Russian Federation), Mr R.M.K. Al Shariqi (United Arab Emirates) and Mr N. Quang Xuan (Viet Nam) replacing Mr Ngo Anh Dzung, who had been given a diplomatic appointment. Mr T. Toga (Ethiopia) was absent.

5.3 The Executive Committee discussed and made recommendations on agenda items to be addressed by the Governing Council. The other matters considered by the Committee are summarised below.

5.4 The Executive Committee discussed the current status of the IPU and the direction it needed to take to improve that status. The Committee considered a proposal to give the IPU a more lasting legal foundation in international law not only to strengthen the organisation, but also to set its relationship with the United Nations on a firmer footing. The Committee fully endorsed the thrust of the proposal while acknowledging that its fulfilment would take considerable time and effort. It instructed the Secretary-General to set out a more widely researched proposal based on the opinions of legal experts.

5.5 The Committee heard a report on the fiscal situation of certain staff members residing in France. It noted that negotiations on the problem continued. It was informed of changes in the Secretariat, including the recruitment of a new Director of Support Services and a Development Officer.

5.6 The Committee was informed of the imminent signing with the Swiss authorities, after protracted negotiations, of a lease for the land on which the IPU Headquarters stood, which would serve as a model for other organisations in Geneva. It established a small working group composed of Mr G. Versnick, Mr M. Nago and Mr R. del Picchia, who studied and endorsed the document.



## Chapter 6

### Co-ordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians

#### Work of the committee

6.1 The Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians met on 18 October 2009. The sitting was chaired by Ms. P. Cayetano (Philippines), President of the Committee. The meeting served to follow up the previous Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and to prepare the work of the forthcoming session. The Coordinating Committee also discussed women's contribution to the work of the 121st IPU Assembly.

6.2 The Committee was briefed on the work and recommendations of the Gender Partnership Group and lauded the fact that almost 32 per cent of delegates at the Assembly were women, the highest proportion ever reached. It also praised the inclusion of information on gender-specific allocations and objectives in the 2010 budget.

6.3 A report was presented on follow-up of the Fourteenth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians held in Addis Ababa relating to climate change, sustainable development and women's economic empowerment. The Committee went on to discuss its contribution to the 121st Assembly. It discussed the draft reports to be debated by each of the Assembly's three Standing Committee panel discussions, highlighting gender-related concerns which the respective Rapporteurs might wish to take into account. Preparations for the Fifteenth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians were also discussed. The Committee decided that it would debate the subject item chosen by the First Standing Committee for debate at the 122nd Assembly, namely *Cooperation and shared responsibility in the global fight against organised crime, in particular drug trafficking, illegal arms sales, human trafficking and cross-border terrorism*. It also decided at the Meeting's afternoon dialogue session between men and women, MPs would focus on the topic of combating violence against women, with a particular focus on women in prisons and immigration detention centres.

6.4 Following a presentation by the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Committee proposed that the panel discussion for the 122nd Assembly consider the role of parliaments in implementing Convention on the Rights of the Child 20 years after its adoption.

6.5 The Committee was briefed on the IPU's forthcoming activities related to gender issues, including the IPU campaign *Parliaments Take Action on Violence against Women*. The members heard about the different components of the campaign and called on parliaments to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November) by organising activities such as seminars, conferences and parliamentary hearings.

6.6 The meeting was informed of the new project on gender-sensitive parliaments. The project sought to examine ways in which parliaments could best become gender-sensitive institutions and effectively mainstream gender into their work. Data would be collected through questionnaires, which parliaments and their members were strongly urged to complete. Activities related to maternal health and Countdown to 2015 were highlighted. They included a conference in Uganda in November 2009 and IPU Partnership for Maternal and Newborn Health cooperation to document case studies on good parliamentary practices regarding Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5.

6.7 Members were briefed about the imminent launch of the Arabic version of the iKNOWPolitics website, scheduled to take place in Amman on 27 and 28 October 2009 on the theme *The role of the media and information technology in increasing the number and effectiveness of women in politics*.

6.8 Members also heard about activities to provide technical support to parliaments, in particular a recently completed two-year project for women parliamentarians in Burundi, and assistance to the Jordanian Parliament with a view to eliminating discriminatory provisions in the country's laws.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Subsidiary bodies and committees of the Governing Council and elections and appointments**

#### **Introduction**

7.1 The Governing Council received detailed reports of the work of the following bodies and committees:

- Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians;
- Committee on the Middle East Question; and
- Gender Partnership Group

7.2 In this chapter, the delegation also records the proceedings of other meetings and events that were held at the Assembly as well as a list of elections and appointments.

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

7.3 The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians held its 127<sup>th</sup> session from 17 to 20 October 2009. Ms Z. Benarous (Algeria), Senator S. Carstairs (Canada), Ms R. Green (Mexico), Mr P. Mahoux (Belgium) and Mr A. Pimentel (Philippines) attended in their capacity as titular members, while Ms A. Boumediene-Thiery (France) and Mr K. Jalali (Iran, Islamic Republic of) participated in their capacity as substitute members.

7.4 During the session, the Committee examined 56 cases in 29 countries concerning 250 parliamentarians. It held six meetings with official delegations. The Committee also met the victims or their representatives in six of those cases.

7.5 The resolutions it presented to the Governing Council for approval concerned the cases of 214 parliamentarians in 20 countries. Two of those cases were submitted for the first time, including the case from Madagascar. Following the presentation of the draft resolutions to the Council by the Committee President, Senator S. Carstairs, Ms. E. Naika, a Malagasy senator, was invited to the podium to recount her personal experience since the coup d'état that had occurred in March in Madagascar.

#### **Committee on the Middle East Question**

7.6 The Committee on Middle East Questions met on 19 October 2009. The meeting was chaired by the Committee President, Ms A. Clwyd, (United Kingdom). Titular members present were Mr F.-X. de Donnea (Belgium), Mr H. Raidel (Germany), Mr L.H. Ishaq (Indonesia), and Mr P. Tanbanjong (Thailand), replacing Mr A. Ponlaboot. The substitute members in attendance were Mr S. Janquin (France), and Mr H. Alir (Turkey), replacing Mr M. Sahin.

7.7 The Committee received the IPU President, who delivered a report on his recent visit to Israel. The President had visited the town of Sderot, which was frequently targeted in rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip. He had held meetings with a number of senior officials, including Speaker Rivlin and President Peres. He reported

on the warmth with which he had been received in Israel. His mission served to complete the tour of the region he had begun in March with visits to the West Bank and Gaza and neighbouring Arab countries.

7.8 The Committee received two representatives from the Humanitarian Dialogue Centre (Geneva) with a view to sharing their experience on matters relating to international mediation. Mr. M Griffiths, Director of the Centre, outlined some of the mediation work done by his institution in different countries, adding that the political context in countries in conflict was difficult for mediators to address, which implied an opportunity for parliamentarians. The great advantage for parliamentarians was that they did not confer recognition on their counterparts; at the same time, they were people who had force and significance. Mr T. Guldimann, a Middle East expert, elaborated on those themes. The objective should be to work with components of societies in the region that were ready to push for greater democracy. The Committee agreed that the best approach in the first instance would be to try to speak to the different parties separately about subjects where a common understanding might be possible. It reiterated its intention to convene the meetings in Geneva rather than elsewhere and instructed the Committee Secretary to liaise with the representatives of the Humanitarian Dialogue Centre to work out a specific proposal for a meeting in late 2009 or in January 2010.

### **Gender Partnership Group**

7.9 The Gender Partnership Group held its 24th session on 17 October 2009. The participants were Ms P. Cayetano (Philippines), Mr R. del Picchia (France), Ms Z. Drif Bitat (Algeria) and Mr Ngo Quang Xuan (Viet Nam). Mr del Picchia acted as moderator.

7.10 The Group welcomed the fact that 31.6 per cent of delegates attending the 121st Assembly were women. This is the highest number of women delegates ever recorded at an Assembly.

7.11 Of the 123 delegations attending the 121st Assembly, 119 were composed of two delegates or more. Of those, 15 (12.6 per cent) were all-male delegations. Those delegations were from the Parliaments of Brazil, El Salvador, Indonesia, Liberia, Malta, Palau, Panama, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Suriname. In addition, there was one all-female delegation from Slovenia.

7.12 The delegations from the following countries were sanctioned at the Assembly, as they had been represented by a single sex for the third consecutive time: Malta, Palau, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

7.13 The Group also recalled the statutory requirement of a minimum of three women members in the Executive Committee, as five new members would be elected to the Executive Committee during the Assembly.

7.14 The Group discussed the IPU's budget, which it had been examining from the point of view of gender parity since 2004. It noted that the 2010 budget contained a strong gender component. The budget of the Gender Partnership Programme was



funded by a core contribution and extra-budgetary funds. Thanks to the latter, IPU activities on gender issues had expanded over the years. The extra-budgetary funding would be in place until the end of 2010, when it would become essential to ensure sustained funding so that Programme activities could continue. Regarding staffing at the IPU Secretariat, the Group was pleased to note that 50 per cent of the staff in the professional category was female, including in managerial positions. Overall, 60 per cent of the staff in the General Services category was female.

7.15 The Group then considered the status of parliaments that did not have women members. Six parliaments had no women members, mainly in the Pacific Islands and the Gulf Cooperation Council States. The Group noted the results of the May 2009 elections in Kuwait and welcomed the election of four women members to the parliament, two of whom participated in the Kuwaiti delegation to the Geneva Assembly. The Group underscored the importance of keeping track of developments in parliaments with no women members and working with geopolitical groups to exert pressure.

7.16 The Group highlighted two major IPU initiatives. The first was the campaign *Parliaments Take Action on Violence against Women*. The Group called on all parliaments to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women - 25 November - by organising activities such as seminars, conferences and hearings in parliament. Parliaments were invited to inform the IPU about initiatives taken so that they could be posted on the IPU website. Relevant documents had been distributed widely to parliaments and were available at: [www.ipu.org/vaw](http://www.ipu.org/vaw)

7.17 The second was the new Survey on Gender-Sensitive Parliaments. The aim of that new research project was to gather primary information on ways in which parliaments could best become gender-sensitive institutions and effectively mainstream gender into their work. Data would be collected through survey questionnaires, which parliaments and their members were strongly urged to complete. The questionnaires were available at: [www.gender-parliaments.org](http://www.gender-parliaments.org)

7.18 On Tuesday, 20 October, the Group held a dialogue session with the delegation from Palau to learn more about the situation of and challenges facing women in politics. The Group welcomed the recent election of two women to the Senate, and hoped that one of them would be able to attend the next IPU Assembly.

## **Elections and Appointments**

### **President of the 121st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

Dr. T.-B. Gurirab, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, was elected President of the Assembly

### **Vice-Presidents of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

*African Group:* Mr M. Nago (Benin)

*Group of Latin America and the Caribbean:* Mr A. Alonso Díaz-Caneja (Mexico)

*Arab Group:* Mr Al Shariqi (United Arab Emirates)

*Asia-Pacific Group:* Mr Chin Young (Republic of Korea)

*Twelve Plus Group:* Mr G. Versnick (Belgium)

*Eurasia Group:* Mr M. Vardanyan (Armenia)

### **Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

The Council decided, with 177 votes in favour, 45 against and six abstentions cast in a secret ballot, to reappoint the incumbent Secretary General, Mr Anders B. Johnsson, for a fourth mandate from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2014.

### **Executive Committee**

The Governing Council elected Mr Ngo Quang Xuan (Viet Nam) until October 2011 (when the term of office of his predecessor from the same country expires), and Mr Nhem Thavy (Cambodia), Mr K. Örnfjäder (Sweden), Ms D. Stump (Switzerland) and Mr M. Vardanyan (Armenia) as members of the Executive Committee until October 2013.

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

The Governing Council elected Mr S. Janquin (France) as a titular member of the Committee until October 2013. The Governing Council elected Mr H. Alir (Turkey) until April 2012 (when the term of office of his predecessor from the same country expires) and Mr J.P. Winkler (Germany), Mr F. Gutzwiller (Switzerland), Ms E. Papademetriou (Greece) and Ms M. Armani (Malaysia) as substitute members of the Committee until October 2013.

### **Group of Facilitators for Cyprus**

The Governing Council elected Mr M. Sheerit (Israel) as a Facilitator until 2013.

### **Internal Auditors for the 2010 accounts**

The Governing Council appointed Mr W. Beke (Belgium) and Mr M. Sheerit (Israel) as Internal Auditors for the 2010 accounts.

## Chapter 8

### Meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

#### Introduction

8.1 Mr Ian Harris, Clerk of the House, and Ms Claressa Surtees, Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms, of the House of Representatives, attended the meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) held in conjunction with the deliberations of the 120th IPU Assembly in Addis Ababa. The meetings of the ASGP were held from 6 to 10 April 2009. Mr Harris participated in the meetings of the Executive Committee, of which he is a member, and of the ASGP. Ms Surtees participated in the proceedings of the ASGP as the substitute of the Deputy Clerk of the House, Mr Bernard Wright.

#### Relations between the ASGP and the IPU

8.2 Mr Martin Chungong, Director of the Division for the Promotion of Democracy, IPU Secretariat, together with his colleague Mr Andy Richardson, Information Specialist, attended a meeting and led debate on recent activities of the IPU to strengthen parliaments and democracy. Mr Chungong referred to IPU initiatives with the World Bank Institute in assessing development needs of parliaments. He also noted the research partnership on professional development and capacity building being carried out by a project team at Monash University. Mr Richardson commented that there was a pleasing level of support from the members of the ASGP for the initiative on self evaluation of parliaments.

8.3 Mr Chungong commended to the attention of members the *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* published in March 2009. He also encouraged members to ensure the completion of a questionnaire on how parliaments organise their work related to the United Nations.

8.4 Mr Chungong announced that Panama had been proposed to host the 124th IPU Assembly in 2011 and that a world conference of Speakers was being proposed for June/July 2010.

8.5 Mr Chungong hailed the success of the conference conducted by the IPU and the ASGP on 16 October 2008 following the Geneva meetings, which focussed on the role of parliamentary library and research services in the context of informing democracy. He concluded by inviting members to propose topics for consideration at this year's conference in Geneva.

8.6 Mrs Daniela Giacomelli, Programme Officer of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament made an intervention to introduce to members a survey to be launched in

May 2009 of ICT in parliaments. She commented that the survey is to be more extensive than the 2007 survey, which was considered to have been very successful, and concluded by encouraging members to ensure the completion of the survey.

### **Consideration of parliamentary matters**

8.7 The general meetings of the ASGP continued the format of selected general thematic debates. The chosen subjects were:

- Questions to ministers;
- Measures to limit the impact of parliament on the environment;
- Election of the Speaker;
- Administrative self-evaluation within Parliaments; and
- Observing parliamentary traditions and meeting expectations of members and electors (a topic suggested jointly by Australia and the Netherlands).

8.8 Each subject was open to discussion and each was fully debated at the meeting. In addition, there was agreement by the members to establish a working group to explore further the subject of administrative self-evaluation within Parliaments. Ms Surtees accepted a personal invitation from Dr Hafnaoui Amrani (Algeria), President of the ASGP, to be a member of the working group.

8.9 There were also presentations and discussions on specific parliamentary topics:

- Parliamentary system of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;
- Promoting e-democracy in the global era;
- Parliamentary privileges: legislature and judiciary interface – the Indian experience;
- The reception of MPs at the beginning of a new term of parliament;
- The ordinance: legislation by the executive in India;
- Afghanistan: the beginning of democracy – achievements and challenges;
- First speeches in Parliament by new members of parliament (a topic suggested by Australia);
- Functions of the chamber of the House of Representatives of Uruguay during non-working periods; and
- The interaction of the Council of the Federation with the legislative assemblies of the subjects of the Russian Federation in the law-making processes.

8.10 During the presentation on promoting e-democracy in the global era, Mr Park Kye Dong (Korea) invited and encouraged members to participate in the Secretaries-General Forum of Asia-Pacific Parliaments, which he will be launching from 7–11 July 2009 in Korea, with a focus on e-Parliament.

### **Administrative matters**

#### *New members*

8.11 A number of new members were admitted to the ASGP. Most were replacing existing members who had retired or moved to other employment. A new member from each of the National Assembly of Chad and the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador was admitted because the country was joining the ASGP for the first time. A new member from the Maghreb Consultative Council was admitted because the Council was joining the ASGP for the first time.

#### *Other membership matters*

8.12 Dr Amrani reported that a proposal had been received for Mme H el ene Ponceau to be admitted as an honorary member of ASGP. Her admission was agreed to by acclamation.

#### *Executive committee matters*

8.13 Dr Amrani reported a vacancy on the Executive Committee. At the deadline for nominations only one had been received, and Dr Ulrich Sch oler (Germany) was declared elected to the Executive Committee.

8.14 Dr Amrani reported that the Executive Committee had been discussing and reviewing the rules of the Association throughout the week and that this work would continue.

#### *Next meetings*

8.15 Mr Pitoon Pumhiran (Thailand) made a communication on Thailand, the host of the 122nd IPU Assembly and associated ASGP meetings in March/April 2010.

8.16 A draft agenda for the next session, in the northern hemisphere Autumn 2009 in Geneva, was circulated. When further developed it will be placed on the ASGP website <http://www.asgp.info/en/home>



# **Chapter 9**

## **Meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments**

### **Introduction**

9.1 In conjunction with the deliberations of the 121<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly in Geneva, meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) were held from 18 to 21 October 2009. Attending the meetings from the Australian Parliament was Mr Andres Lomp, Director of the Parliamentary Relations Office, representing the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Mr Ian Harris, AO.

### **Presentations**

9.2 The general meetings of the ASGP included presentations about parliamentary administration and procedure. Lead speakers introduced a range of topics that were then debated, with participants contributing their experiences and insights.

9.3 Australia led the debate on the role of the Secretary-General, with Mr Lomp presenting a paper prepared by Mr Harris. The paper focused on the dual role that a Secretary-General has as chief procedural adviser and chief executive of a parliamentary organisation. Issues covered in the paper included a Secretary-General's individual leadership role as well as the broader responsibility to promote corporate leadership, so that a parliamentary organisation becomes recognised for its strengths. The paper also examined the processes for appointment of a Secretary-General and how those procedures can help reinforce the independence of the role.

9.4 Other papers also focused on issues of parliamentary administration and management. The delegate from Brazil attracted keen interest with a presentation on a new strategic management and planning framework that was being implemented in the secretariat of the Brazilian Parliament.

9.5 Outreach activities were also discussed. The Korean delegate spoke about initiatives the Korean Parliament has undertaken to promote cooperation between parliamentary secretariats. This includes an e-parliament initiative that has seen the Korean Parliament donate more than 400 computers to parliaments in developing democracies around the world, along with training and expertise to maintain them. On a related issue, Mr Gherardo Casini from the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament briefed ASGP members about the November 2009 World e-Parliament Conference in Washington.

9.6 Other presentations focused on procedural issues and developments in individual parliaments. Topics included reform of the way in which bills are considered; procedures governing contempt of parliament; and parliamentary immunity.

9.7 Mr Alain Delcamp, Secretary-General of the French Senate, presented a report on the autonomy of parliament. That report summarised the results of a questionnaire that had been circulated among the ASGP membership, to which 37 members of the association had responded. The questionnaire enabled contributors to describe how the principle of autonomy is implemented in their parliaments, but also asked how it influences the way parliaments undertake their political, legislative and scrutiny roles. The purpose of the questionnaire and report is to identify common approaches and help establish benchmarking tools.

9.8 On the issue of benchmarking, ASGP President, Dr Hafnaoui Amrani, presented a draft questionnaire on the subject of administrative self-evaluation within parliaments. The draft questionnaire had been prepared by an ASGP working group on which the Australian Parliament was represented by Ms Claressa Surtees from the Department of the House of Representatives. Delegates agreed to consider the draft questionnaire and debate it further at the next ASGP meetings in Thailand in 2010.

9.9 Links with the IPU were emphasised in a presentation by the IPU's Director of the Division for the Promotion of Democracy, Mr Martin Chungong. The presentation updating members on the work of the IPU, including collaborative work with the ASGP, is a regular feature of ASGP meetings.

### **Administrative matters**

9.10 A rule change proposed by Mr Ian Harris (Australia) was considered by the ASGP Executive Committee. The rule change sought to overcome a difficulty that had arisen whereby the positions of President and two Vice-Presidents were up for election at the same time. Mr Harris and other members of the association were concerned that this situation could lead to a lack of continuity within the leadership of the ASGP. After negotiations with the Executive Committee, it was agreed that a new rule would be proposed at the next meetings of the ASGP in 2010 to ensure that the three leadership positions of the ASGP would not be up for election at the same time.

9.11 As part of the regular membership update that generally occurs at each meeting, a number of new members were admitted to the ASGP. In addition, Mr Alain Delcamp was elected to the Executive Committee.

9.12 A draft agenda for the next ASGP meetings, to be held in Bangkok, Thailand from 28 March to 1 April 2010, was circulated and was supplemented with a presentation by the delegate from Thailand. Further information on past and future meetings of the ASGP is available at: [www.asgp.info/en/home](http://www.asgp.info/en/home)

### **Evaluating parliament conference**

9.13 At the conclusion of the ASGP meetings, a conference on evaluating parliaments: objectives, methods, results and impact was conducted jointly by the ASGP and the IPU on 22 October 2009. Australia was represented at the conference by Mr Andres Lomp.

9.14 A range of presenters discussed benchmarking of parliaments and various case studies were examined. It was noted there is no single list of characteristics for



democratic parliaments, but there is an emerging consensus on key elements or standards that democratic parliaments should meet. In this regard, a number of associations and organisations have developed benchmarks and self-evaluation guides, including the IPU, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

9.15 According to presenters, there are various reasons for the recent focus on benchmarks and evaluation: for parliaments it represents renewed efforts to build public confidence and capacity; for academia there is increased interest in legislative development; for parliamentary associations there is an opportunity to codify decades of learning; and for civil society organisations there is an increasing recognition of the role of parliament in cementing democratic values within society.

9.16 The potential value of parliamentary benchmarks depends on their ownership by and usefulness for parliaments and domestic advocacy organisations. It was suggested the current debate on benchmarks is weighted towards donors and academics and needs to increasingly involve parliamentarians and parliamentary staff.

9.17 Presenters suggested that parliaments should not simply use benchmarks to identify weaknesses or deficiencies and areas for improvement, but should also recognise what they do well. It was noted that a number of parliaments have already undertaken a self-assessment based on international benchmarks, and the following parliaments were given as examples: Kiribati, Pakistan, Canada and the Australian Capital Territory.

9.18 It was argued that the benchmarks should evolve over time and should not be seen as set in concrete. At the same time, evaluations using benchmarks should not be regarded as a ‘tick the box’ exercise but should be a basis from which to have a meaningful discussion about parliamentary performance and reform.

9.19 The conference also had four workshop sessions, one of which was chaired by a representative of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. At that workshop session a number of issues were raised about existing benchmarks and their application to parliaments.

9.20 It was noted that a common issue among parliaments is lack of resources to support the oversight function effectively. This issue is linked to a lack of financial independence of parliaments, particularly in setting their budgets.

9.21 Concerns were expressed about the response culture among governments, where inadequate information is provided in response to parliamentary scrutiny or where information is simply repeated in an alternative format. While the process of scrutiny is covered in the CPA benchmarks, it was suggested more emphasis could be placed on the results of scrutiny, in particular the adequacy and timeliness of government responses to recommendations, such as those from parliamentary committees. It was agreed political will is an important consideration in looking at how effective benchmarks can be.

9.22 To improve scrutiny processes, it was also suggested that there could be better coordination with oversight bodies outside of parliament, such as the Ombudsman and other accountability commissions.

The conference concluded with the announcement that a global conference on parliamentary benchmarks is being planned for 2010.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Emergency Item – IPU Final Resolution on:**

Parliamentary action to ensure global food security



# **121<sup>st</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION AND RELATED MEETINGS**

Geneva, 19-21.10.2009

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## **PARLIAMENTARY ACTION TO ENSURE GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY**

### ***Resolution adopted by consensus\* by the 121<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly (Geneva, 21 October 2009)***

The 121<sup>st</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Recalling* that under Article 25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food ...",

*Also recalling* Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), in which the fundamental right of every person to be free from hunger is recognized,

*Further recalling the* commitment made by parliamentarians under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to establish, under the auspices of the IPU, a parliamentary network on the UNCCD to promote information and interaction aimed at increasing parliamentary involvement and efficiency in combating desertification, soil erosion and land degradation,

*Taking into consideration* the cooperation agreement of 24 July 1996 (A/51/402) between the United Nations and the IPU, which laid the foundation for cooperation between the two organizations,

*Noting*, in that regard, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 63/24 of 22 January 2009 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Welcoming* the IPU's contribution to shaping the agenda and work of the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), recently established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council,

*Taking note* of the resolution adopted by the 96<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Beijing (China) on 20 September 1996 on "Policies and strategies to ensure the right to food in this time of globalization of the economy and trade liberalization",

*Also taking note* of the 1996 Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action, which pledged to reduce the proportion of undernourished people to half their 1996 level by no later than 2015,

*Further taking note* that under Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1, Target 3 aims to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger,

*Recalling* Articles 61, 62 and 65 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982), which deal with aspects of overfishing,

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\* The delegation of India expressed a reservation on operative paragraph 21.

*Recalling* the recommendations of the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, adopted in May 2009, on the importance of promoting agriculture and development in a sustainable way,

*Welcoming* the establishment by the UN Secretary-General of the UN High-Level Taskforce on the Global Food Security Crisis and the Task Force's Comprehensive Framework for Action, released in July 2008,

*Bearing in mind* the June 2008 Declaration of the FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security, which called for greater international efforts to address the challenge of global food security,

*Welcoming* the G8 Statement on Global Food Security, adopted at the G8 Outreach Session on Food Security in L'Aquila, Italy, in July 2009, in which the leaders of 40 countries and international organizations emphasized five basic principles to govern cooperation related to food security and agreed to act; *also welcoming* all multilateral and regional commitments to tackle the issue of food security,

*Realizing* that climate change will affect developing countries the most and will pose a threat to food security,

*Recognizing* that the world is experiencing various natural and man-made disasters, ranging from drought, famine and floods to locust invasions, which have had either a direct or indirect impact on agricultural productivity and consequently on the macroeconomic status of countries, particularly developing ones, and which have led in the long run to low agricultural productivity, starvation and even death in some cases,

*Realizing* that severe weather patterns, droughts and floods have become so common globally that they have led inter alia to the loss of life and property and the destruction of farmlands and transport infrastructure,

*Reaffirming* that although each country has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and poverty eradication, concerted and concrete measures are required at all levels to enable developing countries to achieve their sustainable development goals as they relate to the internationally agreed poverty-related targets and goals, including those that arise out of the relevant UN conferences and the United Nations Millennium Declaration,

*Deeply concerned* that despite the progress made by the international community in recent years towards eradicating hunger, the number of malnourished people in developing countries has increased to more than one billion,

*Also concerned* that the global economic crisis is leading to increased poverty, thereby further reducing the food security of the poor, and is widening the gap between rich and poor,

*Further concerned* that while food prices have fallen from their recent peaks, they remain volatile, due among other things to speculative trade in the futures markets in food grains, and are expected to remain relatively high in the foreseeable future,

*Remaining concerned* at situations of armed conflict, which cause a steep decline of socioeconomic conditions, particularly on food security,

*Concerned* that the international community's capacity to respond to the growing demand for food is constrained by increasing urbanization, water scarcity, the decline in investment in agricultural research and development, distortions in global food markets, increasing energy prices, environmental degradation and climate change,

*Recognizing* that appropriate, affordable and sustainable investment in research and scientific advancements to boost agricultural productivity and combat drought-induced famine, severe

weather patterns and floods can play an important role in helping States alleviate poverty and eradicate hunger,

*Noting* the importance of sufficient food storage facilities and an adequate transport infrastructure to facilitate both the storage of food and its transportation to markets,

*Recognizing* that food security and poverty are fundamentally interrelated and must be addressed within a broad framework that encompasses social concerns and economic growth,

*Also recognizing* the negative effects that distortionary agricultural policies have on agricultural production, investment, trade and food security,

*Acknowledging* the importance of fair and efficient markets and trade flows in promoting economic growth and food security,

*Also acknowledging* the importance of sustainable development and real progress in tackling environmental challenges, such as the increase in greenhouse gas emissions, to achieving global food security,

*Believing* that the fulfilment of the right to food requires the adoption of economic, environmental and social policies aimed at increasing both the availability and the accessibility of food,

*Recognizing* the importance of global action to address inadequate food security and the need for a timely process for reporting on progress,

*Believing* that agriculture can be a part of the solution in combating climate change and *calling on* the international community to put agriculture on the agenda at the UN Climate Change Conference Copenhagen 2009 (COP15),

1. *Calls on* parliaments to take urgent and decisive action to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people suffering from hunger by 2015;
2. *Stresses* the critical need for increased investment in rural development in developing countries in order to improve food security;
3. *Urges* donor countries to honour their commitments and mobilize additional resources to help achieve global food security;
4. *Urges* States, parliaments and relevant UN agencies to make greater efforts to promote investment in research and scientific progress in order to boost agricultural productivity and combat drought-induced famine, floods, coastal erosion and other natural disasters under fair, transparent and mutually agreed terms;
5. *Calls upon* parliaments to promote investment in research and scientific progress on issues such as tree planting, wetland and dryland conservation, afforestation and deforestation that will reverse the effects of climate change, which in turn affect other interventions in this area;
6. *Urges* all parliaments to make greater efforts to stop the continuous overfishing of many marine species that has occurred in recent years in several regions of the globe, and which affects the food security of many countries;
7. *Calls for* support for national efforts to foster the effective use of local know-how and technology and promote agricultural research and technologies to enable poor rural men and women to increase agricultural productivity and enhance food security;

8. *Encourages* States to make knowledge and know-how in the field of agricultural technology and agricultural innovation systems more accessible, in particular to the poor, subject to appropriate arrangements;
9. *Urges* the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to support the efforts of States, in particular developing countries, to take full advantage of new knowledge in agricultural technology, innovation, research and development with a view to achieving the relevant MDGs, in particular the eradication of poverty and hunger;
10. *Recognizes* the important role of the private sector in the development of modern and efficient agricultural and food systems, while *stressing* the need for proper regulations to limit potential abuses by the private sector;
11. *Calls for* the empowerment of farmers' organizations in the decision-making process;
12. *Urges* parliaments, relevant UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and donors to invest in improved transport infrastructure, including road and rail networks, as well as adequate food storage facilities, all of which have an important role to play in bringing available food production to markets and areas of immediate need;
13. *Calls upon* public and private institutions to further develop improved crop varieties that are suitable to various regions, especially those challenged by environmental factors, including climate change, and to develop and manage these crops in a sustainable manner; *calls for* further efforts by all stakeholders to ensure that improved crop varieties are made available and affordable to small farmers, especially those in developing countries, in a manner consistent with national regulations and the relevant international agreements;
14. *Encourages* parliaments to exchange information on technological development and international cooperation in the area of agricultural productivity;
15. *Stresses* the need for greater coordination between parliaments, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and farmers' and fishermen's associations in their efforts to improve global food security;
16. *Calls for* the implementation of national and regional agricultural strategies to improve food security through country-led coordination processes, as called for in the Comprehensive Framework for Action developed by the UN High-Level Task Force on Global Food Security;
17. *Encourages* parliaments to expand national social protection systems in order to shield the poor in developing countries from future food price rises and crises and loss of livelihood;
18. *Stresses* the critical need for affected populations to have free access to food and other essentials in areas of armed conflict in order to alleviate the humanitarian situation and improve food security;
19. *Urges* parliaments to take measures, in addition to actions to improve global food security, to adapt to and mitigate climate change as well as strengthen the sustainable management of water, land, soil and other natural resources, including the protection of biodiversity;

20. *Calls on* governments to show renewed commitment to a balanced outcome of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations under the World Trade Organization, and to conclude the negotiations by the end of 2010;
21. *Urges* governments to refrain from erecting barriers to trade and investment in agriculture and to take measures to foster a well-functioning banking system, including microfinance schemes that give access to women and guarantee them a minimum of 50 per cent of available funds;
22. *Encourages* world leaders to agree effective measures to tackle food security at the forthcoming World Summit on Food Security;
23. *Calls on* developed countries to make a renewed commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions during the COP15 meeting so as to reduce the adverse effects of climate change on food supply;
24. *Calls on* all parliaments to submit an annual report to the IPU Secretariat on national progress in addressing the food crisis and *calls on* the IPU to explore the possibility of creating a permanent mechanism to address the subject of food security.



## **Appendix 2**

Statement on the H1N1 Influenza Virus

Statement on the situation in Honduras

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY ON THE H1N1  
INFLUENZA VIRUS**

*Endorsed by the 121st IPU Assembly  
(Geneva, 21 October 2009)*

The 121st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, meeting in Geneva in October 2009, wishes to draw attention to the alarming spread of the H1N1 influenza virus, which has now been classified by the World Health Organization as a pandemic.

Our parliaments agree that they should fully exercise their legislative and supervisory duties to help combat the spread of the H1N1 virus. They must use their oversight powers to ensure that their governments' response to the pandemic is built on sound public health grounds.

In some countries, the health systems are stretched to their limit and even overwhelmed by the crisis. We call upon our parliaments to avail themselves fully of their budgetary powers to make sure that national health systems are sufficiently well-resourced to ensure efficient detection, confirmation and treatment of cases. This includes establishing systems for triage where priority is given to high-risk populations.

We will continue to require our governments to report to us regularly on what they have done to protect citizens and provide early treatment for infected persons. More broadly, our parliaments must also scrutinize the efforts of their governments in containing the economic and social impacts of the disease.

The regional parliamentary organizations are urged to take steps to ensure that regional parliamentary efforts to limit the economic and social risks of the H1N1 virus are coordinated across the world.

The international financial institutions and the G20 are encouraged to provide urgent financial assistance to developing countries to enable their health systems to cope with the effects of the pandemic and limit its spread.

We also urge the media to assist in raising public awareness of how to avoid contracting the virus and serving as a channel for medical instructions and advice.

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY ON THE  
SITUATION IN HONDURAS**

*Endorsed by the 121st IPU Assembly  
(Geneva, 21 October 2009)*

On 28 June 2009, a military coup occurred in Honduras.

On the following day, I declared, in my capacity as President of the IPU, that any act designed to overturn a government by unconstitutional means is completely unacceptable. I am well aware that in so doing, I had your full support.

Since then, much has been done by bodies such as the Organization of American States to set up a dialogue between the representation of the constitutional President, Mr. Manuel Zelaya, and the de facto President, Mr. Roberto Micheletti. Unfortunately, these attempts have not borne fruit and the dialogue remains at a standstill.

I am sure this Assembly will join me in calling for the immediate restoration of the rule of law in Honduras. By the same token, we call for the reinstatement of the constitutionally elected President of Honduras, Mr. Manuel Zelaya.

