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**REPORT OF THE KENYAN DELEGATION TO THE 145<sup>TH</sup>  
ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION AND  
RELATED MEETINGS HELD IN KIGALI, RWANDA**

**(11<sup>TH</sup> – 15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2022)**

PARLIAMENT OF KENYA  
NAIROBI, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS  
FEBRUARY, 2023

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## FOREWORD

Hon. Speaker,

The Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU), the world organization of Parliaments, is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue, cooperation and action. The Union advances democracy and assists Parliaments and parliamentarians throughout the world to fulfill their mandates. The IPU facilitates parliamentary debate, dialogue and cooperation and also promotes and defends democracy and the rule of law while assisting Parliaments in coping with growing international agenda relevant to their duties.

The IPU Assembly is the principle statutory body that expresses the views of the Inter Parliamentary Union on political issues. It brings together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations for parliamentary and governmental action. The Assembly meets twice a year and is held each time in a different country, providing participants with an opportunity to see various national realities.

Hon. Speaker,

The 145<sup>th</sup> Assembly was held in, Kigali, Rwanda, from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2022. The Kenyan delegation comprised the following Members:-

1. **The Rt. Hon. Amason J. Kingi, EGH, MP – Leader of Delegation;**
2. Sen. (Dr.) Boni Khalwale, CBS, MP;
3. Sen. Catherine Mumma, MP;
4. Hon. John Kiarie, MP;
5. Hon. Gonzi Rai, MP;
6. Hon. Rebecca Tonkei, MP;
7. Hon. Naisula Lesuuda, OGW, MP; and
8. Hon. Paul Abuor, MP.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of the delegation for bestowing upon us the important task of representing Kenya in one of the most important fora in the associations of Parliaments.

Hon. Speaker, in accordance with Article 7 of the Statutes of the IPU, it is my pleasure and humble duty to submit this report, the summary of proceedings and resolutions of the 145<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter Parliamentary Union and Related meetings.

**Thank you.**

**SEN. (DR.) BONI KHALWALE, CBS, MP**

## 1. BACKGROUND

The Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), established in 1889, and with a membership of 178 national parliaments, is the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracies.

To this end, the IPU:

1. Fosters contacts, co-ordination, and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;
2. Considers questions of international interest and concern and expresses its views on such issues in order to bring about action by parliaments and parliamentarians;
3. Contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development;
4. Contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.

The IPU supports the efforts of the United Nations, whose objectives it shares, and works in close co-operation with it. The Union also co-operates with regional inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as with international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which are motivated by the same ideals.

In promoting the concepts of peace and international arbitration, the IPU provided the origins for today's form of institutionalized multilateral co-operation and advocated for the establishment of corresponding institutions at the inter-governmental level, which eventually came into being as the United Nations. The IPU was also instrumental in setting up what is now the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

The IPU has transformed itself from an association of individual parliamentarians into the international organization of the Parliaments of sovereign States. It is a center for dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy among legislators representing every political system and all the main political leanings in the world, constituting a unique platform for observing political opinions and trends around the world.

IPU statutory Assemblies and specialized meetings serve as a testing ground for new ideas and initiatives leading to important breakthroughs in the search for peace and advancing international co-operation.

The IPU is financed primarily by its members out of public funds. It is a public organization funded in a transparent way by Member Parliaments and Associate Members, whose annual fees are assessed in accordance with a scale of contributions approved by the Governing Council. In addition, a growing volume of financial resources is mobilized through voluntary contributions, most of which are provided by donor governments.

## 2. THE 145<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY

### 2.1 OPENING OF THE 145<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY

The Inaugural Opening of the 145<sup>TH</sup> IPU Assembly and related meetings took place on Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, at the Kigali International Convention Centre (KICC).

The Assembly was attended by delegations from 119 member countries, Associate Members, observers and other institutions and was officially opened by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda. Other dignitaries who graced the inaugural ceremony included, Hon. Donatille Mukabalisa, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Rwanda, Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Duarte Pacheco, President of the IPU and Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU.

#### **Address by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda**

In his opening address, His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda stated that it was an honour for Rwanda to host the 145<sup>th</sup> Assembly for the first time since its admission to the IPU. He welcomed all delegates as well as representatives of international organizations. Making reference to the theme of the Assembly, *Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world*, His Excellency President Kagame pointed out that all over the world, parliaments existed to protect the interest of citizens; and that this objective cannot be met without the full and active participation of women in parliaments with particular reference to leadership positions. He observed that despite steady gains, inequality between women and men continued to be widespread. He observed that while setting quotas makes an attempt to bridge the gap, it does not address the full spectrum of inequalities in parliaments.

The President pointed out that gender equality could be better achieved, when it is acknowledged that it is a right for everyone, emphasizing that women are the backbone of resilient and peaceful societies. He called for stronger legal and policy frameworks to be put in place, with a focus on implementation and results. He stressed that the fight against gender inequality is a shared responsibility, and that there was need for men to speak up, and not to be bystanders. He stated that this was important to combat the negative perceptions of some men who sustain the status quo.

He lauded the participation of women in Rwanda in public affairs including in the liberation struggle, and in peacekeeping missions across the Africa as an example of the contribution of women in bettering society. His Excellency Paul Kagame concluded his address by calling for greater collaboration between parliaments to work on all challenges perpetuate dehumanization and prejudices of women and other forms of injustices worldwide.

**Address by Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations**

Via a televised message to the Assembly, Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said that IPU Assemblies were a crucial bridge between the local and the global community that allows concerns to be brought into the international arena. He commended the focus of the Assembly on gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change and congratulated Rwanda for being the world's first country with a female majority in parliament. The Secretary General observed that parliaments should work to ensure that women had the same opportunities to sit at the decision-making table as men, and take action to protect women in politics against the growing threat of violence.



**Address by Hon. Duarte Pacheco, President of the IPU,**

The President of the IPU, Hon. Duarte Pacheco, observed that the presence of the President of Rwanda was testament to his commitment to multilateralism and representative democracy. He congratulated the President on the economic success of Rwanda in rebuilding after the 1994 genocide, and the spirit of reconciliation and dialogue. The President of IPU observed that the world continued to face a myriad of challenges including climate change, growing poverty and inequality, terrorism, and migration crises. He pointed out that human rights continued to be violated around the world against women, and particularly singled out the case of Ms. Mansa Amini in Iran.

He however observed that there were several indicators of hope in the fight against discrimination of women, including, increased interfaith dialogue, sports as a means of uniting people, and the growing participation of young people in politics. He pointed out that the representation of women in politics was on the rise and that Rwanda provided an example in that regard, with over 60% of Members of its House of Representatives being women. The IPU endeavoured to set a good example on gender equality through measures to ensure gender balance in every aspect of its work.

**Remarks by Mr. Marting Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU**

Echoing the sentiments of the IPU President, Mr. Marting Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU observed that the IPU had worked with the Parliament of Rwanda to build one of the most forward-looking and gender-sensitive parliaments in the world. He noted that Rwanda provided proof that gender equality and gender-sensitive institutions were drivers of peace and resilience. He pointed out that the General Debate at the 145<sup>th</sup> Assembly must look at ways to accelerate progress to achieve the goal of gender equality.

### **Remarks by Hon. Donatille Mukabalisa, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Rwanda**

In her remarks, the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Rwanda acknowledged that the IPU Assembly was key in bringing parliamentary dimension to international cooperation, global governance and resolution of major international issues. She lauded the IPU for choosing the Theme: *Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world*, and stressed importance of parliaments committing towards ensuring that women could participate in politics on an equal footing with men.

She cited the success story of Rwanda where promotion of gender equality and mainstreaming gender in politics are constitutional imperatives and that commitment to those values was strong at the highest level. This made it possible for women to play an active role, equal to men, in the socio-economic transformation of the country. She concluded by challenging other Parliaments to emulate Rwanda by endeavouring to promote and mainstream participation of women in politics and governance.

## **2.2 CHOICE OF AN EMERGENCY ITEM**

Pursuant to Rule 11.1 of the Assembly Rules, any Member of the IPU may request for inclusion in the Assembly's Agenda, an emergency item for consideration and resolution. Such a request is accompanied by a brief explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution which clearly define the scope of the subject covered by the request.

Requests for the inclusion of an emergency item ordinarily relate to a recent major situation of international concern on which urgent action by the international community is required and on which it is appropriate for the IPU to express its opinion and mobilize a parliamentary response. Such a request must receive a two-thirds

majority of the votes cast in order to be accepted. In the course of proceedings of the Assembly, only one emergency item may be placed on its agenda, and should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted. In the event that two or more requests for the inclusion of an emergency item relate to the same subject, it is permitted pursuant to Rule 11.2, that the proposing member parliaments may combine their proposals to present a joint one. Any subject of a proposal that has been withdrawn or rejected by the Assembly cannot be included in the draft resolution.

On 12<sup>th</sup> October, the Assembly considered four requests that had been received for inclusion of an emergency item on the agenda, as follows:

**(i) Creation of a global fund or financing facility for climate-vulnerable countries to address loss and damage associated with climate change – Pakistan.**

In submitting this proposal, the delegation from Pakistan called for a meeting under the auspices of the United Nations, to discuss the modalities of establishing a permanent global fund or financing facility for retributions to the climate-vulnerable countries affected by the devastations caused by climatic degradation, especially for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of a flood-stricken Pakistan.

The delegation noted that a steady rise in global temperatures caused by increased greenhouse gases emissions had resulted in climate-induced natural disasters. Climate change is impacting the number, frequency and duration of these climate-induced natural hazards and affecting many weather and climatic conditions across the globe that has resulted in the occurrence of catastrophic events like heat waves, heavy precipitation, droughts and tropical cyclones. These incidences have caused

large-scale devastations and have created serious problems, and are a cause of great concern globally. The Pakistan delegation observed that one-third of the country was inundated, with an estimated 33 million people have been affected across the country and over 1,300 lives had been lost including more than 400 children. Further, nearly 800,000 livestock have perished and more than 1.7 million houses and 6,000 km of roads had been destroyed or damaged with other colossal damages to critical infrastructure and livelihoods.

In order to address the climatic repercussions faced by climate-vulnerable countries, the Pakistan delegation argued the need for developed countries to urgently and significantly scale up their provision of climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building for adaptation so as to respond to the needs of developing countries as part of a global climate mitigation effort, including the formulation and implementation of national adaptation plans and adaptation communications. They also advanced for multilateral development banks, other financial institutions and the private sector to also enhance finance mobilization in order to deliver the scale of resources needed to achieve climate plans.

**(ii) Condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine and of the subsequent annexation of territories in defence of the territorial integrity of all States – Chile.**

In submitting this proposal, the delegation from Chile observed that the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation had caused the death and maiming of thousands of civilians and soldiers, the destruction of cities and infrastructure, and the displacement of millions of people as war refugees. The consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukrainian was causing alarm in the international community, which shows a humanitarian, migratory and refugee crisis that affects the whole

world. A direct consequence of this situation was an upward spiral of food and fuel prices due to the war that had the threat of an international food crisis.

The delegation from Chile called upon IPU member states to support the creation of courts with specific jurisdiction for crimes committed in wars of aggression; to urge the international community to support the actions of UNICEF and other specialized agencies in relief efforts in Ukraine; to raise awareness among the relevant national authorities of respective States and civil society organizations regarding the resultant humanitarian crisis, as a measure of solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

Further, the delegation from Chile called on IPU member states to condemn all war crimes or crimes against humanity, as well as any other violation of human rights, the reduction of tensions and exhausting all the means available to bring the parties closer to the mechanisms for a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue, cooperation and diplomacy.

**(iii) Preserving Iraq's sovereignty, rejecting repeated attacks and not interfering in its internal affairs – Iraq.**

The delegation from Iraq observed that in the recent past, Iraq had witnessed many direct and indirect external attacks on its sovereignty by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Türkiye. These attacks had become a source of threat to the sovereignty of the Republic of Iraq and the security and safety of its people and lands, and thus constituted a threat to international peace and security.

The delegation observed that the two countries had taken advantage of the prevailing international regional conflicts to launch attacks, which had resulted in a

threat to Iraq's water resources that would seriously harm Iraq's sovereignty and national interests. For this and other humanitarian reasons, and to safeguard territorial integrity, peace and stability, the delegation from Iraq called on the support of IPU member states in the withdrawal of Türkiye's and Iran's forces from the Iraqi territory, the dismantle of their bases, and a secession of hostility against the people of Iraq.

**(iv) Condemnation of the illegal annexation of the Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk regions by the Russian Federation, the targeting of civilians and other war crimes resulting from the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine – Ukraine.**

The delegation from Ukraine observed that in the continuation of aggression waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine since 20 February 2014, the Russian Federation had escalated its military activities against Ukraine to unprecedented levels on 24 February 2022, resulting in a devastating situation in Ukraine and the death and maiming of thousands of civilians and soldiers, the destruction of cities and infrastructure, and the displacement of millions of people as war refugees.

They claimed that in recent times, the Russian Federation staged sham referendums and announced the annexation of four Ukrainian regions: Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk. The Russian Federation declared mobilization to sustain its war effort and intensified its terror campaign against civilians. Further, high-ranking Russian officials, including the President, had not shied away from unconcealed threats of the use of nuclear weapons against Ukraine.

The delegation from Ukraine stated that those troubling developments represented yet another challenge to the global security architecture and urged the IPU member states to provide an urgent and strong reaction to the aggression leveled against Ukraine by the Russian Federation.

From the foregoing and before a vote on the items, the Assembly observed that during the 144<sup>th</sup> Assembly held in Nusa Dua, Indonesia, a similar topic on the crisis in Ukraine had been debated and an IPU Task Force was established, which had undertaken a fact-finding mission to both the Russian Federation and Ukraine. However, its report was yet to be presented to the Assembly. As a consequence, the delegation from Ukraine withdrew its proposal for an emergency item.

Similarly, before a vote on the items was taken, the delegation from Iraq withdrew its proposal. This effectively left only two items for consideration as emergency items; the proposal from Pakistan and the one from Chile.

Upon a roll-call on the two items and following consultations within the Members of the Kenya delegation, the delegation voted 15 in favour of the proposal from Pakistan and 15 abstentions on the part of the proposal from Chile. On the final tally of results, the proposal from Chile received the required two-thirds majority and the highest number of votes in favour, and was subsequently adopted and added to the agenda of the Assembly as an Emergency Item.

The Assembly held a debate on the Emergency Item *Condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine and of the subsequent annexation of territories in defence of the territorial integrity of all States* on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2022. Delegates expressed their support for Ukraine, observing

that the invasion of Ukraine was a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, and was against the principles of the IPU.

A number of delegates also expressed concern on the impact of the war on the neighboring countries, the refugee crisis and on the global supply chain for grains, of which Ukraine was identified as one of the largest suppliers. On its part, the Russian delegation expressed concern on NATO's expansion policies and condemned the western countries for interfering in a local matter. They condemned international sanctions against Russia and the supply of arms to Ukraine by western allies.

At the close of the debate, delegates called for the IPU to use its structures, working with all parties and the international community to assist in bringing an end to the conflict. Thereafter, the Assembly referred the Emergency Item to a drafting committee composed of members from Canada, Chile, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, New Zealand, Oman, Peru, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania, to consider the matter and prepare a draft resolution for consideration by the Assembly.

On 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, the drafting committee presented the draft resolution to the Assembly for consideration. The Assembly adopted the resolution in the following terms, save for the delegation from India, Mozambique, South Africa, South Sudan and Yemen, who abstained.

- (1) "Recalling that the invasion of the sovereign State of Ukraine has resulted in the death and maiming of thousands of civilians and military personnel, the destruction of cities and infrastructure, and the displacement of millions of people as refugees of war,
- (2) Considering that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) works for peace and cooperation among peoples, and for the promotion and defence of human rights, which are universal in nature and whose unrestricted respect is an



essential factor for democracy and the development of all nations,

- (3) Noting the adoption on 23 March 2022 by the 144th IPU Assembly in Nusa Dua, Indonesia, of a resolution in favour of a Peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, respecting international law, the Charter of the United Nations and territorial integrity,
- (4) Bearing in mind that the Charter of the United Nations states that “[a]ll Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”,
- (5) Having regard to United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES-11/2 on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine, which calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities, in particular of any attacks against civilians and civilian objects,
- (6) Noting United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 49/1 of 4 March 2022 on the situation of human rights in Ukraine stemming from the Russian aggression, as well as United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution S-34/1 of 12 May 2022 calling for investigations into war crimes committed on Ukrainian territory,
- (7) Attentive to the content of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, especially the Fourth Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and their Additional Protocols,
- (8) Aware that the military aggression against Ukraine has continued for eight months now, despite multiple calls from the international community to put an end to the conflict and the resultant suffering of the civilian population,
- (9) Alarmed by the profound consequences of the invasion of Ukrainian territory by the Russian Federation, which point to a humanitarian, migration and refugee crisis affecting the entire world and, in particular:

the sharp deterioration of the global economy, giving rise to major concerns; the situation in the Horn of Africa, with Somalia alone receiving 92% of its wheat imports from the Russian Federation and Ukraine; the upward spiral of food and fuel prices resulting from the war threatening to plunge the African population into a food crisis of potentially catastrophic proportions; and Europe meanwhile facing a cold winter with reduced gas supplies, with some 41% of this vital energy source coming from the Russian Federation,

- (i) Reiterates its call for an immediate end to the Russian military occupation of sovereign Ukrainian territory, restoring its territorial integrity back to its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters, and consequently the rule of international law;
- (ii) Condemns in the strongest terms the serious violations of human dignity and the flagrant violations of human rights perpetrated in the regions of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Sumy, Chernihiv and others;
- (iii) Also condemns the use of extrajudicial executions, sexual and gender-based violence, and inhuman or degrading treatment as a weapon of war, in open violation of the Geneva Conventions relating to the treatment of prisoners of war, the care and assistance of the wounded and sick, and the due protection of the civilian population;
- (iv) Reaffirms the importance of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, in connection with Russia's territorial annexation;
- (v) Supports the resolutions of various international bodies to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of

possible war crimes committed in Ukraine, particularly the massacre in Mariupol, the evidence found of clandestine mass graves in Iziun, the tragic events in Bucha, the hundreds of attacks on the country's health infrastructure, the use of unguided bombs and cluster munitions against the civilian population in Chernihiv and Okhtyrka, among others;

- (vi) Also supports the creation of courts with specific jurisdiction to investigate possible crimes perpetrated in wars of aggression and to hear cases of war crimes and human rights violations committed on Ukrainian territory.
- (vii) Urgently appeals to the international community to support the actions of UNICEF and other specialized aid agencies to alleviate the general deprivation suffered by 3 million children inside Ukrainian territory and another 2 million refugee children, who require rapid and life-saving assistance;
- (viii) Calls on the parliaments of the world to:
  - raise awareness, as appropriate, among the competent national authorities of their States and civil society of the need to contribute, insofar as they are able, to a solution to the humanitarian crisis involving the migration of 6 million Ukrainian citizens as refugees;
  - encourage the support and cooperation of the international community in the process of reconstructing Ukraine, in solidarity with its people and respecting the principles, values and norms of international humanitarian law;
  - continue their commitment to climate change

reduction targets, recognizing that the war of aggression is impacting energy supply;

- (ix) Calls on the competent bodies of the United Nations system, the governments and parliaments of the world, and multilateral financial institutions to adopt and support effective and targeted social policies to address decisively global food insecurity resulting from the effects of the war, namely the rising prices of food, fuel and fertilizers, the supply of which has been severely disrupted or discontinued;
- (x) Expresses solidarity with all the victims of the armed conflict in Ukraine and condemns all war crimes, crimes against humanity and any other human rights violations;
- (xi) Urges all States to address the humanitarian dimension of the conflict, to work together to reduce tensions and to exhaust all peaceful means available through mechanisms of peaceful settlement;
- (xii) Reaffirms support for the ongoing work of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine; encourages the Task Force to continue its efforts to bring the parties concerned to the table of political dialogue for the peaceful resolution of the war, in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations, territorial integrity and international law; and encourages both Parliaments to facilitate the Task Force's engagement to achieve its mission."

### 3. THE GENERAL DEBATE

The General Debate is a forum within the Assembly, through which IPU Member Parliaments have an opportunity to comment and reflect on issues of importance to the Member State. Member Parliaments are often represented by the respective Heads of Delegation, and comments focus on experiences from the member parliament and regularly conclude with proposals for addressing the subject matter of the debate.

The theme for the 145<sup>th</sup> Assembly's General Debate was "*Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world*". The theme was informed by the fact that we live in a world of crises which exacerbates existing inequalities, including gender inequality. It was premised on the understanding that, whether it was the health crisis, the climate crisis, armed conflicts, or the social, economic and security-related consequences of each of them, they all had something in common. That is, that none of them were gender neutral.

These crises threaten to reverse progress achieved in advancing gender equality and more generally, sustainable development. It was observed that gender gaps in access to education and health were closing. Women's role in decision making had continued to increase, with 26% of MPs being women in 2022, up from 13% in 2000. However, crisis have the resulting effect of clawing back on gains made at gender equality and investing in women's and girls' empowerment, hence, it was helpful to mitigate the impact of crises on society at large. This requires commitment and effort to tackle entrenched practices and ways of thinking as well as laws and frameworks that, proactively contribute to gender equality.

Over the course of three days, over 144 legislators and representatives from 106 Member Parliaments, including 26 Presiding Officers and 19 young parliamentarians, contributed to the General Debate. The proceedings of the Debate were livestreamed, and many of the good practices and recommendations that emerged were reflected in the outcome document. Contributions from Member Parliaments observed that there were advancements and experiences from around the world from which the IPU could draw inspiration from to make parliaments gender-sensitive for a more resilient and peaceful world.

Hon. Donatille Mukabalisa, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Rwanda, the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Rwanda, opened the General Debate on 12<sup>th</sup> October, and observed that the 145<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Rwanda would give delegates the opportunity to see for themselves how Rwanda had changed since the tragic events of 1994. She noted that Rwanda had made an irreversible commitment to working for a society in which equality and justice prevailed in all dimensions. She further noted that gender-sensitive parliaments were necessary to keep pace with the diverse needs of the different sectors of the societies they served. She emphasized that the approach to gender issues in parliaments must serve as an example and inspiration for wider society.

The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians paid tribute to women around the world who had to go the extra mile to take their place at the decision-making table and called on delegates to stand in solidarity with the women and girls who had taken on the challenge to fight violence and inequalities in their societies.

On his part, the Speaker of the Senate and Leader of Parliament of Kenya delegation, Rt. Hon. Amason Jeffah Kingi, EGH, MP, observed that SDG No. 5 proposes the “achievement of gender equality and empower all women and girls” with target 5.1

speaking to ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere. He stated that if disproportionate representation of women and girls in society was to be reduced, parliamentarians needed to take up their roles as champions for gender equality at the national, regional and global levels more robustly.

He further stated that with an enlightened public that appreciates the need to break the barriers to the involvement of women in public affairs, there had been a steady increase in the number of women in both Houses of Parliament, rising from 18 in the 1<sup>st</sup> Parliament to 21 in the case of the Senate and, for the National Assembly, from 69 in the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament to 82 in the 13<sup>th</sup> Parliament.

The Speaker pointed out to the Assembly that in an effort to address the counterproductive socio-cultural attitudes and practices to women's autonomy, participation in the society and wellbeing in Kenya, Parliament had passed specific legislation and approved programs towards uplifting the status of women. Notable among these included; the Matrimonial Properties Act (2013); the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act; the Children Act (2001); the Sexual Offences Act (2006); the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act (2010); the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011); and the Marriage Act (2014). He called upon all IPU Member Parliaments to enact such legislation and to urge for the establishment of deliberate government programmes that empower women.

The Assembly observed that to step up action for gender equality, there was need to address structural gender inequalities that are driving vulnerabilities instead of building resilience including - achieve parity in political decision making; ensure the law-making process, law-enforcement, and budgeting are gender-responsive across all policy fields; inclusion of vulnerable groups at the center of parliamentary work; ending of gender-

based discrimination, violence and other harmful practices; parliaments to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice for all women and girls; address societal prejudices against women by both gender taking up equal responsibilities at the family level, regardless of gender.

It was noted that driving structural transformational change for gender equality would require legislators to continue and enhance action to build gender sensitive parliaments, and that by doing so parliaments will meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Members appreciated that gender-sensitive parliaments would be better able to reverse gender inequalities and address vulnerabilities, with a better appreciation that gender equality is a right for everyone, everywhere.

At the conclusion of the General Debate on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, the Assembly considered and adopted the *Kigali Declaration* committing parliaments to be drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world, to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IPU's Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments, and to recommit to advance gender equality in all spheres of society.

At the conclusion of the Assembly on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, the Assembly adopted the *Kigali Declaration* which emanated from the theme of the General Debate. The Assembly resolved that –

“We, Members of Parliament from around the world, gathered at the 145th IPU Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda to discuss the theme *Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world*, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the IPU's Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments, and to recommit to advance gender equality in our institutions and in society.



We recognize that we live in a special time, wrought with global challenges. After two years of confronting the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that crises are never gender neutral. On the contrary, crises exacerbate existing gender-based inequalities and create new ones, and put vulnerable populations in an even more precarious situation. Women and girls pay a heavy toll in situations of crisis, since gender-based discrimination and violence increase, holding back gender equality and our societies in general.

However, we take confidence knowing that our collective commitment to the Sustainable Development Goal of gender equality has led to greater attention to and respect for equal rights among men and women, and women's and girls' empowerment. We also believe that the current generation of parliamentarians is more diverse and is therefore showing even more support for the advancement of gender equality and inclusivity.

We affirm that gender equality is essential in confronting pandemics, conflicts, economic recessions and climate change. From the perspective of the economy, gender equality means equal pay, financial inclusion, universal social protection, valuing care work, and protection from discrimination and violence. Equality in the economy also means that more women participate in the work force, leading to greater prosperity and productivity. Gender equality in politics allows us to respond better to crises by taking into account the diverse and intersectional needs of all, thereby delivering more effective results. From the perspective of peace-building and diplomacy, women's leadership is a driving force, as peace agreements signed by female delegates lead to more durable peace. From the perspective of political decision-making, women leaders have been proven to drive more stringent climate

action. In short, when responding to global challenges, it is more likely that no one is left behind if women participate and lead.

We note, as seen through our General Debate, that there are advancements in parliaments from around the world from which we can draw inspiration. In Kigali, at this 145th Assembly, we acknowledged that gender equality is a right for everyone, everywhere and agreed to make a step change for gender equality and to make our parliaments gender-sensitive for a more resilient and peaceful world.

To step up our action for gender equality, we will look to address profound structural gender inequalities that are driving vulnerabilities instead of building resilience. To do so, we commit to take the five following key actions:

1. Achieve parity in political decision-making, including by using electoral gender quotas and ensuring that other electoral quotas always have a gender parity provision.
2. Ensure our law-making, law-enforcement, and budgeting are gender-responsive across all policy fields.
3. Put vulnerable populations at the centre of our parliamentary functions of legislation, oversight, resource allocation and representation.
4. End gender-based discrimination, violence and other harmful practices, and ensure access to sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice for all women and girls.
5. Advance equality in caring responsibilities among men and women and set an example in our societies by undertaking 50% of the daily care work for our families, regardless of whether we are male or female MPs.

Driving structural transformational change for gender equality will require us to continue and enhance our action to build gender-sensitive parliaments. It is only by

doing so that our parliaments will meet the needs of the modern era, respond to crises and remain resilient. Gender-insensitive parliaments cannot redress inequalities and vulnerabilities. In contrast, gender-sensitive parliaments, that are by definition more representative and have power, structures and capacities to promote gender equality, are better able to reverse gender inequalities and address vulnerabilities.

In the last decade, we have witnessed progress in gender equality in parliaments, following the roadmap set out by the *Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments*:

- In parliamentary participation and leadership, the proportion of women in parliament has jumped from 20 to 26%. Several parliaments have internal quotas to ensure leadership positions and membership of committees are shared equally among men and women. At present, 23% of Speakers or Presiding Officers of parliament are women.
- Looking at parliamentary infrastructure, 50% of all parliaments currently have a women's caucus and 68% of all parliaments have a women's or gender equality committee.
- In terms of gender-responsive internal policies, 23% of all parliaments now have a gender equality policy in their parliamentary administration.
- There are more family-friendly provisions and measures to facilitate work-life balance such as remote or proxy voting and childcare arrangements.
- The existence, forms and prevalence of violence against women in parliament are now widely acknowledged, and

some parliaments have started taking action to eliminate such violence, including by using the IPU *Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament*.

Gender-sensitive parliaments are needed now more than ever against a backdrop of ever more urgent political, economic, social and ecological crises, which are themselves gendered. Facing the reality of the climate crisis, this next chapter of gender-sensitive parliaments must also be green, both in how parliaments undertake their daily work, and in parliamentary outputs and outcomes. New technologies and their rapid development have also opened up new opportunities which must be exploited when they support rather than harm gender equality.

Transformative institutional change towards a gender-sensitive parliament does not just happen by itself. It requires political will, leadership, self-questioning, strategic planning, reform, resources and accountability.

Our commitment to gender-sensitive parliaments today must be more ambitious than it was 10 years ago. Looking forward, we pledge the following 10 actions to make many more parliaments gender-sensitive over the next 10 years:

1. Assess the level of gender-sensitivity of our parliaments twice to ensure progress in-between the two milestones.
2. Create a gender-balanced steering committee to follow up on the findings and recommendations of the gender sensitivity assessments that has the power, resources, and mandate to lead reforms.
3. Recognize the individual differences among women and

prioritize the inclusion of underrepresented groups such as young women, indigenous women and women with disabilities.

4. Create, resource and empower a gender equality committee or similar body which can effectively hold government and parliament to account, and a women's caucus that can effectively support women MPs in their parliamentary work.
5. Adopt formal rules to establish gender-balance across all parliamentary leadership positions, ensure the parity of participation of women and men across all parliamentary activities, and prohibit single-sex committees and groups.
6. Engage men MPs and other men active in the parliamentary ecosystem to act as allies for gender equality, including by co-sponsoring bills, initiatives and actions with women MPs, across the legislative, oversight and representation fields.
7. Ensure that gender sensitivity, gender equality and gender mainstreaming and budgeting guide all of a parliament's work at all times.
8. Conduct gender audits of legislative, budgetary and oversight actions but also of initiatives aiming to introduce or reform, inter alia, parliamentary technology, measures to make parliaments greener, initiatives to engage citizens' in the work of parliament, and implement the respective recommendations from such audits.
9. Become caring parliaments by providing fully for the caring

needs of men and women MPs and staff as they carry out their parliamentary duties.

10. Introduce stringent policies with the objective of zero tolerance of violence against women, sexual harassment and bullying in parliament, and establish independent and efficient grievance procedures with strong sanctions.”

#### **4. MEETINGS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES AND STATUTORY BODIES**

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

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held sittings on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2022. During the sittings, the Committee held two panel sessions, one being on *“The impact of war and atrocity on civilian population”* and the other on *“War and climate change as triggers of global food insecurity”*. During the first panel session, the panel deliberated on the impact of war on women, children, and especially child soldiers, the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas, and the question of compliance with international humanitarian law.

The Committee appreciated that war was not only a military affair, and that the impacts of war are not only felt by the combatants. Conflicts of all kind had devastating consequences for civilians, where more often than note, women and children were the worst affected. In a number of cases, civilians suffered the breaches of international humanitarian law ranging from war crimes to crimes against humanity and even genocide. Delegates who took to the floor made reference to current conflicts which had consequences on an international level and attempted to identify parliamentary action

towards their peaceful resolution, which included sanctions on aggressors, approval aid packages to innocent victims, establishment of peace missions for mediation purposes at both regional and international level and the use of forums such as the IPU to highlight such conflicts.

The second panel was a moderated round table panel that provided an overview of the catastrophic food situation worldwide and identified the factors that led to the state of food deficiency.

The Committee observed that one of the SDGs is to end hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition by 2030. It was observed that while centuries of progress in agricultural and trading technologies could have put the world on track to achieving the goal, the prevailing situation indicated that the world had milestones left at attaining this goal. Conflicts had caused food shortages, while national calamities and the global climate crisis had severely disrupted economic activities that threatened the means of survival of local, regional and global populations. On the other hand, the climate crisis was also contributing to reduced crop yields in certain regions of the world, affecting harvests and increasing the price volatility of agricultural products.

The panel recommended actions that parliamentarians could take to build resilient and empowered communities. In the debate that ensued, delegates that took the floor proposed recommendations for greater parliamentary involvement in resolving the issue. That included channeling of adequate resources towards sustainable agricultural production, improvement in research and development of more drought resistant crops and empowerment of local communities as first line mitigating actors.

The other item on the agenda of the Committee was a debate on the subject of *“Cyberattacks and cybercrimes: The new risks to global security.”* The Committee noted that the

world is in a situation of largescale strife. At the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, no government could foresee the scale and suffering brought by the effects thereof and to protect their citizens, governments made the decision to subject people to restrictive measures and lockdowns as mitigating measures against its spread. As a result, there was an increase in interconnections to networks and in the use of ICT in work and everyday lives.

Given this situation, rapid and enhanced digitization had opened up riskier spaces where cybercriminals had increased their scope of action using new cyberattack systems.

The Committee noted that cyberattacks could be used to wage war, targeting critical infrastructures and putting societies at risk. They could also take the form of massive disinformation and propaganda campaigns. The panel explained the relevance, importance and risks associated with increased utilization of cyberspace in day-to-day human activities and presented practices on building resilience. In the debate that ensued, members addressed the role of parliamentarians in protecting citizens and critical infrastructure in that new paradigm.

The Kenya delegation highlighted the efforts that had been made in Kenya to combat cybercrime. Of note, the delegation highlighted legislative interventions on cyber-security. Some key Acts of Parliament with provisions on cyber-security included the Data Protection Act No. 24 of 2019; the Computer Misuse and Cyber Crimes Act No. 5 of 2018 and the Kenya Information and Communication Act No. 2 of 1998, which had been amended severally to cater for emerging cyber security threats, The delegation noted that the laws had created a stronger legal regime that enhanced the country's capacity to forestall of handle



At the conclusion of the Committee's sittings, Committee held elections to fill vacancies on the Bureau. It also adopted its work plan for the next Assembly including a resolution that the Committee dedicate all the time allocated to the drafting of the resolution on the theme "*Cyberattacks and cybercrimes: The new risks to global security*" for consideration at the next Assembly.

#### **4.2 STANDING COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The Standing Committee held its sittings on 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October. During the first sitting, the Committee debated the subject item of the next resolution, "*Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests.*" In the debate that ensued after introduction of the theme by Hon. C. Hoffmann, the co-Rapporteur, Members stressing the importance of securing budgets for forest protection initiatives, rejuvenating forests by establishing planting cycles, raising awareness of the importance of forests for green development and disaster reduction, and engagement of local communities in decision-making processes in forest protection.

The Committee also deliberated on preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2022, during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) in in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. In a briefing session on the event, the Committee placed emphasis on climate finance, and loss and damage mitigation strategies.

At its second sitting, the Committee held a panel discussion on "*Reconnecting local communities with a local sustainable inclusive economy to achieve the targets of SDG 8.*" Mr. J. Chirove, an expert of the International Labour Organization (ILO), highlighted the need to empower micro, small and middle enterprises, translate economic growth into jobs for local people,

acknowledge the importance of local communities for national economies, and target vulnerable groups such as women, youth and low-income earners.

In the concluding session of the sitting, the Committee adopted a work plan for the next Assembly. It was unanimously resolved that all Committee sittings would be dedicated to the drafting of the resolution for the next Assembly.

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

The Standing Committee held sittings on 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2022. The Committee considered the draft resolution on the theme: *“Parliamentary impetus to local and regional development of countries with high levels of international migration and to stopping all forms, including state-sponsored, of human-trafficking and human rights abuses.”* Subjecting the resolution to examination, the Committee considered 91 amendments submitted and at its final sitting on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, the amended draft resolution was adopted by consensus.

During the Bureau meeting, the Committee considered proposals for the future work programme. Three proposals for the subject item of the Committee’s next resolution were considered as submitted by Australia, France and Morocco, and following unanimous resolution, the Committee approved the theme *“Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm”* submitted by Australia, as the subject item for the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

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

The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs held a meeting on 14 October, 2022, which consisted of two panel discussions UN officials. The first panel focused on the UN response to growing hunger and worsening famine around the world. The Committee

noted that hunger and starvation were worsening around the world because of growing conflict and insecurity. There were weather extremes from run-away climate change and economic shocks, including the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic; and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine which had contributed to this gloomy outlook.

Almost 202 million people, were facing acute food-insecurity. The World Food Programme (WFP) noted that 20% of Rwandans were currently food insecure, with the most vulnerable populations spending 65% of their income on food each month. The Committee observed that Rwanda had started a school feeding programme supported by the WFP, which linked together farmers around schools who benefitted from purchases made in the framework of the programme and, overall, helped enhance resilience and increase nutrition quality.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was collaborating with the Rwandan government to enhance food production and develop export markets. The Committee thereafter undertook a field visit to one of the WFP projects in Rwanda, to familiarize itself with the programme. The Committee engaged with the panel to better understand how they could work to avoid the current devastating world situation and support their citizens in having better food security.

The second panel focused on the UN field presence in support of national development. The case of Rwanda helped parliamentarians gain a better understanding of the reality of the UN-advocated closer relationship between UN field operations led by the Resident Coordinator and the host country, including its Parliament, to build more accountability and “buy-in”. The Committee appreciated the UN’s work in helping Rwanda realize its Vision 2050 with policy support and building national capacity. The Committee, drawing

from the experience advocated for a strong role for parliaments on matters of food for maximum benefits to the people.

The Kenya Delegation was honoured to have Hon. Rebecca Tonkei, MP, elected to the Bureau of the Standing Committee on UN Affairs to replace Hon. Sophia Noor to complete the term which will end in April, 2023.

#### **4.5 COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW**

On 12<sup>th</sup> October, the Committee received a report on recent developments with regard to specific cases and refugee crisis situations which it had been monitoring over the past few years. These include developments with regard to situations in Afghanistan, Myanmar and Ukraine. The Committee noted with concern the escalating cases of civil strife in these countries and the growing numbers of men and women, young boys and girls, having to flee to escape from violence and persecution.

The Committee strongly urged for an end to the hostilities and for international humanitarian law to be respected and observed, for humanitarian assistance to be provided in support of refugees and internally displaced persons. The Committee further called on parliaments to discuss support for such efforts as there was a strong need to build multilateral cooperation to respond to the dire situations by people in not only in the aforementioned countries, but indeed in other parts of the world. The Committee noted that refugees from Afghanistan and Myanmar, as well as in the Horn of Africa and other parts of the world needed urgent help and assistance.

The Committee highlighted the need for support to be provided to countries that host large populations of refugees in order to better address the crisis. On the matter of statelessness, the Committee expressed its support to parliaments mobilizing to end this crisis. It was observed that the UNHCR campaign to end statelessness by 2024 was nearing its last phase, and agreed that a meeting with UNHCR was necessary to develop a workplan for the years to come.

The Committee also deliberated on cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), including preparations for a webinar for parliamentarians on the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions in 2022 to mark the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Protocols. The Committee further resolved to pursue awareness-raising efforts in parliaments on issues related to international humanitarian law and the Ottawa Convention.

The Kenya Delegation was honoured to have one of its Members, Hon. John Kiarie, MP, elected to the position of Chairperson of the Committee for a period of one year, and a possible renewable term of one year.

#### **4.6 FORUM OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS**

Meetings of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians were held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2022. During the meetings, Members assessed their contribution to the work of the Assembly by examining the draft resolution from the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights on *“Parliamentary impetus to local and regional development of countries with high levels of international migration and to stopping all forms, including state-sponsored, of human-trafficking and human rights abuses.”*

The Forum observed with concern that when fleeing for their lives, women and girls faced specific discrimination and gender-based violence. They were also under serious risk of being trafficked, in particular for sexual exploitation purposes. The Forum observed that legislative, law enforcement and educational measures in the fight against human trafficking must address the demand for exploitative goods and services; the trafficking of orphans; and the use of technology and online platforms as drivers of trafficking. The Forum advocated for migrant women and girls to be treated as victims and receive the support they needed regardless of their migratory status in a host country.

In the debate that ensued, Members recommended a human-rights based and gender-sensitive approach to migration; addressing the root causes of the trafficking of women and girls, including for sexual exploitation, and combating human trafficking with a focus on the rights and needs of survivors. This resulted in the formulation of amendments to the draft resolution for consideration by the Standing Committee.

In subsequent sessions, the Forum held a panel session in the context of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the IPU's Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments, focused on solutions to create a culture of equality and zero-tolerance to all forms of sexism in parliaments. The Forum observed that a parliament where a climate of violence against women prevails is bound to fail in its duty to be representative, efficient and effective, to the needs of its people. The debate highlighted policies and mechanisms for the prevention of and response to sexism and gender-based violence in parliamentary space, and provided an opportunity to have an exchange of experiences on these initiatives.

The Kenya Delegation informed the forum of the establishment of a harassment policy that sought to address cases of female harassment in Parliament by both Members and parliamentary officers. Further, the appointment of women in leadership roles in both the

Senate and the National Assembly – at House Leadership and secretariat levels – served as a key milestone to highlight and uplifting the plight of women not only in the East African region but in Africa and the developing world as a whole. The delegation also stated that Standing Orders relating to appointment of members to serve in leadership and committees have progressively been reviewed in order to make it imperative to have women in committee and leadership positions. The Kenya delegation also highlighted the contribution of Kenya Women Parliamentarians Association (KeWOPA) and the Kenya Women Senators Association (KeWOSA) in strengthening participation of women legislators in legislative work in Kenya. The delegation observed that, courtesy of concerted efforts on women in politics, the number of women parliamentarians in Kenya was on the increase, rising from eighteen (18) in the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament (2013 to 2017) to twenty one (21) in the case of the Senate and, for the National Assembly, from sixty nine (69) in the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament to eight two (82) in the 13<sup>th</sup> Parliament (current).

In addition, the delegation shared the need to finance women legislators to be able to tackle societal challenges facing women in the community, thereby making them vulnerable to abuse. They cited the case of National Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) that is exclusively created to facilitate women representatives in the National Assembly elected from the forty seven (47) counties in Kenya.

During the forum, Members called for action to combat discrimination against women and an end to all forms of sexual violence that still prevail in parliaments. Among the measures recommended were training to prevent sexism and harassment in parliament; establishment of independent reporting and complaint mechanisms; and the setting up of spaces where victims can get information and support. To this end, the Kenya delegation highlighted various legislations that had been enacted by Parliament to combat discrimination against women. Notable among these included; the Matrimonial Properties

Act (2013); the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act; the Children Act (2001); the Sexual Offences Act (2006); the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act (2010); the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011); and the Marriage Act (2014).

At the Bureau meeting of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, the Kenya Delegation was honoured to have Sen. Catherine M. Mumma, MP, elected as a Member of the Bureau, to replace Sen. Susan Kihika, who was no longer serving as a Member of Parliament, to complete the term which will end in April 2023.

#### **4.7 FORUM OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS**

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians was held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and brought together a total of 125 participants, including 84 parliamentarians (26 women and 58 men) from 62 countries, as well as representatives from various international organizations.

While addressing the Forum, the IPU President and the Secretary General expressed their support for the cause of young parliamentarians in the IPU. They emphasized the role of young parliamentarians as champions of innovation in parliaments and observed that young Members were in a privileged position to help usher in greater use of digital technologies and promotion of inclusivity in parliamentary work.

The Forum received reports on key developments on youth participation in member parliaments that included the creation of youth caucuses, youth wings of political parties, empowerment opportunities for young parliamentarians, and events held both online and in person to better channel youth dimensions in parliamentary discourse.



In order to exchange good practices in advancing implementation of the I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament Campaign, the Forum held a question and answer session on mentoring and empowering young aspirants to political office. The members of the Forum shared experiences and good practices on how to engage youth in parliament through both formal and informal means. The Rwandan experience of reserving two seats in parliament for one man and one woman elected through the national youth council was lauded as a model to emulate to increase the participation of the youth in national legislatures. Other examples included creation of youth parliaments to channel youth perspectives into parliamentary proceedings.

It was observed that in many countries, political parties played an important role in engaging the youth, and initiatives such as creation of youth wings, holding of special elections for young people among other programmes played a critical role in increasing the participation of the youth in parliaments. Training initiatives such as mock parliaments were also highlighted. The obstacle of funding, especially for young people hoping to finance election efforts, was deliberated as a major challenge to be overcome youth representation in parliaments.

Speaking at the forum, the Kenya delegation, which was represented by Hon. John Kiarie and Hon. Naisula Lesuuda, informed the forum that Kenya had recorded an increase in the number of young Members in Parliament, with the youngest Member being twenty four (24) years old. The delegation cited constitutional imperative that have made it mandatory for youth to be represented in Parliament. Articles 90, 97 and 98 of the Constitution reserves seats for nomination of one (1) youth in the National Assembly and two (2) in the Senate.

The delegation informed the forum of the Young Parliamentarians Forum (KYPA) has been very instrumental in supporting young parliamentarians to maximize their potential in youth representation. While decrying the expensive nature of elective politics as the major hindrance to youth involvement in politics, the Kenyan delegation urged the need to regulate election campaign financing review nomination regulations in order to compel political parties to afford fair ground for youth in politics.

## **5. THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

The Governing Council is the administrative and policy-making organ of the IPU and its meetings are held during the Assemblies. The Council is made up of three Members from each Member Parliament, provided that the delegation includes both men and women; while single-sex delegations are limited to one Member.

The Council decides on admitting, readmitting and suspending members and on general activities and operations of the organization including election of the President, the Secretary General and the mandate and composition of committees, working groups and ad hoc bodies. It also oversees the budget and work programme and sets contribution rates for each member parliament and observer organizations. The Governing council also determines the location of Assemblies and approves venues and dates of future events.

At meetings held on 12<sup>th</sup> and on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, the Governing Council considered *inter-alia*, the following items on its agenda –

- i. **Policy to prevent harassment, at Assemblies and other IPU events;**

On the recommendation of the Gender Partnership Group and the Executive Committee, the Governing Council approved the policy on harassment to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other events.

**ii. Financial situation of the organization**

The Council received a report on the financial situation of the organization and noted with appreciation that the financial position was healthy and that income, expenses and reserves were on target. However, concern was expressed that six Member Parliaments - Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela - were in arrears for three years and therefore liable for suspension of their membership pursuant to Article 5.3 of the Statutes. A further three Members (Central African Republic, Haiti and Vanuatu) were in arrears for two full years and therefore subject to participation and voting sanctions. The Council however noted that Secretary General was making continuous efforts to follow up with all the Members subject to payment sanctions.

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

***Membership***

The Governing Council deliberated on the question of IPU membership and observer status and took note with appreciation of the progress made by the President and the Secretary General in their efforts to achieve universal membership to the organization. Particular reference was made to non-Member Parliaments in the Caribbean region where it was observed that the Parliaments of Belize and Bahamas would soon be joining the IPU.

However, the Council expressed concern about the current instability in Africa after a series of military coups, especially in West Africa and mandated the Secretary

General to initiate consultation with the Pan African Parliament, Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and SADC Parliamentary Forum, that would enable the IPU to offer assistance at efforts to resolve the conflicts. Further, the Council, while observing the general situation in Armenia and Azerbaijan, mandated the President and the Secretary General to engage with the said parliaments in order to mediate between the two countries at the parliamentary level to promote dialogue with the view of peaceful resolution to the conflict in the region.

### ***Regional Offices***

The Council was apprised of the Executive Committee's deliberations on the question of establishment of IPU regional offices across the world. It was however pointed out that the regional offices would only serve as administrative units that would facilitate implementation of organizational strategy, plans and programme of the IPU and not political organs of the organization. Uruguay and Egypt had offered to host regional offices for the GRULAC and Arab Group regions respectively.

However, a number of delegations expressed concern about the offer proposed by Egypt to represent the Arab Group, even though Egypt was geographically located in Africa. It was recommended that this concern be factored by the Secretary General when consulting with the Egyptian authorities. It was finally agreed that the Secretary General proceeds with the proposal for establishment of regional offices taking into account the general principles for the programme, the requirements for opening and the offers by the aforementioned countries and makes a further report on the matter at the next Governing Council.

iv. **Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine**

The Governing Council received a report from the Chairperson of the Task Force on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2022. The Council observed that in the 144<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly held in Nusa Dua, Indonesia, the emergency item resolution entitled *Peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, respecting international law, the Charter of the United Nations and territorial integrity* was adopted. Among other actions, the resolution called for the establishment of a Task Force to facilitate the role of parliaments in formulating peaceful solutions to the crisis. The Task Force on the war in Ukraine was constituted in April, 2022, with representatives of the IPU geopolitical groups, with Hon. A. R. Al Nuaimi from the United Arab Emirates serving as the President and Hon. P. Katjavivi from Namibia serving as the Vice-President.

The Task Force's Terms of reference was to encourage dialogue between the parliamentarians of the Russian Federation and Ukraine and support diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the conflict that are in keeping with the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law.

The Governing Council noted that the Task Force undertook a mission to Kyiv and Moscow in July, 2022, with the objective to engage in political dialogue with the parliamentary leadership in both countries. The Task Force tried to get a better understanding of the situation and to identify modalities conducive to the cessation of hostilities and a return to diplomacy.

The Task Force held discussions with parliamentary leaders in Ukraine and in the Russian Federation. In both Kyiv and Moscow, the Task Force members met with the UN Country Teams, which provided insight into the situation on the ground

and the challenges that they faced. Both parliaments confirmed their support to the mandate of the IPU Task Force and expressed their readiness to engage in consultations and inter-parliamentary dialogue. The mission showed that IPU's actions are complementary to those of governments and international organizations, opening a channel to express the concerns of the people and contributing to the resolution of the conflict through peaceful means.

During the Assembly, the Council noted that the Task Force held consultations with the delegations of Ukraine and of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. Both sides reconfirmed their commitment to continue to work closely with the Task Force in seeking a peaceful resolution of the war. However, the Governing Council observed that at its meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2023, the Task Force considered the recent developments and deplored the escalation of the situation in the region and called for de-escalation and for the identification of measures for restoration of dialogue.

The Governing Council noted that both parties were urged to identify issues that they would re-establishing a dialogue and in the interim, the Task Force would redouble its efforts in carrying out its mandate. The Governing Council took note of the Task Force's report and encouraged the Task Force to pursue its mission and report at the next Assembly.

**v. Future inter-parliamentary meetings**

The Governing Council approved the list of future meetings and other activities funded by the organization. The Council noted that the 146<sup>th</sup> Assembly was scheduled to take place in March 2023 in Manama, Bahrain. The 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly

was pending confirmation of the offer by the Parliament of Angola, scheduled to be held in October, 2023.

During the Governing Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2022, Kenya delegation was honoured to have the Hon. Millie Grace Odhiambo, CBS, MP elected in absentia as a Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians for a five-year term ending in October 2027. The Committee is a subsidiary body of the Governing Council that is responsible for protecting and defending MPs suffering human right violations in their countries.

#### **6. BILATERAL MEETING WITH THE SERBIAN DELEGATION**

In the course of the proceedings of the 145<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the Parliament of Kenya Delegation received a request from the delegation of the National Assembly of Serbia that the Speaker of the National Assembly of Serbia, Hon. Vladimir Orlic, wished to hold a bilateral meeting with the Kenya Delegation. Subsequently, on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, the two delegations held a meeting. Participants included Members of the two delegations as well as representatives from the Serbian Embassy in Nairobi and the Kenyan High Commission in Rwanda.

At the meeting, it was observed that diplomatic relations between Kenya and Serbia begun in 1963, and over the years, the relationship had matured to the point of Serbia elevating its Kenyan representation to a fully-fledged Embassy with accreditations to Uganda, Seychelles, Somalia and Eritrea. With respect to parliamentary engagement, the two delegations observed that the former Speaker of the National Assembly of Serbia had visited Kenya in 2019. Kenya participated at the 141<sup>st</sup> Assembly of the IPU held in October of the same year, with a delegation led by the then Speaker of the Senate, Rt. Hon. Kenneth Lusaka, EGH. It was noted that in previous Parliaments, there had been a

Kenya-Serbia Parliamentary friendship Group, comprising of Members from Parliaments of both countries.

The two delegations highlighted the need to upscale cooperation at the highest parliamentary level between counterpart parliamentary committees, with special interest in those dealing with foreign relations, defense, agriculture, education, health and culture; cooperation in capacity development for both Members and officers; and exchange experiences in legislative processes and in matters relating to the oversight role of Parliaments.

Deliberations on wider cooperation between the two countries centered the health sector; tertiary education, where Serbia expressed its wish to upscale the same from the current 10 scholarships to Kenya annually; mutual support for the candidature of Serbia to host a Specialized Expo in Belgrade in 2027; and Kenya's candidature to host the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for the period 2023-2026. Other areas of cooperation that were deliberated on were with respect to defense, agriculture, dam construction, urban solutions and the ICT sectors, to which there were huge opportunities for the two countries.

## **7. CONCLUDING SITTING**

At its final sitting the Assembly received a report on the results of the work of the Standing Committees, as well as the *Kigali Declaration* – the outcome of the General Debate *Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world*. The President of the Assembly invited the IPU President to present the *Kigali Declaration*. The President of the IPU highlighted the comprehensive and inclusive nature of the Assembly's General Debate, as well as the key messages that had emerged from it, which were now included in the Declaration. She expressed optimism that the outcome