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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TENTH PARLIAMENT – SECOND SESSION, 2008

**REPORT OF THE IPU, KENYA  
DELEGATION ON THE 119<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF  
THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION HELD IN  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND  
13 – 15 OCTOBER 2008**

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## **1.0 FOREWORD**

This report is a summary of proceedings and resolutions of the 119<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held at the Geneva International Conference Centre in Geneva, Switzerland from Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

In accordance with article 11(1) of the Statutes and Rules of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, you on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Kenya National Assembly Group nominated the following Members to represent our parliament during the 119<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly held at the Geneva International Conference Centre in Geneva, Switzerland from Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

As is our tradition, these Members were drawn from various political parties represented in the Kenya National Assembly. The nomination was also from both genders. The delegation comprised of the following Members:-

1. The Hon. Kenneth Marende, MP – Speaker of the National Assembly
2. The Hon. Clement M. Wambugu, MP – Leader of the delegation
3. The Hon. Washington J. Midiwo, MP and Government Chief Whip
4. The Hon. Peris Chepchumba, MP.
5. The Hon. Abdi Nuh Nassir, MP
6. Mr. James N. Mwangi – Assistant Deputy Clerk & Deputy Director, Legislative Services
7. Ms. Eunice Lumallas – Personal Assistant to the Speaker
8. Ms. Rachel N. Kairu – Clerk Assistant and Secretary to the Delegation

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank you Sir, for according us the opportunity to represent the National Assembly at this important meeting and also join fellow Parliamentarians from all over the world in exchanging views and experiences in an effort to seek solutions to problems that continue to threaten the survival of many nations.

Mr. Speaker Sir, my delegation is particularly grateful for the exposure and invaluable experience gained during the conference.

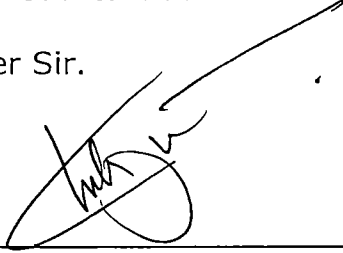
Mr. Speaker Sir, on behalf of the members of my delegation, I wish to submit the report of the 119<sup>th</sup> IPU and related meetings together with the attached resolutions (Appendix) in accordance with the provisions of

Article 8 of the IPU statutes which states:-

**"It is the duty of a National group to submit the resolution of the Union to its respective Parliament, in the most appropriate form, to communicate them to the government, to stimulate their implementation and to inform the Secretariat of the Union as often and fully as possible, particularly in its annual reports as to the steps taken and the results obtained."**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker Sir.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Wambugu', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and includes a long, sweeping stroke that extends upwards and to the right.

**The Hon. Clement M. Wambugu, MP**  
**LEADER OF THE KENYA DELEGATION**

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is the sole international organization that represents the legislative branch of government on a global scale. Established in 1889, currently, the IPU has a membership of over 154 national parliaments; in addition, eight international parliamentary assemblies and organizations are Associate Members.

The Union is the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue and its main mission is to strive for peace and cooperation among peoples of the world and for the firm establishment of representative institutions. The IPU is funded by its Members through annual subscriptions.

The 119<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and its related meetings, which took place between 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2008 at the Geneva International Conference Centre in Geneva, Switzerland was organized and hosted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Assembly, which officially opened its proceedings in the morning of Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2008 at the Geneva International Conference Centre was officially inaugurated by the President of the IPU, Mr. P. F. Casini. He was subsequently elected President of the Assembly, and the Vice-President of the Executive Committee, Mr. A. Radi (Morocco), was elected Vice-President.

The conference was attended by 1,197 (one thousand, one hundred and ninety seven) delegates, Associate Members, observers' representatives of various organs of the United Nations System including UNICEF, UNEP, UNCTAD, UNESCO, ILO, WHO and UNHCR. Others included World Bank, WTO, OPCW, CTBTO, European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA), Common Wealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), African Parliamentary Union (APU), SADC, ICRC, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) among others.

## **3.0 PARTICIPATION**

The Assembly was attended by the following National parliamentary groups from 134 countries:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, 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, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

#### **4.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

The main objective of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is to promote the globalization of democracy and assist Parliamentarians to exercise their shared responsibility for the world in which we live in. The IPU has also become an organization of Parliamentarians who wish to foster, through permanent dialogue, not only universal establishment of human rights and democracy, but also the joint global elimination of undesirable developments, organized crime and international terrorism which national governments are no longer able to counter on their own.

Other objectives of IPU includes among others:

- i) To foster contacts, co-ordination, and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries.
- ii) To contribute to the defence and promotion of human rights an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development.
- iii) To contribute to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.
- iv) To consider issues of international interest and concern and expresses its views on such issues in order to bring about action by National parliaments and parliamentarians.

The IPU Assembly also has over the years served to provide the backdrop for parliamentary diplomacy and on numerous occasions, when relations between the executive branches of government have reached a stalemate, parliamentarians have managed to negotiate a way out of the impasse.

The IPU supports the efforts of the United Nations, whose objectives it shares, and works in close co-operation with it. It 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.

To achieve the above goals, the IPU organizes conferences at which parliamentarians discuss political, economic, social and cultural issues the results of which are included in resolutions and recommendations for implementation by member parliaments.

## **5.0 CONFERENCE TOPICS**

There were three major topics for discussion during the conference and one emergency item which was discussed after resolutions in the Governing Council.

- i) Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: The role of parliaments. (*First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security Subject item at 120<sup>th</sup> Assembly*)
- ii) Climate change, sustainable development models, and renewable energies (*Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade Subject item at 120<sup>th</sup> Assembly*)
- iii) Freedom of expression and the right to information. (*Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights Subject Item at 120<sup>th</sup> Assembly*)

The Emergency Item:

- i) The role of parliaments in containing the global financial crisis and its economic impact, both on developing and developed countries.

## **6.0 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Executive Committee held its 252<sup>nd</sup> session in Geneva on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2008. The President chaired the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October and the Vice-President of the Committee chaired on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

The Executive Committee discussed and made recommendations on agenda items to be addressed by the Governing Council. The matters considered by the Committee are summarized herein below;

- i) Once the IPU Statutes had been amended to allow for membership of the Parliament of Palestine, the Committee was called upon to make a recommendation to the Governing Council on that parliament's request for full membership. Its opinion, recommending the admission of the Parliament of Palestine, stated that the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) was a parliament constituted in conformity with the basic law of the Palestinian Authority and endowed with legislative and oversight functions. The recommendation then noted that the situation in the Palestine territories impeded the functioning of the PLC and that its participation in the work of IPU might therefore be temporarily facilitated by the Palestine National Council (PNC).
- ii) Pursuant to the financial regulations, the Secretary General informed the Executive Committee of transfers he had made between budgetary headings in order to implement additional activities in the work program. The additional costs had all been met by transfers within the total appropriation approved by the Council.
- iii) The Committee heard the customary report on transitional assemblies, welcoming the establishment of the new parliament in Angola. It discussed the question of the role of its six vice-presidents, with suggestions that the responsibilities be shared on a geographical basis, or that each should take care of a different thematic area. It emphasized the importance of ensuring the representation of the organization at times when the President was not able to do so, and decided to resume discussion of the subject in Addis Ababa. The Committee also broached the question of parliamentary networks and asked the Secretary General to prepare a detailed study for their next session. It also discussed applications for observer status from bodies that did not fall within the five categories set forth in the modalities established by the Governing Council, also resolving to revert to the matter at the next Assembly.
- iv) The Committee considered the venues for the 122<sup>nd</sup> and 124<sup>th</sup> Assemblies. It recommended, following a unanimous vote, that the 122<sup>nd</sup> Assembly be held in Thailand, the only potential host whose invitation had already been studied by the Executive Committee following completion of the procedure and received the blessing of the Council. It received a delegation from Venezuela to hear the status of that parliament's invitation, noting that the procedure for the approval of the venue had yet to be completed. Regarding the 124<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the Committee was informed that the Parliament of Canada had maintained its invitation to host this Assembly in 2011. It expressed continuing misgivings about the question of visas being



granted to all participants and decided to resume discussion of the matter at its next session.

- v) The Committee received a report with recommendations for the procedure to be adopted for the appointment of the Secretary General of the organization in 2010. It decided to revert to the matter at its next session.
- vi) The Committee heard the report of the ASGP from its President, Mr. A. Forsberg.
- viii) The annual revisions to the Staff Rules, incorporating the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) with respect to changes in salary scales and allowances, were submitted to the Executive Committee for information. The changes involved cost-of-living adjustments to the salary scales and a reduction in dependency allowances. The Committee also heard a report on staff movements in the Secretariat.

## **7.0 THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

### **i) Election of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

The Governing Council elected Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab (Namibia) as the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for a three-year term ending in October 2011.

### **ii) Membership of the IPU**

The Governing Council approved the request for affiliation of the Parliament of Oman and the requests for reaffiliation of the Parliaments of Comoros and Sierra Leone. The Governing Council also approved the affiliation of the Parliament of Palestine. The delegation of Palestine subsequently made a statement thanking the IPU for having accorded its Parliament the status of full Member and setting out its position on that issue.

The Governing Council took note that the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan had accumulated more than three years' arrears in the payment of its contribution and would therefore automatically be suspended on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009, unless payment was received before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008.

The Governing Council also approved requests for observer status from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) and from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).

### **iii) Cooperation with the United Nations system**

The Governing Council welcomed the biennial Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Cooperation with the IPU, in particular its conclusions and recommendations for future action. All Members were encouraged to work closely with their foreign ministries to garner strong support for an ambitious resolution of the UN General Assembly.

The Council received their latest information on the 2008 joint Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> November at the UN Headquarters in New York, under the chairmanship of the President of the IPU and the President of the UN General Assembly. The hearing will examine the topic *Towards effective peacekeeping and the prevention of conflict: Delivering on our commitments*. All Member parliaments were encouraged to participate actively in the event, as well as in other parliamentary meetings organized in New York during the week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008: a conference on legislative frameworks for human rights and child protection convened by UNICEF with IPU support, and a panel discussion organized by the IPU on a parliamentary fact-finding mission to Tanzania.

The Governing Council was pleased to note that preparations were under way for the parliamentary hearing to be held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008 in Doha, Qatar, on the occasion of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. It endorsed a draft parliamentary message to be delivered at that event.

The Council also took stock of the parliamentary action in support of the MDGs, particularly those related to child and maternal health. The Council heard a presentation by Fr. F. Songane, Director of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, who reported on follow-up action to the Countdown to 2015 Conference, held in Cape Town, in parallel with the 118<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. The IPU would be working closely with the Countdown initiative to support the 68 countries currently not on track to meet the relevant MDGs. It would be preparing case studies featuring good practices adopted by at least six parliaments in framing legislation and ensuring adequate budget allocations, and would present those studies on the occasion of the 120<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Addis Ababa.

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

#### **iv) IPU activities in the field of development**

In the context of consolidation of the reform of the IPU, the Governing Council was informed of recent IPU activities in the field of development and of efforts underway to start transforming them into a more a comprehensive programme of activities. The Council gave its general endorsement to the plans to establish a programme to mobilize parliaments on development issues, with special focus on such issues as the attainment of the MDGs, reduction of child mortality and improvement of maternal health, the fight against HIV/AIDS and other pandemic diseases, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, and promotion of global partnerships for development. Those priorities were duly reflected in the IPU's programme and budget for 2009 as well as the Planned Activities and Requirements for Voluntary Funding 2009-2011.

#### **v) Action by IPU to strengthen democracy and parliamentary institutions**

##### **a) First International Day of Democracy**

The Governing Council took note of a report by the Secretary General on activities undertaken by parliaments and the IPU to celebrate the first International day of Democracy on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008. The Day was proclaimed by the United Nations in November 2007 and coincided with the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the IPU Universal Declaration on Democracy in September 1997.

Some 50 parliaments had reported to the IPU on the activities they had organized. They included, among others, the adoption of resolutions marking the Day, television and radio programmes, 'open days' and special parliamentary sessions. The IPU President had participated in one such session at the Hellenic Parliament. Other activities included the involvement of the public, in particular young people, in parliamentary proceedings and the organization of democracy-related exhibitions. Many of the parliaments had made use of the information that the IPU had placed at their disposal, which included a poster and a leaflet, as well as a redesigned version of the 1997 Universal Declaration on Democracy. Some had translated or intended to translate the material into their national language(s).

At its Geneva Headquarters, the IPU had organized a panel discussion on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008, focusing on the challenges to democracy today. The event was attended by ambassadors, journalists, students and representatives of international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

In addition, the IPU had set up an exhibition of caricatural drawings portraying challenges to democracy. The exhibition had also been on display during the 119<sup>th</sup> Assembly. A special section on the International Day of Democracy was created on the IPU website. The section contained background information, a list of events organized by the IPU and its Member Parliaments, a series of questions and answers entitled '10 things you should know about democracy', a video extract of the above-mentioned panel discussion, and the exhibition of political caricatures.

The Governing Council took note of the activities. They endorsed the appeal by the Secretary General for an increasing number of parliaments to celebrate the Day in the future.

## **b) Promoting and Defending Democracy**

The Council took note of a comprehensive report by the Secretary General on activities carried out recently by the IPU in the area of democracy. The work continued to be inspired by the 1997 Universal Declaration on Democracy and the 2006 handbook on *Parliaments and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice*.

As far as strengthening parliaments was concerned, the IPU continued to give priority to parliaments in post-conflict countries. It had carried out extensive needs assessments of the parliaments in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lao People's Democratic Republic, Sierra Leone and Togo. Those assessments were currently being converted into assistance projects in cooperation with the United Nations and the parliaments concerned.

The IPU's parliamentary strengthening programmes increasingly focused on capacity-building in substantive areas identified in cooperation with the parliaments and less and less on procedure and processes. They were complemented by thematic regional and sub-regional seminars on issues where the IPU had developed specific expertise, such as human rights, gender equality and gender budgeting, reconciliation, security sector reform and sustainable development.

Four specific initiatives had been launched recently. The first sought to facilitate the involvement of parliaments in the least developed countries in the implementation of the 2001 Brussels Programme and Plan of Action, which set out a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy tailored specifically to the needs of the LDCs. The second consisted of the helping a number of French-speaking African parliaments to promote and ensure implementation of major human rights treaties. A third initiative was aimed at assisting English-speaking African parliaments to promote national reconciliation. The fourth project sought to promote a better understanding

of how minorities and indigenous groups were represented in parliaments and on the basis of that knowledge, develop tools for better and more effective representation.

In the area of human rights, the IPU Committee on Human Rights of Parliamentarians was working to protect an ever-growing number of parliamentarians who came under threat merely for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

The IPU, at the request of the Committee, also intended to carry out an in-depth study on freedom of expression and the ability of members of parliament to freely carry out their popular mandate.

The IPU was building a coalition among parliamentary human rights committees and continued to organize yearly meetings for their members to exchange views with human rights specialists. In Sri Lanka, the IPU also facilitated the work of an International Group of Eminent Persons set up to observe the proceedings of the country's National Inquiry Commission, which was investigating a number of alleged human rights violations, including the murder of two parliamentarians.

In the area of promoting gender partnership in politics, the IPU continued to track and analyze the evolution of women in parliaments and government and had published a new edition of the world map on *Women in politics: 2008*. It had carried out research on women in the political arena and had completed a major survey on *Equality in politics: a study of women and men in parliaments*, which had been launched in April 2008.

The IPU also implemented technical assistance activities for women parliamentarians and mobilized them on specific gender issues. It had organized for the second year running a Conference for Women decision-makers from the Gulf Cooperation Council States. The IPU also brought together members of parliamentary committees dealing with gender equality issues. In 2007, the meeting had focused on *Women and Work*.

In its work to promote knowledge and set standards for parliaments and democracy, the IPU had undertaken a thorough review of the *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections which had resulted in several improvements*. The IPU had also upgraded information tools available on its website and the PARLINE database had undergone a major overhaul to make it more user-friendly.

The IPU worked closely with the Global Centre for Parliaments and ICT (jointly established with the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs) to promote parliaments' use of ICT. They had organized a first

Global e-Parliament Conference in Geneva late last year and had published the first ever World e-Parliament Report in early 2008.

In view of the increasing work in the area of democracy, the IPU had continued to expand its funding base through support from a growing number of donors. That would enable it to deepen and expand its activities. Future areas of priority included promoting political dialogue and inclusiveness in post-conflict parliaments.

#### **vi) Recent specialization conferences and meetings**

The Governing Council took note of the results of the;

- i) seminar on the role of parliaments in Central America in reconciliation and democratization processes;
- ii) conference organized by the African Parliamentary Union in cooperation with the IPU on Africa and migration: Challenges, problems and solutions;
- iii) parliamentary briefing on HIV/AIDS;
- iv) stakeholder Forum on The role of national and local stakeholders in contributing to aid quality and effectiveness;
- v) panel discussion on Parliaments, peace building and reconciliation;
- vi) regional Seminar on The role of parliaments in national reconciliation processes in English-speaking Africa;
- vii) Parliamentary briefing at the XVII International AIDS Conference;
- viii) annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO; and
- ix) sub-regional workshop on special measures for women.

#### **vii) Financial situation of the IPU**

The Governing Council received a comprehensive written report on the financial situation of the IPU as at 30 September 2008. The Secretary General projected a substantial operating surplus as a result of savings from weak US dollar and due to the changes in the financial regulations by which contributions from new Members and earnings on Working Capital Fund were recognized as income. A list of Members' arrears as at 10 October 2008 showed five Members with significant arrears and subject to sanctions under the Statutes.

#### **viii) Programme and budget for 2009**

The Council received the budget proposal for 2009 and a summary of planned activities and requirements for 2009-2011. The Secretary General noted that the consolidated budget was results-based and sustainable, in both fiscal and environmental terms. For each area of expenditure the gender effects and the environmental impacts were clearly identified. As in

the previous year, the budget proposed to be carbon-neutral by providing funds to offset carbon emissions.

The Committee expressed support for the budget presentation, which it commended for its transparency and detail. It was noted that the budget included additional funds for parliamentary activities related to development, such as promoting the MDGs and combating HIV/AIDS, more funding for peace activities, including missions of the Committee on Middle East Question, and new funding for security at the second Assembly and for preparations of a Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2010. The proposed increase in assessed contributions was below inflation and in keeping with the longer term commitment to limit fee increases.

All of the speakers noted the continued improvement in the content and visual quality of budget that made it easier to understand. They applauded the targeted increases in spending on gender issues, development issues and peace activities. Several speakers welcomed the expenditure on teleconferencing facilities and called for more efforts to reduce travel. The African group echoed the request for the Executive Committee for measures to facilitate the participation of parliaments that could not afford to join IPU. Members drew attention to past difficulties in fully executing the budget and in particular looked forward to progress in the implementation of a communication strategy for the IPU.

At the end of the debate, the Governing Council approved the 2009 budget, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

#### **ix) IPU Policy on the participation of persons with disabilities**

The Governing Council approved a policy to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the work of the Organization, whether as delegates, as candidates for employment, as employees or as public interlocutors. The policy, which was premised on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, set out objectives to raise awareness and promote inclusion. The IPU undertook to make its meetings accessible, provide public information that could be understood by all, provide barrier-free access to facilities, ensure equal employment opportunities and accommodate disabled employees.

The Governing Council stipulated that the policy should be gradually implemented within a reasonable timeframe and without imposing undue burden, financial or otherwise, on the IPU. The Secretary General would report back on the implementation of the policy.

## **x) Reports of Plenary bodies and Specialized Committees**

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 and the Gender Partnership Group.

## **SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**

### **8.0 DEBATE ON THE EMERGENCY ITEM**

The Hon. Kenneth Marende, MP – Speaker of the National Assembly  
The Hon. Clement M. Wambugu, MP  
The Hon. Washington J. Midiwo, MP  
The Hon. Peris Chepchumba, MP.  
The Hon. Abdi Nuh Nassir, MP

### **THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN CONTAINING THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS AND ITS ECONOMIC IMPACT, BOTH ON DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

The debate on the emergency item took place in the afternoon of Monday, 13 October 2008. It was chaired in turn by the President and by Mr. A. Kozlovskiy (Russian Federation), acting as Vice-President. A total of 30 speakers from 29 parliamentary delegations and one observer took part.

During the debate, speakers who included the Speaker of the Kenya National Assembly, Hon. Kenneth Marende, MP expressed concern about the current crisis and underlined the serious impact it was having on developing and developed countries. They called for greater transparency of financial markets, for regulation of the financial sector so as to prevent future financial crises, for oversight of financial institutions and for central banks and currency control agencies to implement precautionary policies. They also spoke of the need to reduce the social consequences of the financial crisis and called on the IPU to convene an international parliamentary conference as soon as possible to examine the causes and effects of the international financial crisis, so as to identify ways of dealing with its consequences. These and other concerns and initiatives were reflected in the resolution prepared by a drafting committee made up of members of the delegations of Belgium, Egypt, India, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and Venezuela. The drafting committee appointed Mr. B. Apte (India) as its president and rapporteur.



The draft resolution was adopted unanimously by the Assembly on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

***See Appendix 1 for resolutions (overleaf)***

## APPENDIX 1

### THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN CONTAINING THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS AND ITS ECONOMIC IMPACT, BOTH ON DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 119th Assembly  
(Geneva, 15 October 2008)*

The 119th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Considering* the consequences of the international financial crisis and its negative repercussions on the global economy, in particular its adverse effects on developing countries,

*Noting* the recent warning issued by the International Monetary Fund that debt-ridden banks are pushing the global financial system to the brink of meltdown, and that it is the responsibility of the wealthy nations to restore investor confidence,

*Considering* the importance of parliaments' role, in cooperation with national governments, to contain the effects of the global financial crisis that threaten the world's stability, security and development,

*Recognizing* the shared and differentiated responsibility of all countries in dealing with the international economic crisis in order to meet human development needs, eradicate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

*Aware* of the threat that the international economic crisis poses to sustainable development - considered essential for human progress - particularly in the context of the Declaration issued by the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in September 2002,

*Considering* the need to allocate the necessary resources and to ensure the establishment of a stable, fair and secure global economic system,

*Mindful* of the interdependence of the national economies and the global economic system, which requires a holistic approach and strong international cooperation to ensure the optimal use of financial resources and the establishment of strong and accountable financial institutions,

*Recalling* that the report on the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002, considered that international financial stability in particular was crucial for fostering international economic growth,

*Concerned* that the international financial crisis has undermined social stability in many countries around the world and threatens the gains made in democracy and human rights,

1. *Calls on* the Governing Council to organize, as soon as possible, an international parliamentary conference with experts to examine the causes and effects of the international financial crisis on the global economic system and identify ways of dealing with the consequences of this crisis;
2. *Urges* parliamentary committees dealing with financial, economic and trade-related issues to urgently convene meetings to identify the best ways of protecting financial institutions and mitigating the effects of the international financial crisis, until such time as a global strategy to deal with the crisis is found;
3. *Calls on* national parliaments to provide a more efficient proactive regulatory framework for national regulatory bodies with a view to preventing future instability in the major financial markets;
4. *Encourages* implementation of internationally agreed laws and standards on the transparency of financial markets to ensure the clarity of financial transactions, as this would enhance the national and international capacity to assess financial risks;
5. *Calls on* governments to include parliamentarians in their official delegations to conferences, forums and meetings organized to discuss the international financial crisis so that parliamentarians can express their opinions and ideas as the representatives of the people;
6. *Calls for* the necessary national and international measures to oversee financial institutions so as to mitigate the impact of this crisis;
7. *Calls for* action to reduce the potential social consequences of the international financial crisis as they relate to employment prospects, job security, rising prices and poverty, all of which are covered by the United Nations Millennium Declaration;
8. *Calls on* the central banks and currency control agencies to implement precautionary policies, procedures and measures in order to ensure the stability of the financial and banking sectors;
9. *Calls for* greater regulation of the financial sector, with particular attention to inter-bank lending and consumer protection, to prevent future financial crises;

10. *Calls on* all countries to put in place more effective law enforcement measures to deal with financial crime and to cooperate in this field;
11. *Requests* the governments of the leading industrialized States to assume their responsibility for the developing countries by curbing the negative effects of this crisis on their national economies and to make every effort to prepare the ground for the full participation of developing countries in shaping the global economy;
12. *Urges* the governments of developed States to promptly honour their commitments vis-à-vis the developing countries in order to help them resolve their domestic economic problems, eliminate poverty, illiteracy and disease and achieve higher growth rates, as recommended in relevant instruments, in particular the UN Millennium Declaration; and, in this context, *urges* international organizations, within their respective mandates, to contribute to the achievement of the above-mentioned objectives; and
13. *Urges* parliaments to spare no effort in working on ideas and initiatives aimed at promoting a new rules-based financial system that could help to achieve a more just and transparent world economic structure, which in turn could also help to achieve peace and stability.

## **9.0 FIRST STANDING COMMITTEE**

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

The Hon. Clement M. Wambugu, MP

The Hon. Washington J. Midiwo, MP

### **ADVANCING NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT, AND SECURING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS. (FIRST STANDING COMMITTEE SUBJECT ITEM AT 120<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY ON PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY)**

The panel discussion took place in the morning of 14 October 2008. It was chaired by Mr. T. Boa (Cote d'Ivoire), President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security. The co-Rapporteurs, Mr. R. Price (Australia) and Mr. J. Mwiimbu (Zambia), presented their draft report which focused on the current situation, the challenges ahead, and the role and responsibility of parliaments and parliamentarians. Participants also heard keynote presentations from Mr. T. Toth, Executive Secretary of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and Mr. A. Ware, Global Coordinator of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament.

A lively discussion followed, with some 50 legislators from as many parliaments taking the floor. Participants recognized that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were crucial matters, and that their constituencies expected them, as parliamentarians, to play a more active role in overcoming some of the major impediments to the current nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. As one participant remarked, the abolition of nuclear weapons would not only rid the world of one of the greatest threats to its security and survival, but would also open doors to the international collaboration required to solve other key global problems.

Inversely, the point was made that in today's world, marked by dramatic climate change, depleting oil reserves and daunting development challenges, a revival of nuclear energy could not be ruled out. Due to technological advances, making a clear distinction between the development of peaceful nuclear capacity on the one hand and military nuclear capacity on the other was becoming increasingly difficult, and the distinction often became a purely political one. The international community, therefore, needed a clear comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach based on a set of common guidelines, safeguards and verification mechanisms.

The gender dimension of nuclear non-proliferation was also raised, as women and children tended to become weakest link in a brutal economic system where nuclear waste was dumped in poor regions with few or no safeguards in place. That had a devastating impact on the world's most vulnerable populations.

Participants evoked a series of good practices and bold legislation that might inspire other parliaments to take action. Examples included the establishment of nuclear-free zones, the voluntary renouncement of nuclear capacity, pension fund regulations to prevent investments in nuclear activities, and the leading role played by some parliaments in expediting ratification and implementation of major international treaties. Several delegations stated their intention to contribute to the early entry into force of the CTBT, preferably before the next review conference in 2010.

## **10.0 SECOND STANDING COMMITTEE**

### **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, FINANCE AND TRADE**

The Hon. Clement M. Wambugu, MP

The Hon. Abdi Nuh Nassir, MP

### **CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MODELS, AND RENEWABLE ENERGIES (SECOND STANDING COMMITTEE SUBJECT ITEM AT 120<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, FINANCE AND TRADE)**

The panel discussion took place in the afternoon of 14<sup>th</sup> October 2008, with Mr. P. Martin-Lalande (France), President of the Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade in the Chair. The panel provided an opportunity for IPU Members to deepen their understanding of the subject item to be debated at the 120<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

In addition to the two co-Rapporteurs, Mr. H. J. Fuchtel (Germany) and Mr. Mr A. Lins (Brazil), who were to prepare a report and a draft resolution on the agenda item for the next Assembly, the panel included two experts, Mr. C. Frei, Senior Director, Energy Industries and Strategy, World Economic Forum, and Mr. C. Nuttall, Director, Centre for Innovative Partnerships, UNDP.

The four panelists' introductory statements by the panelists were followed by a lively exchange of views, with a total of 38 delegates taking the floor. While agreeing on the pressing need for concerted global action to mitigate the effects of climate change, delegates offered widely differing views on what sources of energy could offer the best solution in terms of reducing the carbon footprint of human activity. The controversy surrounding the use of nuclear energy and biofuels as alternatives to fossil fuel energy production drew particular attention.

It was noted that parliaments bore their share of responsibility for preserving the planet's natural resources and safeguarding ecological sustainability in the sense of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The challenge could be met only if industrialized countries, established a global development partnership and worked together to eradicate poverty and hunger. During the debate, delegates proposed a number of additions to the texts of the draft reports prepared by the co-Rapporteurs.

## **11.0 THIRD STANDING COMMITTEE**

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

The Hon. Kenneth Marende, MP – Speaker of the National Assembly  
The Hon. Peris Chepchumba, MP.

#### **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION (THIRD STANDING COMMITTEE SUBJECT ITEM AT 120<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY)**

The panel discussion took place in the morning of 14<sup>th</sup> October 2008. It was chaired by Mr. D. Canepa (Uruguay), President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights. The co-Rapporteurs, Mr. A. Dismore (United Kingdom) and Mr. P. Rashtrapal (India), replacing Mr. K. Malaisamy, informed participants of progress made in the preparation of their report and draft resolution.

They highlighted the main issues addressed in the draft report and called on the participants to make inputs in order to enrich the final report and inform the draft resolution under preparation. Participants also heard keynote presentations from Ms. A. Callamard, Executive Director of ARTICLE 19, a human rights organization. Some 37 delegates also took the floor to address those issues.

Participants stressed the importance of freedom of expression to democracy. While all citizens needed to enjoy this right, they should do so responsibly. Freedom of expression should be exercised with due regard for other people's rights and reputation. Furthermore, tolerance and respect for religious and cultural beliefs of diverse segments of the population should be encouraged.

Freedom of expression required a strong and independent media that was able to express the diverse views of society. Press censorship was inimical to democracy. Rather, the press should adopt self-regulatory mechanisms and codes of conduct that prevented abuse. State authorities should also refrain from curtailing media freedom in the name of fighting terrorism or invoking emergency measures.

Discussions focused on the need for State-controlled media to implement the necessary transformation to become a full-fledged public service tool in the interest of all. Plurality and diversity of media ownership was also highlighted as essential to freedom of expression.

Participants stressed that access to information was a fundamental right of all citizens and that State institutions were the custodians of information on



behalf of the people. It should be mandatory for them to provide such information to enable citizens to make informed choices. Efforts should be made to limit the circumstances under which information could be withheld, for instance, in cases of State secrecy.

Parliaments and their members had an important role to play to ensure transparency of their internal processes but also to promote and protect citizens' right of access to information. They should adopt and oversee implementation of an appropriate legislative framework. Parliaments were also called on to work towards the removal of other barriers to access, for instance, by combating illiteracy and promoting new means of delivering information to public, including the internet. Citizens should be able to access information in an equitable fashion and every effort should be made to avoid a situation where impediments to access aggravated socio-economic inequalities, especially in respect of women, who are often the victims of stereotyping.

## **12.0 MEETING OF COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS**

The Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians met on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2008. The sitting was chaired by Ms. P. Cayetano (Philippines), President of the Committee. The session served to follow up on the previous Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and to prepare the work of the forthcoming Meeting. The Coordinating Committee also discussed women's contribution to the work of the 119<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

The Committee was briefed on the work and recommendations of the Gender Partnership Group by one of its members, Ms. Z. Drif Bitat (Algeria). It noted that close to 30 per cent of delegates at the Geneva Assembly were women, and underlined that this was not an improvement over the previous Geneva Assembly in 2007. It called on delegations to pursue their efforts. It applauded the fact that the budget for 2009 included detailed information on gender-specific allocations.

Follow-up by women parliamentarians on the meetings held in Cape Town was also discussed. Committee members reported on recent developments in their respective countries, in the field of women and the media, trafficking of women and women in politics. Many members also reported on follow-up to the survey *Equality in Politics: A Survey of Women and Men in Parliaments*. In particular the Parliament of Mexico was thanked for having translated the publication into Spanish.

The Committee went on to discuss its contribution to the 119<sup>th</sup> Assembly. It discussed the three themes of the Assembly's panel discussions, highlighting aspects of each topic's gender dimension, which the respective rapporteurs might wish to take into account.

Preparations for the fifteenth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians were also discussed. It was decided that women would debate agenda item 5, of the 120<sup>th</sup> Assembly on *Climate change, sustainable development models, and renewable energies*. It was also agreed that part of the Meeting's afternoon session would be dedicated to a dialogue between men and women on the role of women in ensuring financial stability and contributing to economic development, in particular as it related to the current financial climate, which posed a threat to women's livelihoods and the attainment of the MDGs.

Following a presentation by the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Committee proposed that the panel at the 120<sup>th</sup> Assembly should consider the question of *Adolescent girls: the girls left behind?*

The Committee was briefed on the IPU's upcoming activities related to gender issues. It discussed follow-up of the Panel on Child Survival (MDG 4) and Maternal Health (MDG 5). The Committee members committed themselves to following up on action at the national level, to raising the issue in their respective parliaments and to mobilizing parliaments in their region. The Committee also discussed the 'Say No to Violence against Women' campaign orchestrated by UNIFEM, which sought to collect one million signatures in support of its cause. The effort would contribute to the UN Secretary-General's Campaign to End Violence Against Women. All Committee members signed up to the UNIFEM campaign, and called on IPU members to do so in their respective parliaments. Lastly, the Committee renewed its support for the iKNOW Politics initiative.

On 14 October 2008, the Coordinating Committee organized a meeting between women parliamentarians and the two candidates to the presidency of the IPU. Each candidate was received separately for a thirty-minute exchange with the women parliaments.

### **13.0 IPU CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

#### 1. 120<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and related meetings

**Venue:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Date:** April 2009

- Topics:**
- i) Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: The role of parliaments.  
(First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
  - ii) Climate change, sustainable development models, and renewable energies  
(Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade)
  - iii) Freedom of expression and the right to information.  
(Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)

#### 2. 121<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly and related meetings

**Venue:** IPU Headquarters, Geneva

**Date:** October 2008

3. 122<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly and related meetings

**Venue:** Bangkok, Thailand

**Date:** 2010