



UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Constitutional & Parliamentary Information

*Half-yearly Review of the Association
of Secretaries General of Parliaments*

Welcome and Presentation of the Parliamentary System in Rwanda
(Mr Sosthène Ciyatire, Rwanda)

Parliamentary Research and Studies: An initiative of the Federal Parliament
(Dr Bharat Raj Gautam, Nepal)

Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa
(Ms Penelope Tyawa, South Africa)

Renovation of the Dutch Parliament
(Dr Remco Nehmelman, Netherlands)

Resilience in the face of crisis (humanitarian, environmental, health)
(Mr Ahmed Manna, Egypt)

Welcoming new Members
(Dr Beyom Malo Adrien, Chad)

The ability of parliaments in facing various crises
(Mr Mahmoud Etman, Egypt)

Questionnaire to create a best practice guide for 'Digital Parliaments'
(Ms Penelope Tyawa, South Africa)

Challenges and opportunities for the digital transformation of parliaments: the case of Argentina, with special reference to artificial intelligence technologies
(Juan Manuel Cheppi, Argentina)

Assisting the transition, offering support for MPs who lose or give up their seats
(General Debate)

Recent developments from the Centre for Innovation in Parliaments
(Mr Andy Richardson, IPU)

Implementing flexible codes of conduct and etiquette for staff and members of parliaments
(Mr Abdulla Almasri Fadel, Libya)

Code of conduct and ethics for Members of Parliament and staff: raising standards and performance
(Mr Pramod C. Mody, India)

The implementation of a code of conduct and ethics for staff and Members of parliaments
(Mr Mehmet Ali Kumbozoğlu, Türkiye)

The role of the Secretary General in the budget of Parliament (adoption, spending and scrutiny)
(General Debate)

ASSOCIATION DES SECRETAIRES
GENERAUX DES PARLEMENTS

UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE



ASSOCIATION OF SECRETARIES-
GENERAL OF PARLIAMENTS

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

MINUTES OF THE AUTUMN SESSION

KIGALI (RWANDA)

12-14 OCTOBER 2022

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Aims

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, whose international Statute is outlined in a Headquarters Agreement drawn up with the Swiss federal authorities, is the only world-wide organisation of Parliaments.

The aim of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is to promote personal contacts between members of all Parliaments and to unite them in common action to secure and maintain the full participation of their respective States in the firm establishment and development of representative institutions and in the advancement of the work of international peace and cooperation, particularly by supporting the objectives of the United Nations.

In pursuance of this objective, the Union makes known its views on all international problems suitable for settlement by parliamentary action and puts forward suggestions for the development of parliamentary assemblies so as to improve the working of those institutions and increase their prestige.

Membership of the Union

Please refer to IPU site (<http://www.ipu.org>).

Structure

The organs of the Union are:

1. The Inter-Parliamentary Conference, which meets twice a year;
2. The Inter-Parliamentary Council, composed of two members of each affiliated Group;
3. The Executive Committee, composed of twelve members elected by the Conference, as well as of the Council President acting as *ex officio* President;
4. Secretariat of the Union, which is the international secretariat of the Organisation, the headquarters being located at:

Inter-Parliamentary Union
5, chemin du Pommier
Case postale 330
CH-1218 Le Grand Saconnex
Genève (Suisse)

Official Publication

The Union's official organ is the *Inter-Parliamentary Bulletin*, which appears quarterly in both English and French. The publication is indispensable in keeping posted on the activities of the Organisation. Subscription can be placed with the Union's secretariat in Geneva.

ASSOCIATION OF SECRETARIES GENERAL OF PARLIAMENTS

Minutes of the Autumn Session 2022

**Kigali
12-14 October 2022**

List of attendance

MEMBERS PRESENT

NAME	COUNTRY
Mr Juan Manuel CHEPPI	Argentina
Mr Vahan NARIBEKYAN	Armenia
Mrs Barbara DITHAPO	Botswana
Mr SRUN Dara	Cambodia
Mr Charles ROBERT	Canada
Mr Ghislain Junior MORDJIM	Central African Republic
Dr Malo Adrien BEYOM	Chad
Mr Aboubacar Sidiki DIOMANDE	Côte d'Ivoire
Ms Jana VOHRALÍKOVÁ	Czech Republic
Mr Ahmed MANNA	Egypt
Mr Mahmoud ETMAN	Egypt
Mr Antero HABICHT	Estonia
Mrs Jeanette EMBERSON	Fiji
Ms Maija-Leena PAAVOLA	Finland
Mr Eric TAVERNIER	France

Dr Silke ALBIN	Germany
Mr Cyril NSIAH	Ghana
Mr Souleymane TOURÉ	Guinea
Mr Sherlock E. ISAACS	Guyana, Co-operative Republic of
Mrs Ragna ÁRNADÓTTIR	Iceland
Mr P.C. MODY	India
Mr Sadeq Jumaa HAMEED	Iraq
Mr Ali Mohammad GHOLIHA	Iran
Mr Jeremiah M. NYEGENYE	Kenya
Mr Abdulla ALMASRI	Libya
Mr Calvin RANDRIAMAHAFANJARY	Madagascar
Mrs Fiona KALEMBA	Malawi
Mr Modibo SIDIBE	Mali
Mrs Lydia KANDETU	Namibia
Dr Bharat Raj GAUTAM	Nepal
Dr Remco NEHMELMAN	Netherlands
Mr Khalid AL SAADI	Oman
Mr Ahmed Mohammed AL NADABI	Oman
Mr Mohammad Qasim SAMAD KHAN	Pakistan
Ms Agnieszka KACZMARSKA	Poland
Mr Adam NIEMCZEWSKI	Poland
Mr Ahmad AL FADALA	Qatar
Mr Amadou THIMBO	Senegal

Mr Srdjan SMILJANIĆ	Serbia
Ms Penelope TYAWA	South Africa
Mr Makuc Makuc Ngong AKOT	South Sudan
Mr Dhammika DASANAYAKE	Sri Lanka
Mr Philippe SCHWAB	Switzerland
Mrs Nenelewa Joyce MWAHAMBI	Tanzania (United Republic of)
Mr Adelino A. DE JESUS	Timor Leste
Mr Efoe Mawunyigan KINI	Togo
Mr Mehmet Ali KUMBUZOĞLU	Türkiye
Mr Adolf MWESIGE KASAIJA	Uganda
Mr Paul GAMUSI WABWIRE	Uganda
Mrs Afra ALBASTI	United Arab Emirates
Dr José Pedro MONTERO	Uruguay
Mr Roy NGULUBE	Zambia

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Said MOKADEM	Maghreb Consultative Council
Mr John MUTEKA	East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
Mr Alex OBATRE	East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
Mr John AZUMAH	ECOWAS Parliament

SUBSTITUTES

(for Mr/s)	
Mr Ahcene DJOUAHRA (for Mr Mohamed Drissi DADA)	Algeria

Mr Swapon Kumar BARAL (for Mr K M Abdus SALAM)	Bangladesh
Ms Nathalie DOURNOVO (for Ms Catherine LEROY)	France
Mr Efraim JANE (for Mr Tousy NAMISEB)	Namibia
Ms Maria João COSTA (for Mr Albino de Azevedo SOARES)	Portugal
Ms Ana ÁLVAREZ (for Mr Manuel CAVERO)	Spain
Mr Liam LAURENCE SMYTH (for Dr John BENDER)	United Kingdom
Mr NGUYEN Truong Giang (for Mr CUONG Bui Van)	Vietnam

ALSO PRESENT

Ms Boemo SEKGOMA	SADC
Mr Gali Massa HAROU	Pan African Parliament
Mr Emmanuel TULIKUMANA	Rwanda
Ms HARYANTI	Indonesia
Mr Barnabas BWALYA	Zambia
Ms Agata KARWOWSKA-SOKOWOWSKA	Poland
Ms Aneta SKORUPA WUKAYNISKA	Poland
Mr Charles KADONYA	EALA
Ms Emiliana TUHOYE	EALA

APOLOGIES

Ms Claressa SURTEES	Australia
---------------------	-----------

Mr Rashid BUNAJMA	Bahrain
Mrs Marie HANSEN	Denmark
Mr Torben JENSEN	Denmark
Dr Georg KLEEMANN	Germany
Dr Michael SCHÄFER	Germany
Mr Peter FINNEGAN	Ireland
Mr Dan MARZOUK	Israel
Dr Fabrizio CASTALDI	Italy
Mr Fumitake KOBAYASHI	Japan
M. Najib EL KHADI	Morocco
Mr Mario Ovidiu OPREA	Romania
Mr Gennadiy GOLOV	Russian Federation
Mrs Pornpith PHETCHAREON	Thailand
Ms Steejit TAIPIBOONSUK	Thailand
Mr Simon BURTON	United Kingdom
Dr John BENGER	United Kingdom
Ms Sarah DAVIES	United Kingdom

Table of contents

MINUTES OF THE AUTUMN SESSION	1
List of attendance	4
FIRST SITTING	12
Wednesday 12 October 2022 (morning)	12
1. Opening of the session	12
2. Members	12
3. Executive Committee elections	14
4. Orders of the day	14
5. Official languages	17
6. Collaboration with the IPU	17
7. Welcome from and brief presentation from Mr Sosthène Cyitatre, Clerk of the Rwandan Senate, on the parliamentary system in Rwanda	18
8. Communication from Dr Bharat Raj Gautam, Secretary General of the Federal Parliament of Nepal on ‘Parliamentary Research and Studies: An initiative of the Federal Parliament, Nepal’	19
9. Concluding remarks	23
SECOND SITTING	23
Wednesday 12 October 2022 (afternoon)	23
1. Introductory remarks	23
2. Presentation on recent developments in the IPU	23
3. Communication by Ms Penelope Tyawa, Deputy Secretary General of the Parliament of South Africa, on ‘Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa’, based on the IPU report of the same title’	24
4. Communication by Dr Remco Nehmelman, Secretary General of the Senate of the Netherlands on the renovation of the Dutch Parliament.	31
Theme: The resilience of Parliaments in the face of crisis (humanitarian, environmental, health)	34
5. Communication by Mr Ahmed Manna, Secretary General of the Egyptian House of Representatives on ‘Resilience in the face of crisis (humanitarian, environmental, health)	34
6. Communication by Dr Beyom Malo Adrien, Secretary General of the Transitional Council of Tchad on ‘Welcoming new Members’	37
7. Communication by Mr Mahmoud Etman, Secretary General of the Egyptian Senate on ‘The ability of parliaments in facing various crises’	39
8. Concluding remarks	42
THIRD SITTING	42
Thursday 13 October (morning)	42

1. Introductory remarks	42
2. Members	43
3. Elections	43
4. Orders of the Day	44
5. PRESENTATION: Questionnaire to create a best practice guide for ‘Digital Parliaments’, Ms Penelope Tyawa, Deputy Secretary General of South African Parliament	44
6. Communication: Juan Manuel Cheppi, Secretary General of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies, on ‘Challenges and opportunities for the digital transformation of parliaments: the case of Argentina, with special reference to artificial intelligence technologies’	45
7. General Debate: Assisting the transition, offering support for MPs who lose or give up their seats.	49
8. Concluding remarks	53
FOURTH SITTING	54
Thursday 13 October 2022 (afternoon)	54
1. Introductory remarks	54
2. Andy Richardson gave a presentation on recent developments from the Centre for Innovation in Parliaments	54
Theme: the implementation of a Code of Conduct and Ethics for staff and Members of parliaments	55
3. Communication: Mr Abdulla Almasri Fadel, Secretary General of the Libyan House of Representatives on ‘Implementing flexible codes of conduct and etiquette for staff and members of parliaments’	55
4. Communication by Mr Pramod Mody, Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha of India, on ‘Code of conduct and ethics for Members of Parliament and staff: raising standards and performance’	58
5. Communication by Mr Mehmet Ali Kumbuzoglu, Secretary General of Turkish Parliament on ‘The implementation of a code of conduct and ethics for staff and Members of parliaments’	64
6. Concluding remarks	67
FIFTH SITTING	68
Friday 14 October 2022 (morning)	68
1. Introductory remarks	68
2. Elections to the Executive Committee	68
3. Orders of the Day	69
4. General Debate: The role of the Secretary General in the budget of Parliament (adoption, spending and scrutiny).	69
5. Administrative questions	72
6. Draft agenda for the next meeting in Manama, Bahrain March 2023	73

FIRST SITTING

Wednesday 12 October 2022 (morning)

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, in the Chair

The sitting was opened at 11.10 am

1. Opening of the session

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, opened the session by thanking the Rwandans hosts for organising the visit to the genocide memorial and museum which he found deeply moving. He presented the apologies of Mr Najib El Khadi, President of the Association, who could not attend the session due to the opening of the Moroccan parliament.

He said the meeting represented the first time a Secretary General from a Latin American country would serve as President of the Association, which was both a great honour and great challenge.

He welcomed members of the Association and reminded them to check that their details on the list of members is correct and if not, to approach the secretariat to make any corrections necessary, he further reminded colleagues that the secretariat are at their disposition to answer any questions. He invited members to ask any questions they may have to the secretariat: Elektra, Capucine, Daniel and Elektra.

He recalled that IPU guidance is to wear masks while in the conference centre.

2. Members

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, told the Association that the secretariat had received the following requests for membership which had been put before the Executive Committee and agreed to, as follows:

For membership:

Mr Juan Manuel CHEPPI

Secretary General of the Chamber of
Deputies,
Argentina

Mr Farid HAJIYEV

Chief of Staff of the Milli Majlis, Azerbaijan

Mr Jan DELTOUR

Secretary General of the House of
Representatives, Belgium

Mr Aboubacar Sidiki DIOMANDE	Secretary General of the National Assembly, Côte d'Ivoire
Ms Jana VOHRALÍKOVÁ	Secretary General of the Senate, Czech Republic
Mr Martin PLÍŠEK	Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies, Czech Republic
Mrs Catherine LEROY	Secretary General of the Questure of the National Assembly, France
Dr Michael SCHÄFER	Secretary General of the Bundestag, Germany
Mr Sadeq Jumaa HAMEED	Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Representatives, Iraq
Mr Dan MARZOUK	Secretary General of the Knesset, Israel
Mr Mario Ovidiu OPREA	Secretary General of the Senate, Romania
Mrs Ursula ZORE TAVCAR	Secretary General of the National Assembly, Slovenia
Mr Xolile GEORGE	Secretary to Parliament, South Africa
Mrs Nenelwa Joyce MWIHAMBI	Clerk of the National Assembly, United Republic of Tanzania
Ms Cheryl JOHNSON	Clerk of the House of Representatives, United States of America
Mr Jason SMITH	Parliamentarian of the House of Representatives, United States of America
<i>For associate membership:</i>	
Mr Alex OBATRE	Clerk, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
Mr John Njoroge MUTEKA	Deputy Clerk, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)

The new Members were accepted.

3. Executive Committee elections

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, reminded members that it was possible there would be two elections held during the Kigali session. A post of Vice-President of the Association and 2 posts of ordinary members of the Executive Committee were open to applications.

He announced the deadline for submitting candidate and nomination forms, which could be found on the website or from the secretariat in hard copy.

- The deadline for applying for the post of Vice-President of the Association was 5pm on Wednesday 12 October. If required, the election would take place at 12-noon on Thursday 13 October.
- The deadline for applying for the two posts on the Executive Committee was 5pm on Thursday 13 October. If required, the election would take place at 12-noon on Friday 14 October.

He recalled that it is customary that experienced and active members of the Association stand for election. He also reminded members that women and francophones remain under-represented on the Executive Committee.

He recommended that any member with questions about the election process refer to the note on the website or speak to the ASGP secretariat.

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, emphasized that only members who have paid their subscription fees may vote or stand as candidates for election. Those members with 2 years unpaid fees can have their right to vote suspended by the Executive Committee. Members with 3 years unpaid membership fees can be suspended from the Association. He concluded that any members with fees owed should pay by 5pm that day if to ensure their participation in the elections. Finally, advised any members who was unsure about their membership fees to speak to the secretariat.

He thanked all the members who had regularised their situation and those who always pay on time.

4. Orders of the day

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, recalled that the agenda for the meeting had been circulated to members and was available on the website.

Wednesday 12 October (morning)

8.30 am

Meeting of the Executive Committee

11 am

- Opening of the session
- Orders of the day for the conference
 - New members
- Announcement regarding elections

- Welcome and brief presentation on the parliamentary system in Rwanda, Mr Sosthène Cyatire, Clerk of the Rwandan Senate

Theme: In the news

- Communication by Dr Bharat Raj Gautam, Secretary General of the Federal Parliament of Nepal on 'Parliamentary Research and Studies: An initiative of the Federal Parliament, Nepal'

Wednesday 12 October (afternoon)

2.30 pm

- Presentation on recent developments in the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Communication: Ms Penelope Tyawa, Deputy Secretary General of the Parliament of South Africa, on 'Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa', based on the IPU report of the same title'
- Communication by Dr Remco Nehmelman, Secretary General of the Senate of the Netherlands on 'The renovation of the Dutch Parliament'

Theme: The resilience of Parliaments in the face of crisis (humanitarian, environmental, health)

Feedback from Secretaries General about their experiences and the administrative tools they have used to manage crises in the 21st Century.

- Communication: Mr Ahmed Manna, Secretary General of the Egyptian House of Representatives on 'Resilience in the face of crisis (humanitarian, environmental, health)'
- Communication Dr Beyom Malo Adrien, Secretary General of the Transitional Council of Tchad on 'Welcoming new Members'
- Communication Mr Mahmoud Etman, Secretary General of the Egyptian Senate on 'The ability of the parliaments in facing various crises'

Thursday 13 October (morning)

8.30 am

Meeting of the Executive Committee

10 am

- Presentation Questionnaire to create a best practice guide for 'Digital Parliaments', Ms Penelope Tyawa, Deputy Secretary General of South African Parliament.

- *Communication by Juan Manuel Cheppi, Secretary General of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies, on 'Challenges and opportunities for the digital transformation of parliaments: the case of Argentina, with special reference to artificial intelligence technologies'*

- **General Debate with informal discussion groups : Assisting the transition : offering support when Members of Parliament lose, or give up, their seats**

Moderator: Mr Charles ROBERT, Clerk of the House of Commons of Canada

Themes for informal discussion groups:

- *Systems for financing the retirement of members*
- *Systems for supporting members who give up their seat voluntarily*
- *Systems for supporting members who lose their seat*

Thursday 13 October (afternoon)

2.30 pm

- *Presentation on recent developments from the Centre for Innovation in Parliaments*

Theme: the implementation of a Code of Conduct and Ethics for staff and Members of parliaments

- *Communication: Mr Abdulla Almasri Fadel, Secretary General of the Libyan House of Representatives on 'Implementing flexible codes of conduct and etiquette for staff and members of parliaments'*
- *Communication: Mr Pramod Mody, Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha of India, on 'Code of conduct and ethics for Members of Parliament and staff: raising standards and performance'*
- *Communication: Mr Mehmet Ali Kumbuzoglu, Secretary General of Turkish Parliament on 'The implementation of a code of conduct and ethics for staff and Members of parliaments'*

Friday 14 October (morning)

10.30 am

Presentations by candidates and election for the 2 vacant posts of ordinary member of the Executive Committee

- **General debate: The role of the Secretary General in the budget of Parliament: adoption, spending and scrutiny.**

Moderator: Dr José Pedro Montero, Secretary General of the Senate of Uruguay.

- 1. What is the role of the Secretary General in the adoption of the parliamentary budget?*
- 2. How is parliamentary spending decided? Does the Secretary General have control over spending decisions?*
- 3. To what extent is the Secretary General involved in expenditure control?*

- *Administrative questions*
- *Draft agenda for the next meeting in Spring 2023*

The agenda for the Session was agreed to.

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, first thanked members for volunteering to present the communications and general debates on the agenda for Kigali. Addressing the newer members of the Association, he explained the different options available to members who wish to speak at ASGP conferences.

- Any member of the Association can apply to make a 10-minute presentation, called a communication, on a topic of their choosing. Before the conference, the member must provide written texts of their speaking notes, in Microsoft Word format, translated into both English and French. These written texts are placed on the ASGP website and published in the Constitutional and Parliamentary Review, the formal record of the ASGP's proceedings. Presentation of the communication is followed by question from the floor.
- Members who wish to speak in response to a general debate can do so spontaneously, by raising their hand on the day, or by notifying the moderator in advance. Oral contributions to general debates are limited to 5 minutes. Written contributions to general debates are only published in the Constitutional and Parliamentary Review if they are also presented orally.

He informed the Association that, in the lead up to the Bali and Kigali Conferences, many members had failed to send their written contributions, particularly the French version, before the deadline. He said this is a problem for members needing to translate documents into another language, such as Arabic and Spanish, and for those members wishing to read or print out their papers in advance of the meeting.

He concluded by asking all members to respect the deadlines for submitting forms and written texts for the Bahrain conference and invited members to consider subjects for debate at the spring session, in Bahrain.

5. Official languages

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, said that interpretation for the session would be provided in English and French, the two official languages of the Association. Interpretation would also be provided in Arabic, thanks to the generosity of the Arab Association of Secretaries General of Parliament.

6. Collaboration with the IPU

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, noted that the ASGP would work together with the IPU during the session; Kareen Jabre would address the ASGP on the recent IPU programme and Andy Richardson would speak about the Centre for Innovation in Parliament.

He also informed members that he has presented the annual report of the ASGP to the Executive Committee of the IPU.

He then invited Mr Sosthène Cyitairé, Clerk of the Rwandan Senate, to speak to ASGP.

7. Welcome from and brief presentation from Mr Sosthène Cyitairé, Clerk of the Rwandan Senate, on the parliamentary system in Rwanda

Mr Sosthène Cyitairé, Clerk of the Rwandan Senate, spoke about the parliamentary system in Rwanda.

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, thanked the member for their presentation and invited questions from the floor.

Mr Philippe Schwab, Switzerland asked for clarification regarding the specific functions of the administrative organs discussed in his presentation. He also asked whether the ‘body politic’ referred only to the House of Representatives, and not the Senate?

Dr Malo Adrien BEYOM, Tchad, asked for clarification on the procedure for elections under article 54 and whether it was an election in which all candidates campaign throughout the country or limited to specific departments?

Ms Lydia Kandetu, Namibia, asked what procedure or systems Rwanda has used to achieve its 61% representation for women in Parliament. In particular, whether there are policies adopted by Parliament, and whether they have been adopted by all the political parties?

M. Mehmet Ali KUMBUZOĞLU, Türkiye (Enquired first about the two speakers of the Parliament and whether representatives of all the political parties were represented in the government. Secondly, whether the administrative management of parliaments comprised of only the Speaker and assistants or whether representatives of other political parties are part of the management of the parliament?)

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, asked whether members of the Rwandan senate were appointed indirectly, and therefore not by the citizens?

Mr Sosthène Cyitairé, Rwanda responded that elections are not on the level of the specific administrative entities. They have 5 provinces with 30 districts. In the 5 provinces, each district during election time must set forth candidates. There can be 12 candidates elected by the administrative entities, there is a quota for each district, which is based on population figures. Kigali, population 1.2 million, is made up of X districts. In other districts, it is possible to elect 2, 3 or 4 representatives based on population size. This results in 12 senators. The other 8 are appointed by the President of the Republic. There is one senator appointed by higher administration and another represents higher educational institutions of Rwanda. There is a democratic election at each level.

In response to Tchad, he said that every political party has the opportunity to make a list, which should take into account gender considerations, if the first candidate on the list is a man then the second should be a woman. Rwanda therefore has gender parity, which is true for every political party. Once the lists are done, it goes to the electoral board and to the supreme court for validation. Once that is done, the candidates begin campaigning. Rwanda has 11 political parties. In the constitution, Rwandans have committed themselves to a minimum of 30% of women in the lower chamber, out of the 80. Each political party goes into the election.

Mr Amadou Thimbo, Senegal noted that some MPs are elected and some are nominated. He asked about the relative legitimacy of Members who were nominated and sought clarification regarding the composition of the Bureau.

Mr Mehmet Ali KUMBUZOĞLU, Türkiye remarked that all the decision are taken via the Vice-Presidents and President of the Bureau. He asked whether the composition of this small bureau was sufficiently representative to make decisions. He added that in Türkiye, the Assembly has 600 MPs and decisions are taken by a bureau of 21 MPs, by majority decision. The composition of the bureau reflects that of the parliament.

Mr Ahmed Mohammed AL NADABI, Oman commented that deputies in the Chamber of Representatives in Oman are named by the King. He discussed the separation of powers in Oman and asked how the separation between legislature and executive operates in Rwanda.

Mr Sosthène Cyitatre, Rwanda responded to his colleague from Senegal by stating that all Rwandan deputies are elected, not nominated. However, there are several different categories of deputies with different electoral processes. He said that 53 are elected by direct universal suffrage, 24 are elected at district level, 1 by the federation of disabled people and 1 elected by the federation of young people.

In response to Türkiye, he said that each chamber has an office with 1 President and 2 Vice-Presidents. It is the bureau who take all administrative decisions. Where there are questions which also touch legislative matters, it is the bureau of the President who also contributes to the decision making.

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, thanked members for their interesting questions. He announced that, as time was short, Dr Remco Nehmelman's communication would now be deferred until after lunch break.

8. Communication from Dr Bharat Raj Gautam, Secretary General of the Federal Parliament of Nepal on

‘Parliamentary Research and Studies: An initiative of the Federal Parliament, Nepal’

First of all, I would like to thank you all, for providing me an opportunity to share our efforts in the areas of Parliamentary Research and Studies, at the Federal Parliament of Nepal.

The generic functions of the Parliament and the Parliamentary Committees are law making, government formation and oversight of its actions, debates on the issues of public concerns in the plenary, and committee hearing. For making our Parliamentary Functions more evidence and fact based, we have established a permanent unified Parliamentary Research and Studies wing, led by one of our Secretaries, formally in 2008 to facilitate MPs and staffs. Until then, the activities of the Parliamentary research and studies were carried out in fragments through our Library Services, individual Parliamentary Committees, and the administrative unit of the Human Resource and Capacity Building.

The Federal Parliament of Nepal is Bi-cameral- the House of the Representatives, lower house and the National Assembly, upper house. Our Research Wing provides its services to both Houses. We have studied the trend of women representation in the Parliament of Nepal from the past to the present. At present the women representation is 33% in both the Houses, which was below 10% in 1990. The study shows that the women MPs from the ruling and opposition parties stand as a single voice on the issues of women, establishing equal rights on their parental properties, uplifting their representations, and acquiring leadership roles in the Parliament. As a result of their common voices and efforts, 9 Parliamentary Committees out of 16 were chaired by the women MPs in 2017 to 2022.

Women representatives have succeeded to achieve either post of the President or Vice President of the country, Speaker or Deputy Speaker, and the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the Federal Parliament in Nepal that is ensured in the Constitution.

We have also carried out a study on oversight tools of Parliamentary Committees and their field study monitoring. We have studied the cases and process of Impeachments in our National Parliament with some reference of the Global cases. Now, we are planning to conduct research on "Parliamentary objectionable words and languages" which are the most debatable issues in many times in the Parliament, and also in the areas of "Conflict of Interests of the MPs and Officials". We are also planning to study on global practices of Private Member's Bills in the Parliamentary system and how the Parliamentary Research wing can help individual MPs in drafting Private Member Bill. Still to date, our Parliament Secretariat does not assist the MPs to draft a Private Member Bill. Now, we are planning to extend our Research Services to a single MP or MPs for drafting private member bill if they show their interest with their concept areas.

The Federal Parliament of Nepal follows similar to the West-Minster Parliamentary System and more than 90% Bills are introduced by the Government Ministers. Therefore, Parliamentarians may need to work hard to insert their amendments and

defend their amendment proposals. If MPs could not propose fact and evidence-based amendments, their inputs may not be included by replacing governments' proposals on the Bills. Therefore, there is a growing need of Parliamentary Research and Studies that can help the MPs to amend government Bills with credible evidence and facts.

Recently, we have conducted a study on the role of the Lower and the Upper Houses in amending and improving Government Bills. To identify the contributions, we have marked red colour to the Upper House changes, blue colour for the Lower House changes and black colour for the Government drafts. The finding shows that, in recent years, both Houses of the Parliament are active in amending Bills than in the previous years. In addition, the Upper House seems more active in improving and changing government drafts in the Parliamentary process.

Let me share another interesting result. We have studied on implementation status of the Recommendations and Directives given by the 16 Parliamentary Committees which are considered the major means for the oversight functions. We found that only 40% recommendations of the Parliamentary Committees have been implemented and 60% remained unimplemented. In our case, Parliamentary Committees' reports are not mandatory to the government and its agencies. The Committee reports are only considered obligatory for implementation. Dear friends, may we learn what's about the implementation rates of yours' Parliamentary Committees' Reports so far? Are they mandatory or obligatory to the Government?

Dear Fellow Secretary Generals and Representatives, we may share the similar views that the Parliamentary Research and Studies produce knowledge and knowledge is beyond the borders. But the context of the national Parliament may be ours own. Therefore, let's build a collaboration in sharing the findings of research works, let's conduct the joint research on the similar Parliamentary functions for enhancing capacity of the MPs and the Parliamentary Staffs who are mostly engaged to support MPs in law making, in overseeing the functions of the government, in raising the public voices more effectively by the MPs in the plenary and the committees.

To achieve our common research objectives, may we connect our Parliamentary Libraries to each other through e-Library technologies? May we share our insights on how to explore independent social research and how we can be ensured unbiased and credible findings of other research, how can we trust on individual researchers and expert opinion for the Parliamentary Functions? Sometimes, Government Ministries say that they have brought a Bill to the Parliament based on their own study. In this situation, whether or not the Parliament or Committees need to have its own Independent Research on the Bills being tabled and discussed. In the Nepalese case, there is still a long way to go for conducting Research to the each and every Bills tabled in the Parliament and on the oversight issues of the Parliamentary Committees.

Finally, considering great importance of Parliamentary Research and Studies, may I humbly request the IPU, ASGP as Institutions, and Fellow Secretary Generals of the Parliaments for conducting joint researches and sharing the findings with easy access, building viable research networks at the national, bi-nationals, regional, and global level. I think, the collaborative means of research could be beneficial to

our Parliaments and to us as Secretariat actors for the evidence-based Law making, Oversight functions of Parliament and Secretariat services.

Thank you very much, you all, for your kind attentions. Thank you.



Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, thanked the member for their presentation and invited questions from the floor.

Mr Liam Laurence Smyth, UK said that House of Commons briefing papers, created by the House of Commons Library, are published on the internet. When doing so, the House of Commons makes clear that it does not invite correspondence from the public on the contents of the briefings. The advantage of publication is access for the public to the information and the disadvantage is that library colleagues can have their time wasted by members of the public who wish to dispute the contents of carefully researched evidenced based briefings. The briefings are drafted to support the work of Members of Parliament, the public in only an indirect audience.

Ms Penelope Tyawa, South Africa, queried what happens where the Executive rejects the amendments to a Bill, if the President has not assented to that which would have been passed as law in parliament, without the legislators affecting the content of the bill? She said that in South Africa, where laws do not pass constitutional muster, they are pushed back to parliament to be reconsidered.

Mr Safwan Basheer YOUNUS, Iraq, asked whether Mr Gautam would propose a contribution by the House of Representatives, not just at the end of the submission of those laws? He said they also have research studies, but it requires a lot of time from parliamentarians.

Dr Bharat Raj Gautam, Nepal responded that Nepal does not publish the papers but the committees can invite the public to comment. He said that trust is a key issue and 90% of the parliamentary system cannot introduce bills on finance, it must be a government bill. However, they have succeeded in passing around 23 Private Members Bills, which can be introduced and apply pressure to the Government. These bills produce more subjective types of recommendations and there will be more follow-up from committees.

In response to South Africa, he said that if the amendments are more convincing than those of the ruling party they can be incorporated into bills. Members can always table their amendments but only very few are finally incorporated in the Bill. Members have to really defend their amendments to get them inserted. There is only 5 sitting hours in which each house can table amendments. Whereas in the committees that develop legislation, there is more time to debate and discuss the issues and amendments.

9. Concluding remarks

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President thanked members for their contributions and reminded them to return to the room at 2.30pm for the afternoon session.

He closed the sitting.

The sitting ended at 12.45pm

SECOND SITTING

Wednesday 12 October 2022 (afternoon)

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, in the Chair

The sitting was opened at 2.45 pm

1. Introductory remarks

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, opened the sitting and welcomed members back into the room.

He informed members that the Rwandan Senate had invited the ASGP to attend a lunch at the hotel on Friday. Members wishing to attend should return the registration form. He also informed members there would be a group photo at 12.45 on Friday afternoon, after the close of the session.

He set out the items on the agenda for the afternoon, starting with a presentation from Kareen Jabre on the work of the IPU. The communication from Dr Remco Nehmelman, delayed from this morning, would be taken as the third item on the afternoon agenda.

2. Presentation on recent developments in the IPU

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, welcomed Ms Kareen Jabre and invited her to update members on recent developments in the IPU.

Ms Kareen Jabre, IPU provided an update on recent developments at the IPU. She commenced by showing Members a diagram setting out the new IPU strategy for 2022-2026 which would focus on climate change, democracy and youth participation, peace and security, sustainable development for all. She informed members about the IPU work carried out in the last 9 months, including

- 36 national support activities in 16 countries to build capacity

- 45 regional and global events to mobilise and leverage parliamentary action and facilitate learning
- More than 10 publications and tools

She then spoke about work to accelerate the IPU's digital transformation with significant increases on IPU's digital platforms: ipu.org, parline and YouTube (over 500,000 unique visitors).

Another priority was encouraging more engagement and accountability, by creating a database with over 16,000 contacts. Up from 12,000 in March and an IPU newsletter which enjoys a healthy 30% open rate, well above market averages.

A third goal was increasing influence and visibility and she confirmed that there have been big hikes in social media metrics for the number of followers, a 61% increase on Instagram, a 14% increase on Twitter, 61% increase on LinkedIn and 9% increase on Facebook. The IPU were also pleased to be receiving widespread media coverage in top-tier media outlets (Forbes, BBC, EFE...) for their events.

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, thanked Ms Jabre for her excellent presentation. There were no questions from the floor.

3. Communication by Ms Penelope Tyawa, Deputy Secretary General of the Parliament of South Africa, on 'Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa', based on the IPU report of the same title'

Ms Penelope Tyawa, South Africa spoke as follows:

The report based on the regional study conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in partnership with the African Parliamentary Union (APU), focuses on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa.

Violence against women in politics and in parliament

The focus is all acts of violence directed against women in politics or in parliament because of their gender to discourage them from engaging in political activities and exercising their human rights, as well as to influence, restrict, or prevent their individual or collective participation in political life.

Normative framework that commits States and parliaments

- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

- ILO Violence and Harassment Convention in the World of Work (No. 190), 2019
- Report on violence against women in politics by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, 2018
- UN General Assembly resolution Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: sexual harassment, 2018

IPU Studies

1. First international survey conducted by the IPU in 2016
2. First regional study conducted by the IPU: in parliaments in Europe in 2018

The purpose of the studies is to bring light to the scourge, to have data, to enrich knowledge available. To take into account the women of parliaments. To raise awareness and encourage parliaments to address the problem.

The second regional study in parliaments in Africa is based on confidential interviews conducted with:

- 224 women from 50 African countries
- 137 women parliamentarians
- 87 female members of parliamentary staff

Findings of the study

1. Psychological violence: includes all gestures, acts, words writings and images that harm the psychological integrity of a person or group of people and that have the effect of weakening and injuring them psychologically, but also of subjugating and controlling them.
2. Sexist behaviour or remarks: any behaviour or remarks directed against a person because of their gender that have the purpose or effect of demeaning them and their dignity.
3. 80% of respondents have experienced psychological violence:
 - 67% have been subject to sexist remarks
 - 46% have been the target of sexist attacks online
 - 42% have received death threats, rape threats, threats of beating
 - 39% have faced intimidation
4. Sexual, physical and economic violence
 - Sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct carried out for sexual purposes, such as physical contact and advances, remarks with sexual connotations, or requests for sexual acts, the purpose or effect of which is to violate the dignity of a person, in particular when such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
 - Sextortion or demand for sexual favours: a situation where one person abuses his or her authority to sexually exploit another and obtain sexual favours in exchange for a benefit that he or she is empowered to withhold or confer.

- Economic violence: uses economic barriers and deprivation as a means of control, most often by destroying a person's property or putting in jeopardy their livelihood as a form of intimidation.

- 39% have experienced sexual violence:
 - o 40% have been sexually harassed
 - o 9% have been affected by sextortion (requests for sexual favours)
 - o 23% have experienced physical violence
 - o 29% have been exposed to economic violence

Comparison with global and European data

- Percentages of psychological violence against women parliamentarians are similar across the 3 studies
- The level of physical and economic violence uncovered by the African study is markedly similar to the global study
- The level of sexual violence against women parliamentarians in Africa is considerably higher than in Europe and in the world

Perpetrators of violence

- Male parliamentary colleagues are the primary perpetrators
- Male colleagues from political parties opposing that of the respondent are in first place followed closely by male colleagues from the same party

Furthermore:

- 44% of online sexist attacks can be attributed to members of the public or to anonymous people
- 30% of acts of intimidation are perpetrated by members of the public, particularly in the run up to elections
- 52% of threats are made by citizens, militant groups, terrorist groups and, above all, by anonymous people

Places where women parliamentarians experience violence

- Parliaments as workplaces are directly concerned:
 - o 83% of acts of sexual harassment
 - o 78% of sexist behaviour
 - o 40% of acts of physical violence took place in parliament
- Other places include: electronic communication platforms (internet, social media, messengers), on the ground working in their constituencies and communities as well as in their private life

Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination

Incidents of violence are higher among:

- Women parliamentarians living with disabilities, young women under 40 years of age, unmarried women and women from minority groups.
- Women parliamentarians from the political opposition in their countries.

Those who speak out in support of women's rights and equality between men and women.

Sexism, harassment and violence against female parliamentary staff
Violence and perpetrators

Psychological violence

- 56% of the female parliamentary staff interviewed were the target of sexist remarks
- 38% reported having experienced psychological harassment/bullying within the context of their work in parliament

Sexual violence

- 45% reported sexual harassment at work
- 18% received requests for sexual favours (sextortion)

The perpetrators were parliamentary colleagues and male parliamentarians

Comparison with European data

- The percentages of economic and psychological violence experienced by female parliamentary staff in Africa are considerably higher than in Europe.
- The percentage of sexual violence is slightly higher.
- The percentage of physical violence is similar.

Reporting Violence

Very low level of reporting

- 27% of women parliamentarians and 33% of the female parliamentary staff who had been slapped, pushed or hit reported it
- 7% of women parliamentarians and 13% of the female parliamentary staff who had been sexually harassed reported it
- 12% of the female parliamentary staff who had been subjected to psychological harassment/bullying had reported it to their parliamentary authorities

According to the respondents' testimonies:

"Women are very partisan and don't dare to report violence out of fear of harming their party. They think that violence against Women in politics is part of life." A member of parliament.

"Women are afraid of being abandoned, afraid of being fired, afraid of how others will react." A parliamentary officer.

"Victims are afraid of not being taken seriously. They do not dare to speak out, especially if it is a member of parliament who is harassing them." A parliamentary officer.

Effects of violence

- Undermines the dignity and human rights of women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff and affects their psychological and physical health.
- Perpetuates gender inequality.
- Creates a destabilizing, hostile, degrading, humiliating or abusive work environment.
- Undermines women's participation, visibility and influence in politics.
- Undermines the idea of a representative and inclusive parliament and of a democracy that serves all

Solutions

Internal parliamentary policies to combat gender-based violence

- Clear policies
- Counselling and support units
- Complaints and investigation mechanism
- Sanctions
- Training for all people working in parliament

IPU Guidelines

A tool:

- To support and better equip parliaments in efforts to put an end to sexism and violence against women in their own settings.
- Containing advice and practical information.
- Illustrated with examples given by several parliaments from around the world.
- Developed with inputs from many parliaments and experts.

Examples of measures from African parliaments

- SIERRA LEONE: The gender policy for public servants condemns sexual harassment and cites concrete examples.
- UGANDA: The Human Resource Policy Manual defines, prohibits and sanctions sexual harassment, both inside and outside parliament, including at social events, on business trips, during training sessions or at conferences.
- Mechanisms to receive and investigate complaints of sexual harassment exist in the parliaments of SIERRA LEONE, SOUTH AFRICA, UGANDA and ZAMBIA, with a different procedure depending on whether the person accused is a parliamentarian or a parliamentary official.

Complementary mechanisms

- Increase number of women in parliament, and solidarity among them:
 - Caucuses of women parliamentarians can be places for sharing of experiences, mutual support and solidarity among women parliamentarians, including for finding solutions and drawing attention to gender-based violence in parliaments.
 - Some caucuses open their activities to female parliamentary staff. Separate caucuses are also being developed for female parliamentary staff.
- Engage male parliamentarians. The problem is the business of everyone, men and women.
- Partner with civil society organizations.

Follow-up of the publication of the study:

- In January 2022 the IPU published a News Brief on how African parliaments accepted the IPU's call to amplify the findings of the study and talk about sexism with the following local initiatives: <https://www.ipu.org/news/news-in-brief/2022-01/african-parliaments-talk-openly-about-sexism>

One example, in December 2021, the Parliament of South Africa, represented by the Acting Secretary General, and the Women and Gender Rights Forum (a forum made up of parliamentary staff) jointly organized a webinar for parliamentary staff on combating violence against women. The IPU presented the African study and the guidelines.

More events are planned in 2022 including in the Central African Republic and organized by the African Parliamentary Union.

- A Regional Conference for African parliaments entitled Preventing and Responding to Violence against Women in Politics and in Parliaments will take place on 30 November and 1 December 2022 in Lomé, Togo. The Conference is jointly organized by the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), the African Parliamentary Union (APU) and the National Assembly of Togo.

The Regional Conference in Lomé will be an opportunity for African parliaments to examine in depth how violence against women in politics and in parliaments manifests itself and which issues are at stake, both in Africa and across the world. It will be a platform for identifying legislative, regulatory and policy solutions that parliaments and parliamentarians can adopt and implement to improve women's political participation, and ensure that the national social and political environment, as well as the environment of their own legislative institutions, no longer tolerate any form of gender-based violence.

- In addition, one year after the publication of the IPU and APU study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa, the Conference will allow for an initial assessment of what these parliaments have done to combat this terrible problem. In that regard, delegations taking part will be asked to share insights into how their parliaments have used this study to tackle sexism, harassment and violence against women in their midst and in the world of politics. Delegations will be invited to present initiatives and good practices that their parliaments have implemented on these issues. Challenges and difficulties encountered will also be reflected in the presentations and deliberations.



Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, thanked the member for their presentation, which contained many things for everyone to reflect upon, and invited questions from the floor.

Mrs Maija-Leena PAAVOLA, Finland said that what the presentation shows is that we have a universal problem, the figures differ from country to country, but it is a

problem we must all solve. As Secretaries General, what is our role, how can we improve the situation? The members of parliament are generally willing, but it is hard to know what to do, opinions differ. She asked how we improve the working environment in parliaments, she said she felt parliaments must take a leap, a leap which gets results.

Mr Said MOKADEM, Maghreb Consultative Council, noted the difference between the statistics for Europe and Africa. He then said he felt the main causes of violence against women, is prevention of letting women attain their own political and economic rights and the lack of equality economic opportunities are important for women. He said the main message about sexual harassment and violence is that it is aimed at excluding them from political life.

Mr Efoe Mawunyigan KINI, Togo, said that since the report was published, many efforts have been made and some progress attained. Since 2018, in Togo they have both a President and Prime Minister who are women. He said it is true there is still some resistance to the presence of women in public. On 30 November, Togo will host a conference on the fight against violence against women and girls. What can we do to help? Well, he invited all colleagues to come to Togo to listen to expert solutions for the problem.

Mr Charles Robert, Canada said that in Canada, and many other countries, violence and harassment against women is a criminal act. He asked whether, in any country, parliamentary privilege has been used to defend male colleagues who have treated women badly?

Ms Penelope Tyawa, South Africa said there are policies, gender sensitive guidelines and processes to protect women who report sexual harassment. She that heads of administrations must intervene to ensure everyone has access to tools which prevent exploitation. In response to Togo, she said it is true that many parliaments have policies and guidelines but it is about making sure these documents are consistently implemented to empower and protect women in practice.

She agreed with the remarks of Mr Mokadem, and said that more women are compromised because they earn less than men and the environments in which they live also make exploitation easier, due to lower status of women in households and society. The data shows that in most African parliaments the notion of economic violence is more prevalent and is also speaks to the issue of status in communities.

Responding to Canada, she said it was easy for Members of Parliament to drag out the time for the case of a women's complaint to be dealt with, this led to the exhaustion of the victim, who faces questioning at every point. In South Africa there is a HR process for staff and a committee process for Members. She said that unless you have good protection for women, Members can abuse this system to the detriment of women.

[ASGP sitting suspended until 16.15 for a coffee break]

4. Communication by Dr Remco Nehmelman, Secretary General of the Senate of the Netherlands on the renovation of the Dutch Parliament.

Dr Remco Nehmelman, Netherlands spoke as follows:

Dear colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to meet you all here today. I want to thank the parliament of Rwanda for the excellent organization of this conference. After meetings in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and ZOOM in the past years, it is great to be able to hold this conference now on the African continent.

Dear colleagues,

I would like to share some thoughts regarding the renovation of parliamentary buildings. At this moment, the parliamentary complex of the Netherlands is undergoing a large scale renovation.

The two chambers of the Dutch parliament, the Senate and the House of Representatives, are situated in the city of The Hague in the so called 'Binnenhof complex'. Also the Council of State and the Ministry of General Affairs are situated there. The monumental complex has been the center of Dutch politics for centuries. The plenary hall of the Dutch Senate at the Binnenhof complex is the oldest parliamentary hall in Europe that is still being used as such.

The complex however, which is owned by the Central Government Real Estate Agency, is plagued by a wide variety of technical and structural defects. Large-scale renovation is required to ensure the safety of visitors to the complex and an improvement in the working conditions of those who work there. Also, the renovation is crucial to the longterm maintenance of our cultural heritage.

Due to the renovation, our parliament temporarily moved to another location last year. The Senate is now situated in a former city palace in The Hague, that used to be the home of the Royal Library and the Supreme Court in the past.

Some of you might have experienced a temporary rehousing of your parliament in the past. Those colleagues will probably agree that this is a major and very complex operation. However, after the relocation of the parliament, the real job only has to start: the renovation of the parliamentary complex.

Dear colleagues

I am sharing with you some insights about the renovation of our parliamentary complex and the related governance process, with regard to three topics:

- The conflict between history and future
- The factor time
- The complexity of dealing with different stakeholders

Many of the parliamentary buildings around the world are historic buildings, with

monumental value, as is also the case with the parliamentary complex of the Netherlands. This gives an extra element to the renovation, because the historic character of the buildings raises boundaries with regard to the scope of the renovation due to regulations on the preservation of cultural heritage.

This might provide a conflict with other interests, for example the need to transform our building to a workplace of the future, with modern facilities regarding for example ICT, accessibility and other facilities.

between the sexes. He said spiritual and

Another important factor is time: a large scale renovation takes several years to prepare and to complete. In the case of the Netherlands, the decision to renovate the Binnenhof complex was taken seven years ago in 2015, while the preparation started in 2016. The end of the total renovation is officially foreseen in 2026, which is eleven years after the initial decision.

In this period of time, needs and wishes can change. The plans that were made in 2016, might be totally outdated now. For example, in the mean time we experienced a pandemic, which got us familiar with working from home and increasingly using digital sources. Also, the legislation and standard with regard to security, accessibility changed over the years. And the number of parliamentary staff of the Dutch Senate has increased significantly over the last two years due to several reasons. All this has consequences for the renovation project. In other words: initial plans may need changes during the project, which might also have consequences for the duration and costs of the project.

Thirdly, the renovation of the Dutch parliamentary building brings forward some challenges regarding governance and the involvement of different stakeholders. The Dutch government is the owner of the Binnenhof complex, and pays for the renovation. The renovation is being supervised by the Government Real Estate Agency. However, among the users of the complex are the both chambers of parliament and the Council of State. Furthermore, the municipality of the city of The Hague has also a role to play, as well as the responsible architect. Within the chambers of parliament, it is the politicians that have a say, but also the civil servants under leadership of the Secretary-General.

In other words: the presence of these different stake holders, that all have their own role, their own interests and their own responsibility, makes the project very complex.

It is very important to make sure that roles and responsibilities are not getting mixed up, and that information is being shared with the right players at the right time.

Dear colleagues,

Renovation of parliamentary buildings is a topic that is particularly suited for an organization like ASGP, to discuss related elements, to share experiences and to exchange information with each other. All our parliamentary buildings will need renovation at some moment in time, so it is a topic that many of us will have to deal with during their mandate as secretary general.

I would like to explore whether it would be useful to set up a group of colleagues that recently dealt with a renovation project, are dealing with it at this moment or will have to deal with it in the near future, to share our experiences and learn from each other where possible. We might be able to meet in the margins of the ASGP-sessions. I hope that some colleagues would be interested to join this group, so we could further develop this idea together.

Thank you.



Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, thanked Mr Nehmelman for his presentation and invited questions from the Association.

Mr Mehmet Kumbuzoglu, Türkiye, said that all General Secretaries are interested in this topic because parliaments are often old and historic. The Turkish parliamentary buildings are very much appreciated by the citizens, it is a monumental building of which Turkish people are very proud. When you are renovating you have to preserve historic value, whilst also modernising, and get permission from the commissions that monitor preservation of the historic nature. Where you construct a new building, it has huge impacts on the organisational structure. He asked who decides where people work during a renovation in the Netherlands?

Ms Maria João COSTA, Portugal, said Portugal also has its headquarters in a huge and monumental building. All members would like a computer in their seat, during 2 years of refurbishment the entire plenary held sessions in the senate hall. She said doing 2 years was a huge restructure which meant the costs increased. She said they had faced the same challenges in terms of space for the building. Portugal would be very happy to join the informal group proposed.

Mr Ahcene DJOUAHRA, Algeria, said the Algerians are facing a similar problem: old historic buildings and a lack of space. He asked whether moving out of the parliamentary buildings required a new law or whether it was simply an administrative decision?

Dr Bharat Gautam, Nepal, asked whether the coloured coded areas of the building in the presentation corresponds with the papers in the parliament?

Mr Charles Robert, Canada, said that using new technology they have found problems with the parliament of Ottawa, they are managing the problems by creating a floating parliament which enables it to absorb shocks without damaging the building. This is a good example of using new technology to preserve what is old but it is going to cost several billion dollars.

Mr Gali Massa HAROU, Pan African Parliament, asked for clarification regarding the decision to relocate the plenary, did this require an Act of Parliament?

Dr Remco Nehmelman, Netherlands responded to Türkiye by saying that the Dutch are also very proud of their buildings. It is very complicated as many groups are involved in the decision making – the borough council, the alderman who control renovation and permit decisions. Certain decisions were not granted by the municipality, there was conflict between local government, national government and parliament. He said you have to respect this process in countries with rule of law and democracy. Lots of stakeholders with different interests mean that you have to be careful and clear about who is in charge of each decision. It is very complex. In response to Portugal, he said it was very convenient to have only 1 chamber, the senate went to a former train station and the assembly went to another hall. It was very difficult, the places made available for personnel had to be perfect and live televised streaming also had to be organised.

He further said that in the Netherlands they didn't make a new law. It is a strange situation that the parliament is not the owner of its own building. In the Netherlands it is Ministry of Housing who has ownership. He said the President likes this because he is not responsible for the plan but it is difficult because when Members are not happy it is with decisions of the Minister. With regards to colours of the map, he said orange is the Netherland's national colour but the Minister decided which colours were granted to the stakeholders. In response to Canada, he said he would love to see what Canada is designing, a floating parliament sounds very 'Dutch'.

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, thanked all members for their comments and contributions and announced a short 15-minute break.

***** A small break for 15-minutes *****

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, welcomed members back and reminded them to return the registration form for the lunch on Friday, hosted by the Rwandan Senate.

Theme: The resilience of Parliaments in the face of crisis (humanitarian, environmental, health)

5. Communication by Mr Ahmed Manna, Secretary General of the Egyptian House of Representatives on 'Resilience in the face of crisis (humanitarian, environmental, health)

Mr Ahmed Manna, Secretary General of the Egyptian House of Representatives, spoke as follows:

His Excellency, José Pedro Montero, Vice-President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

Dear Colleagues,

At the outset, let me express my deep pride and appreciation for being among you

in our great forum, which represents an important channel and platform for exchanging views and experiences in order to support the work of our national parliaments to perform their constitutional and political roles with a view to achieving the great interests and hopes of our peoples. Allow me to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the brothers in the Rwandan Parliament for their good reception, organization and hospitality, which clearly contributed to the success of our meetings.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Undoubtedly, our meeting which is held periodically takes place in an exceptional timing that our contemporary world is witnessing, in terms of the multiplicity of atypical and exceptional challenges facing us. Global stability is now at stake as a result of these severe shocks and crises that strike the global system. In such exceptional times, peoples seek parliaments as being their free platforms to protect them and defend their issues against these challenges. This places the task of designing preventive responses to these specific crises on the shoulders of the general secretariats of parliaments, in light of their crucial role in supporting the work of parliaments. That is why our meeting is highly important to exchange visions and experiences in the presence of such wonderful elite of secretaries general of parliaments.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the midst of these unprecedented challenges that strike our world, the General Secretariat of the Egyptian House of Representatives has demonstrated the paramount and vital importance of having a professional administrative body that assists parliaments in performing their work, especially in times of crises and exceptional challenges. In this context, the General Secretariat of the Egyptian House of Representatives dealt with the outbreak of Corona pandemic on two parallel tracks, the first of which was taking a set of urgent and precautionary measures to ensure continuity of work in addition to ensuring the safety of members and employees of the House of Representatives. All the parliament buildings and premises were sterilized, and a medical examination was conducted i.e., measuring body temperature upon entering the parliament, and providing preventive medical tools such as masks and disinfectants. That coincided with the reduction of the workforce by rotation among the employees of the General Secretariat, and the expansion of remote work in addition to providing vaccines and authorized treatment protocols. Meanwhile, the second track was the provision of technical support to the members of the Egyptian House of Representatives in order to help issue a package of important legislations to support the efforts of the Egyptian state in combating this pandemic.

As a result of these disciplined measures on the part of the General Secretariat of the Egyptian House of Representatives, the House maintained its sessions, which created a legislative backing that helped the Egyptian state confront this crisis. Further, the Egyptian state could hold successful elections for the House of Representatives and the Senate, amid these exceptional circumstances, which has preserved the Egyptian democratic path and proved its strength, in the face of this atypical challenge. On the level of environmental crises, you may agree with me that climate change is the biggest existential threat facing the planet. In this context, and in line with the tireless and pioneering efforts of the Egyptian state to confront climate change at the national and international levels, which resulted in hosting the most

prominent and largest event in the world COP27 from 7 to 18 November 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh. The Egyptian House of Representatives and its General Secretariat were not off from facing this existential challenge, that the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives provided technical support in order to issue a package of legislations aiming to transforming into a green economy, preserving the environment and confronting this phenomenon. The House of Representatives, based on its sincere belief in the importance of the close participation of parliamentarians in the upcoming climate summit in Egypt, the Egyptian House of Representatives will host the work of the parliamentary meeting on the sidelines of the COP27 climate summit, as this parliamentary meeting will provide a unique opportunity for parliamentarians to obtain first-hand information on the main issues and approaches of COP27 and to interact with the governmental negotiators directly involved in the decision-making process. The General Secretariat of the Egyptian House of Representatives is currently responsible for organizing this global parliamentary meeting.

In conclusion, we have to strengthen our cooperation to confront such global issues, a matter that is necessitated by the crucial circumstances that the global system is going through. We are obliged to engage into intensive cooperative approaches, constructive sustainable dialogue, and build strong partnerships among us in order to exchange visions and experiences to contribute to building a system of knowledge for our general secretariats, and the development of their institutional capacities, so that the general secretariats of parliaments are transformed into parliamentary houses of expertise, contributing to the development of the performance of parliamentarians in the face of these successive challenges.

Thank you for your good attention.



Dr José Pedro Montero thanked the Member for their remarks and invited questions from the floor.

Mr Charles Robert, Canada, said the topic discussed by Mr Manna raised central questions for all parliaments, whether we are fit for purpose. To some extent, the notion of the paradigm shift, whether we carry on our business is sufficient for the problems we face. In Canada, they have a committee structure which is 150 years old, but does it do the work that needs to be done? Does the direction we are taking to the critical issues we are facing – such as climate change which is an existential crisis. He said they are using the same vehicle to address these problems and wondered if there are there more effective options to tackle the problem?

Brief pause to proceedings due to interpretation problems in the room.

Mr Manna, Egypt replied that in the Egyptian Parliament they have 25 Commissions that deal with many subjects referred to them, or that they propose, which means they can create an alternative solution. Do we need more innovation?

Yes. We also need to think outside of the box and to hold Government to account for its shortcomings. He said Egypt is keen to hold intensive proceedings on any draft law which has urgent solutions.

6. Communication by Dr Beyom Malo Adrien, Secretary General of the Transitional Council of Tchad on 'Welcoming new Members'

Dr Beyom Malo Adrien, Secretary General of the Transitional Council of Tchad, spoke as follows:

I. CONTEXT

- Brutal and tragic death of the Marshal of Chad, IDRIS DEBY ITNO, President of the Republic, Head of State, on 20 April 2021;
- Withdrawal of the President of the National Assembly who was the constitutional successor;
- Establishment by the army of a Transitional Military Council headed by General Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno;
- Suspension of the Constitution;
- Dissolution of the Government and the National Assembly;
- Publication of a Transitional Charter in lieu of a Constitution;
- Establishment of transitional bodies, namely: Executive power (CMT and

Transitional Government) Legislative power (National Transitional Council)
Judicial power (maintaining in place the judicial institutions existing before the transition)

However, while waiting for the establishment of the CNT, the new legislative body of the Transition, the Transitional Charter provides for a provision that keeps the dissolved National Assembly in place until the constitution of this new body. It was only five (5) months after the advent of the transition that the CNT was constituted and that the National Assembly handed over the legislative duties to it. The General Secretariat, which constitutes the institutional memory of the parliament and ensures its continuity, was called upon to make appropriate arrangements to welcome the new parliamentarians. This is what was done.

II. PRELIMINARY ACTIONS

Aware of the important responsibility that falls to it in this transitional phase and faced with a lack of documentation and information in the field of welcoming new parliamentarians, the Secretariat General sought and obtained the support of the IPU. Thus, from 24 to 26 August 2021, the IPU strengthened the capacities of the administrative officials of our parliament through a training session by videoconference led by Mr. Ibrahima Niane, an IPU expert, and Mrs. Laurence Marzal.

The comparative studies in the framework of the reception of new parliamentarians presented to the participants and the related document elaborated by Mr. Ibrahima Niane were of decisive help for us because they deeply inspired us in our work.

After this very successful training, an Administrative Committee in charge of the Reception of New Parliamentarians was set up under the direction of the Secretary General. The main mission assigned to this Administrative Committee is to make arrangements related to:

- Administration;
- Legal issues;
- Protocol;
- Logistics, and;
- Finance.

All this for a successful welcome of the members of the new legislative body. It was also an opportunity for the Secretariat to show the new parliamentarians its ingenuity and know-how in terms of organising events of this scale.

III. DOCUMENT RESEARCH

As mentioned above, the training course organised by the IPU for the Secretariat General's staff enabled them to learn about the practices of other parliaments in terms of welcoming new members. It is this exchange of information that has inspired the Committee in the planning and implementation of its activities.

The comparative study carried out by the IPU expert also served as a background document for the design and implementation of the Committee's activities, although other documents were also consulted, notably:

- The Transitional Charter of the Republic of Chad;
- The revised Constitution of the Republic of Chad of 4 May 2018
- The Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly of the Third Legislature
- The Rules of Procedure of the High Council of the Transition of Chad of 1993;
- The Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly of the Republic of Niger;
- The Rules of Procedure of the National Transitional Council of the Republic of Mali;
- The descriptive and biographical forms of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire

IV. ACTIVITIES PLANNED AND CARRIED OUT

The comparative approach adopted by the Committee enabled it to draw up a checklist of relevant activities to be carried out. These are:

- The set-up of welcoming teams ;
- The development of tools for collecting information about new parliamentarians
- The organisation of a pre-first-day meeting during which the new parliamentarians met with the secretariat teams and produced documents that provide information on their profiles
- The provision of material for the election of the Bureau members;
- The preparation of a draft of the CNT's Rules of Procedure;
- The preparation of a draft resolution defining the rules governing the conduct of the inaugural session;
- Identification of the members of the Seniority Board;
- Organisation of a simulation of the inaugural session;

- Assisting in the direction and conduct of the inaugural session;
- The organisation of guided tours for the benefit of new parliamentarians;
- The organisation of a capacity building seminar for new parliamentarians on themes relating to the role and status of parliamentarians;

CONCLUSION

Thanks to this organisation and to the guided tours organised for them, the National Councillors did not feel out of place and very quickly got used to the hemicycle. Thank you for your kind attention!



Dr José Pedro Montero thanked the Member for their remarks and invited questions from the floor.

7. Communication by Mr Mahmoud Etman, Secretary General of the Egyptian Senate on ‘The ability of the parliaments in facing various crises’

Mr Mahmoud Etman, Secretary General of the Egyptian Senate, spoke as follows:

Your Excellency, José Pedro MONTERO

Vice-President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

Dear distinguished colleagues,

At the beginning of my speech, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to your excellencies, the distinguished president and members of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, which is considered an important platform within the framework of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for consultation and coordination between the secretaries-general of national parliaments and the exchange of legal and technical expertise, thus contributing to Improving the work and performance of national parliaments and achieving more mutual cooperation among them, to fulfil the demands and hopes of our peoples.

Allow me to express great appreciation of the significant role played by the presidency of the Association, represented by His Excellency Dr. Najib El-Khadi, Speaker of the Moroccan House of Representatives, and his assisting team in order to support and develop mechanisms of cooperation and joint work between the general secretariats of national parliaments, so that the Association could achieve its goals and to promote and advance international parliamentary work.

Honourable attendees,

We gather today in light of global conditions that carry with them rapid political and

economic changes, which have obligated legislative assemblies to deal with them with a high degree of efficiency and professionalism. At the forefront of these conditions is the crisis of the Corona pandemic, which has posed a great challenge to world parliaments, and its repercussions still persist.

Parliaments in most countries of the world have been negatively affected by the Corona pandemic, as health restrictions imposed by the World Health Organization as well as local authorities in order to counter the spread of the virus have restricted plenary sessions and committee meetings, reduced members' transportation and meetings with constituencies, as well as traveling to international parliamentary conferences. This resulted in the need to remotely work through virtual meetings.

However, this crisis, like any other crisis, gave parliaments favorable opportunities to enhance their capabilities and develop new tools to deal with crises and emergency conditions. That is why some countries made amendments to allow the parliament to meet remotely or in multiple locations, while other countries made amendments that included reducing the quorum needed to approve legislations and parliamentary procedures or to allow remote voting.

Other parliaments, including the Egyptian parliament, of which the Senate is one of the two chambers, decided to hold its meetings and sessions in presence, while limiting the number of members and employees inside the halls and adhering to precautionary measures imposed by the competent authorities in order to continue its work, including plenary sessions and meetings of specific standing committees, while adhering to the precautionary measures, including sterilizing all buildings and halls, and providing protective masks, disinfectants, vaccines and the necessary treatments for all Senate members and staff.

Distancing between the members was also taken into consideration during plenary sessions and committee meetings, while adhering to safe distances, with the necessary indicative signs. The work force of the General Secretariat has also been reduced as well as the number of working hours. A rotating attendance system has been adopted, taking into consideration the most vulnerable cases of chronic diseases and pregnant women, without prejudice to the performance of the required tasks. The media presence in the halls has been reduced while relying on following up sessions and meetings through live broadcast screens.

Your Excellency,

The Senate had to act early at the beginning of the pandemic in two directions: the first is to continue its legislative and oversight work in light of this pandemic, based on its constitutional responsibilities while ensuring the safety of its members and employees. The second is developing the necessary work mechanisms to confront this pandemic, in light of the state's policy and the measures taken by the government regarding the ways to confront this pandemic and to provide the necessary recommendations to counter it. Thus, the Senate has conducted many discussions on the state's policy in addressing this pandemic, while following and evaluating the measures taken by the government in this regard.

Egypt has also allocated a financial package of 100 billion pounds, which constitutes 2% of GDP; to support the hardest hit sectors, and to open an additional appropriation

in the State's general budget to reduce the negative effects of this pandemic, and to advance production in all economic sectors, in addition to a grant given to irregular employment through two phases, in 6 payments, in the period from April 2020 to March 2021. These measures have contributed to containing the crisis and mitigating its implications on the Egyptian citizen and economy.

Honourable attendees,

The crisis of Corona pandemic has revealed, beyond doubt, the need for digitizing parliaments' work rapidly in order to promote their flexibility and capability of managing updates and crises and to enhance the usage of technological tools in terms of holding virtual sessions, remote voting and electronic archiving of minutes and records. This will lead the parliaments to be more open and transparent and enable them to efficiently perform their functions.

The Egyptian Senate has taken several measures in this regard, especially with the imminent moving to the New Administrative Capital immediately upon completion of the parliament building which is equipped according to the latest technologies and logistics worldwide. Employees have been trained on the latest technological systems, the ways of addressing updates both externally and internally as well as archiving and digitizing all documents in preparation for moving to the New Administrative Capital.

On the other hand, this pandemic has further enhanced collaboration opportunities between parliaments and governments. It has also offered new perspectives to consider coordination mechanisms between national parliaments at the regional and international levels for enhancing joint efforts to confront the repercussions of the pandemic and other crises facing the world nowadays, which require cooperation between parliaments and the concerned associations.

Your Excellency,

The world is facing today several challenges and crises on top of which is the Russian Ukrainian war, and its implications such as the scarcity of food and energy sources, increasing poverty and social marginalization. The phenomena of forced displacement from conflict zones, aggravation of asylum and migration, intensification of organized crimes, environmental challenges and terrorism require wide-scale parliamentary cooperation and the development of suitable approaches to address them.

We need now, more than ever, to activate mechanisms of international work and solidarity for the effective and urgent response to these challenges. Parliamentary diplomacy should play a key role in this regard. ASGP is certainly one of the active platforms in the framework of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for dialogue, joint coordination and exchange of experiences among Secretaries-Generals of national parliaments which would contribute to enhancing these parliaments' capabilities and resilience in coping with current and future crises.

At the end, I would like to thank you all for listening, and I am looking forward to hear your parliaments' experiences in dealing with this crisis as well as other crises. I am confident that our meeting will achieve the desired goals and targets, especially with the distinguished participation of the privileged elite of Secretaries-Generals with

established experience in institutional parliamentary work. I wish you all success and blessings and wish your peoples all prosperity and progress.



Dr José Pedro Montero thanked the Member for their remarks and invited questions from the floor.

8. Concluding remarks

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice President, announced that there had been 1 candidate for the post of Vice-President of the Association. He congratulated Mr Charles Robert on his election by acclimation.

Mr Charles Robert was *appointed to the post of Vice-President* by acclimation.

He recalled that nominations remain open for the two posts of ordinary member of the Executive Committee, deadline 5pm on Thursday 13 October. He invited any members considering applying to speak to him, or other members of the Executive Committee, about what the role entails.

He thanked all members for participating in a full and interesting debate and invited them to return for the next day's session from 10.00am. He closed the sitting.

The sitting ended at 5.15 pm.

THIRD SITTING

Thursday 13 October (morning)

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, in the Chair

The sitting was opened at 10.05am

1. Introductory remarks

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, invited members to take their seats and welcomed them back to the meeting.

He expressed his sadness at hearing of the death of Mrs Marie Joséphine DIALLO, the former Secretary General of Senegal, who was an active and engaging member of our Association

He informed the Association that the Executive Committee had formally approved the draft questionnaire for the project to create a best practice guide for digital parliaments. He confirmed that Ms Tyawa, Deputy Secretary General of the South African parliament, leader of the working group on the project, would present the questionnaire and answer any questions about the project. The draft questionnaire is on the ASGP website.

2. Members

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President asked members to welcome the following new Member of the Association, who had been put before the Executive Committee and agreed to:

Mr Efoe Mawunyigan KINI

Secretary General of the National Assembly of Togo to the Association.

Mr Souleymane TOURÉ

Secretary General of the National Assembly, Guinea

Mr Amadou THIMBO

Secretary General of the National Assembly, Senegal

He noted that new members **Mr Souleymane TOURÉ** of Guinea and **Mr Amadou THIMBO** of Senegal had taken the initiative and introduced themselves to the Association yesterday.

3. Elections

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President offered, Charles Robert, Clerk of the House of Commons in Canada, the opportunity to say a few words following his election by acclamation to the post of Vice-President of the Association.

Mr Charles Robert, Vice-President, spoke as follows:

I am honoured by your decision to nominate me to the role of Vice-President, it is a privilege to have this opportunity to serve the Association. The work we do in the Association strengthens principles of parliamentary democracy, it is important work and I am honoured to be part of, and contribute to, the work as part of the Executive Committee.

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President recalled that the deadline to apply for the two vacant posts on the Executive Committee was 5pm that day. More than two candidates would mean an election would be held the following morning.

4. Orders of the Day

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President confirmed there are no changes to the Orders of the Day.

He invited Ms Tyawa to make her presentation.

5. PRESENTATION: Questionnaire to create a best practice guide for ‘Digital Parliaments’, Ms Penelope Tyawa, Deputy Secretary General of South African Parliament

Ms Penelope Tyawa spoke as follows:

Survey for the guide on digital transformation of parliaments

The objective of this survey is to support the development of a guide on the digital transformation of parliaments based on good practice examples. Your answers to this survey will be used to learn about the current state of digital transformation in parliaments and establish a ‘baseline’ on the strategic governance of ICT. These experiences are a precious source of inspiration for all of us because we live in a constantly evolving digital world.

The purpose of the guide is to capture and share good practices on digital transformation. The guide will be evidence based and, as well as this survey, will use existing data from sources such as the IPU World e-Parliament Report series, the IPU Parline Database and the IPU/UNDP Global Parliamentary Report on public participation in parliament. The guide will also be based on evidence of parliamentary practice and will include examples of actions taken, lessons learnt and recommended good practices.

It is envisaged that the guide will capture the leadership roles that SGs may assume in the digital transformation of their respective parliaments, building blocks that can be offered by parliaments that are more advanced in digital technology, as well as partnerships around common approaches on solutions.

In this context ‘digital transformation’ means the action of applying new digital-based tools and technologies to parliamentary processes and culture in order to transform and improve them, thus making the organisation more efficient and effective, and delivering a more optimised and user-centric service. In this sense, these questions go beyond the provision of basic/core ICT services.

The survey consists of 23 questions. These are grouped around five broad themes:

1. Strategy, governance and management – 7 questions
2. Digital infrastructure – 5 questions
3. Information security – 6 questions
4. Public participation and open data – 4 questions
5. Examples – 1 question

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President thanked the member for their presentation and invited questions from the floor.

Mr Liam Laurence Smyth, UK, said that, between friends, he would find it much easier to copy than write originally. He asked whether good example answers to the questionnaire could be published, to give a sense of what the questionnaire requires?

Ms Penelope Tyawa, South Africa, responded to ask whether the ‘example answers’ should be attached to the questionnaire?

Mr Liam Laurence-Smyth, UK, replied to suggest that the responses be shared on the website and that a reminder be given before the December deadline.

6. Communication: Juan Manuel Cheppi, Secretary General of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies, on ‘Challenges and opportunities for the digital transformation of parliaments: the case of Argentina, with special reference to artificial intelligence technologies’

Mr Juan Manuel Cheppi, Secretary General of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies, spoke as follows:

As of December 2019, when Sergio Massa became the Speaker of the Argentine House of Deputies, position now held by Cecilia Moreau—the first woman in the history of our country to do so—, our goal has been very clear: to initiate an innovation process that leads to the creation of the Congress of the future. The General Secretariat of the Speaker’s Office has been working hard to achieve this aim by means of a variety of projects and tasks. The process of digital transformation, which started as soon as we took office, accelerated and extended due to an unexpected event, the COVID-19 pandemic. In the face of an adverse scenario, we had to adapt, be creative and work out solutions using the available technology tools to keep one of the cornerstones of our Republic, that is, the legislative branch, running.

I speak of “digital transformation” because it works as an umbrella term that covers all the projects we have been carrying out in the different areas of the House to help every employee fulfil their daily tasks, provide access to public information to every citizen and improve overall performance in the legislative sphere. For the almost three-year period we have been in office, we have firmly focused on the optimization of processes and the improvement of management and performance, to which the use of digital tools is essential.

The world is subject to constant changes, which require public institutions to rapidly adapt to emerging demands and implement the ways of managing provided by new technologies. The adoption of flexible methodologies, making decisions with boldness and bonding with the different social sectors are some of the means through which we can achieve institutional objectives in a more efficient, comprehensive and

transparent way. Our House is not alien to the global scenario, which allowed for the development of different digital systems and apps to modernize how we work and interact both internally and externally. In this context, the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the House of Deputies has been, without a doubt, a key point of what we set out to do. Together with a team of scientists from the Argentine National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), we carried out the project “Intelligent Parliament,” the first algorithm to be specifically created and used by a legislative body in Argentina. An AI application that works with the Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) algorithm was designed and used to analyze all the speeches made by the deputies since 2005. This means that the algorithm goes through every discourse, identifies the co-occurrence of words and extracts forty topics without being monitored.

The results are currently available and can be accessed freely through our website. Similarly, together with the International Center for Parliamentary Studies, Research, and Forward-Looking Planning of the Austral University School of Government, the Open Government Institute of the Zeppelin University from Germany and the Hellenic Optical Character Recognition Team—a crowdsourcing initiative led by experts from Greece and other countries—, we carried out the first diagnosis, anticipation and projection applying AI technologies to the Argentine House of Deputies. Using a specifically designed methodology, which had already been implemented by the Greek and German congresses, Argentina was the third country in the world and the first one in Latin America to undergo this thorough analysis aimed at transforming the digital systems used by the Parliament and incorporating AI to the decision-making process and the parliamentary management.

Fostering international cooperation and sharing our findings enables us, in the future, to agree on an agenda jointly created with other parliaments worldwide to increase shared knowledge based on real institutional data. What I have just outlined is only the beginning of a process that needs to consolidate as a State policy: technology and innovation at the service of common good. In fact, I strongly believe that we cannot think of the future of the legislative branch without including AI in the work plan. In addition, I would like to point out a series of events of extreme importance to the Argentine House of Deputies. On the one hand, on 13 May 2020, within the framework of COVID-19 pandemic, we held the first remote sitting in Argentine history and deputies were able to meet from their own provinces. The drafting of protocols ruling virtual sittings and their adoption was agreed by all political blocs. This transformation entailed a great effort made by the House employees and joint work done with ARSAT, Argentina’s leading telecommunications company, including penetration testing and ethical hacking to identify security issues that may arise and, later on, to repair them or improve the system to avoid future attacks.

We have also created a new voting system through which deputies are given a device to log in and cast their votes using their fingerprint. On the other hand, a virtual classroom to host training activities addressing topics related to digital communication and cybersecurity was created. Given that moving forward necessarily involves being inclusive and gender sensitive, this is another challenge we

have taken on. In the context of an unequal society, the emergence of an excluding technological paradigm or, at least, one which reflects the same issues we find offline is to be expected. Thus, it is hardly surprising that men are still those who most probably have access to these developments.

We need to rise up to the challenge and avoid the use of mechanisms that perpetuate patterns of inequality in terms of gender, race and class, which widen the gap between the society we belong to and how we would like it to be. Driven by this desire, we have designed the Gender-Sensitive Strategic Program for Digital Inclusion to put an end to the old practices that perpetuate obsolete behavioural patterns. To conclude, I would like to share with you another historical event: the implementation of the digitalization of over 15 million documents, including parliamentary records containing information from 1854 until 2019. By giving rise to a more efficient way of working, which optimizes access to public information, and sharing it, this event marks a paradigm shift. It also enables using less paper, producing less waste and reducing our carbon footprint. Sustainability must be the beacon leading the way for all technological developments in the field of public management. The protection of the environment and the development of sustainable initiatives are going to be unavoidable issues for the State-led development of modern societies. Thank you very much for giving me the possibility of sharing our contribution to this serious discussion and for remaining open to ideas that may broaden and improve our experience.



Taking up the words of my colleague and Secretary-General of the Argentine House of Deputies, Juan Manuel Cheppi, I agree that several milestones can be identified as part of the digital transformation process we started in 2019. I will explain them in more detail as their analysis may allow us to outline future work lines to make further advances.

Technology and new tools should make decision making easier for us and contribute to the formulation of better public policies. Therefore, we are working to build an agile and inclusive House. In this pursuit of more efficient management, three primary pillars lead the way towards progress undertaken by the Directorate-General of Innovation, Planning and New Technologies. They are innovation, transparency and participation. It is in connection to each of these pillars that I would like to highlight certain milestones in our transformation. Regarding innovation, one of the most relevant events has been the creation of the Laboratory of New Technologies (DipLab), a place where ways of addressing identified needs can be tested; research, encouraged; and training, promoted. In DipLab, we not only test disruptive technologies that could be applied, but also examine their implications for our society, economy and politics in general, and the legislative field in particular. The lab is where the Intelligent Parliament, through which artificial intelligence was introduced in the Argentine House of Deputies, was conceived.

Another milestone is the celebration of the first remote sitting in Argentine history. The coronavirus pandemic forced us to develop a system that allows deputies to work without coming together physically. This eventually led to a new system for members to cast their votes in the chamber. Once the in-person work was resumed and sanitary conditions allowed it, the old voting system, which had not been updated for over ten years, was replaced by one in which deputies log in using their fingerprint to cast their votes.

In this context, the full implementation of the digital signature, a process that started during the previous administration, was also achieved. All deputies and House authorities currently use this technique.

In addition, for the first time in the history of the Argentine House of Deputies, we have started a digitalization process of over 15 million documents, including parliamentary records with information from the period between 1854 and 2019. Five hundred and eighty-five thousand employee files will be digitized and stored in twelve thousand archive boxes, resulting in more than 18 million images. This is equivalent to more than 70 tons of paper converted into digital files.

In terms of transparency, the House live streams committee meetings and recordings are available online so that citizens can watch the debates whenever they wish. In this regard, a platform was created where over 700 presentations delivered by experts and leaders during the discussions held in 2018 and 2020 on the law on access to voluntary termination of pregnancy can be found.

Open data must be available and made public so that those who are interested can access the resource. In this regard, we have co-created spaces to reflect and carry out tasks with public universities, such as the National University of Buenos Aires (UBA) and the National University of San Martín (UNSAM), and have invited them to use the data obtained by the House and analyze it to find ways to improve our functioning and to formulate public policies.

Progress has also been achieved in terms of communication, social media and technology. As we understand that they foster access to public information, we have been working jointly with the Service Office for Deputies to authenticate social media accounts of all deputies and validate official communication channels to access safe and verified content. By means of the platform “Diputados 2.0,” a friendly dashboard that includes all official accounts, users are able to get to know what their representatives speak of and feel safe from possible fake accounts.

The third pillar, participation, is of extreme importance in terms of management. This is why we have focused on improving the Open Legislation Portal, which has been available for almost three years, to increase the amount of visits and the interaction with the deputies for the co-drafting of bills. The portal constitutes a virtual platform where deputies can upload draft bills for citizens to access them and make concrete contributions to the texts. The goal is to create a synergy that leads to more inclusive bills.

This summary only includes some of the advances we have accomplished. We work every day to create the Congress of the future: more open, transparent and inclusive.

Mr Germán TARASEWIEZ General Director of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies



Mr Ahmed MANNA, Egypt asked several questions about the security of remote voting.

Mr Mehmet Ali KUMBUZOĞLU, Türkiye, asked whether the public had access to the public record of parliament?

Mr Pramod Chandra MODY, India, asked whether there was a mobile application for the public?

Dr Bharat Raj GAUTAM, Nepal, asked whether all written records, from both committee and plenary session, were published digitally?

Mr Juan Manuel CHEPPI, Argentina, responded that during the pandemic the system operated via mobile phones of the Deputies, block-chain helps to assure the safety of platform. In response to Türkiye, he said that all activities are broadcast on YouTube, there is no confidential information during the session.

In response to India, he said that citizens can use an application which informs them about the participation of members in committees and visits. The MPs have access to the same information and some additional private information. He confirmed to Mr Gautam that all the information is published.

Mr Sadeq Jumaa HAMEED, Iraq underlined that the measures taken by the Argentine parliament would strengthen administrative and operational functions. He enquired whether the measures had enabled them to improve drafting of legislation?

Mr Juan Manuel CHEPPI, Argentina, explained that university researchers developed the original algorithm and could be called upon to create more tools in future, he said there were more benefits which could be realised via the technology.

7. General Debate: Assisting the transition, offering support for MPs who lose or give up their seats.

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, set out the process for conducting the general debate:

- Charles Robert to introduce the topic in a 10-minute speech.

- The Association then splits into four language-based groups (English, French, Spanish and Arabic) and continue discussions informally, in these groups, for 45 minutes. Each group takes a corner of the plenary room.
- Each group nominates one person to act as rapporteur. This person will be responsible for presenting a summary of their groups' discussion to the main plenary when we all return to this room at 11.45am

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, invited Mr Charles Robert to open the General Debate.

Mr Charles Robert, Vice-President introduced the General Debate and then invited Members to dive into language groups.

Ms Ana Alvarez, Spain spoke on behalf of the Spanish language groups as follows:

In our countries we do not have a bureau where parliamentarians who are leaving can find useful information. In some of the countries, for example Argentina, there is informal support in the political parties but this does not come from the administration. Between the election and the constitution of the new chamber, there is no transition compensation because the mandates start when the new parliament sits for the first time.

However, in Spain, there is compensation provided because the mandate finishes on the day of the election and between the day of election and constitution of a new chamber, parliamentarians do receive a subsidy from parliament. As to logistical issues, in each country it is the bureau which adopts the most important decisions relating parliamentarians during their term of office. There is a problem in Uruguay, Portugal and Argentina, which doesn't exist in Spain, which is the management of diplomatic passports which are difficult to recover after term of office ends. She concluded that it would be good to organise matters in a more formal and strict way for all parliamentarians.

Mr Mahmoud Etman, Egypt, spoke on behalf of the Arabic speaking group as follows:

It is a system we can build on, in the Arab group we have different types of parliamentary support after the mandate ends. In some countries, after it expires, the relationship ends and there is no support. However, even in these countries the MPs preserve some of their rights, for example if they were originally a civil servant they can recover their former position and would receive the same remuneration.

There are other systems in our countries where MPs no longer receive previous profession remuneration and when their mandate expires, they get financial support provided by parliament. In addition, privileges can be kept housing, vehicle, security escorting for 4 years after mandate expires. In summary what is applicable is different in each of the systems. For support and assisting during the mandate, it varies a great deal. Sometimes the salaries are very high.

Mrs Barbara Dithapo, Botswana, spoke on behalf of the English language groups as follows:

Most presentations from various colleagues in the English group were on the payment of pensions and gratuities. In India, benefits included: 1 month housing after losing in election, access to other parliamentary facilities, travel first class for life, medical facilities for members and dependents. For example, in Pakistan there is no pension but they have many facilities such as an official passport for the member and their spouse and access to VIP facilities at the airport.

In Botswana, a gratuity is calculated according to the number of years worked, medical assistance and a funeral package. Tanzania also has a gratuity but medical assurance expires at the end of term.

Speakers often get more benefits which last beyond the term of office, higher on average than benefits for MPs. In Uganda, there is a pension scheme calculated according to number of years worked. In Kenya, they used to have pension but now has abolished it. In Ghana, they also have a gratuity system and medical facilities. The speaker has all utilities paid and facilities, anywhere in the world.

In the East African Legislative Assembly, their members also get gratuities and the speaker gets business class travel to wherever they would like to relocate. Transport of goods is paid for by the Government.

Sri Lanka's MPs has ID cards which give access to the restaurant, the library and gratuities. The Speaker has benefits like medical facilities. Germany also has a system of compensating the negative impacts on superannuation, it is an autonomous system not based on stock markets, it is non-contributory, and pay is awarded according to their age. Once a Member has reached 67, they get the benefits. Annually they have a percentage that is added to the pension.

In Finland there is a law on MPs pensions but it was changed in 2013. Now they get their pension at 65, below 65 there is an adjustment allowance and they also have their own association and fee access to parliamentary facilities.

From the UK, we heard there is a study from Australia on the psychological effect of losing your job or parliamentary seat which might be helpful for us as Secretary General to understand what MPs are going through. The House of Lords Members get a pension for the rest of their life. In Türkiye, sitting members and former members of parliament have almost the same benefits as current MPs. All the expenses for MPs and their families are paid by the Government. They can also use diplomatic passports, all accommodation is paid for by Government and offices in the Assembly with staff are also paid for by parliament. For Turkish MPs, there is no problem with not being elected, often their salaries increase once they are not elected.

Mr Amadou Thimbo, Senegal, spoke on behalf of the French groups as follows:

I am going to present the practices that are in vigour in French speaking parliaments, particularly in West Africa. We have pensions and other indemnifications for MPs. In

Tchad there is a specific fund that is available to deputies so they can be financially accompanied for 3 years after service as an MP, there is also 6-month payment of salary on leaving.

In Guinea, there is a separation bonus at the end of the term and at the beginning of the parliamentary term. In Ivory Coast, MPs receive lifelong pensions from the age of 55 and a bonus on departure. This is a nearly identical system to that of France. In France, there is also financial assistance provided to former MPs to help them find another job. In Rwanda, there is a 6 month period of wages which stops when the ex-MP finds another job. When an MP reaches retirement age there will also be a pension.

In Switzerland, all MPs are members of pension funds, usually on appointment as an MP they have another profession, so when leaving the role that can go back to the other profession and continue to contribute to the pension fund.

This is only available on retirement. There is no bonus at beginning or end for MPs in Switzerland. There is an emergency fund for MPs in difficult straits which is available for 2 years and requires proof that the MP lacks fund and therefore needs assistance.

In Senegal there are training schemes for young parliamentarians, being an MP might be the first job, in Senegal there are MPs who are 25 years old and came straight out of university to the role. There is a subsidy or scholarship offered to do further training.

Mr Charles Robert, Canada, responded to the discussion as follows:

It has been an interesting discussion, I completely ignored the topic of pensions when I made the presentation because our programme is independent of our pensions schemes. The scheme depends on the length of service in the House of Commons, the Canadian Members are entitled to a pension after 6 years of service and can maximize this very well after 15 years of service.

For most of the groups, the focus has been on pensions and additional benefits that accrue to members as they depart. It is interesting to see that some parliaments do include training support but it is not the majority. Medical access and VIP treatment for transport or diplomatic passports seem to be more widespread. Interesting also that the speaker often receives benefits above and beyond the others. From the perspective of the House of Commons in Canada, it is odd that a servant of the House receives benefits above and beyond Members of the House.

In comparison to points raised, the psychological impact and trauma of defeat has not been spoken about. We have come to recognise that mental health is an important component of general health, its treatment underplayed, the Canadian programme intends to tackle that. The life of an MP is often long, hard and unrewarding. Compensation to those who have been defeated in office is compassionate. The debate today has been very helpful in explaining broad range of benefits and services provided to members of parliament on leaving the role.



8. Concluding remarks

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President thanked members for their interesting and varied contributions and applauded the diversity of the interventions. He reminded members that we return at 2.30pm.

He closed the sitting.

The sitting ended at 12.15 pm

FOURTH SITTING

Thursday 13 October 2022 (afternoon)

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, in the Chair

The sitting was opened at 2.40 pm

1. Introductory remarks

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, welcomed everyone back to resume work.

He reminded members that the deadline for putting forward candidacy for the three ordinary members of the Executive Committee was today at 5pm. Any elections would take place tomorrow morning.

He recalled that the Rwandan Senate had invited ASGP Members to lunch followed by an excursion to the Rwandan Parliament.

2. Mr Andy Richardson gave a presentation on recent developments from the Centre for Innovation in Parliaments

Mr Andy Richardson, IPU updated Members on recent developments from the Centre for Innovation in Parliaments.

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President thanked the speaker and invited comments from the floor.

Mr Charles Robert, Canada, commented that that in Canada they had had to look at so many different aspects when it came to digitalisation. Connectivity, the constitution, equipment. This was a revelation and they had not anticipated many of these aspects. He also discussed that the procedure committee had led a study which helped decision-making with regards to digitalisation.

Mr Andy Richardson, IPU responded that he was thrilled to see a procedure committee doing a study as one of recommendation in the Word e report is for committees to take stock of what has changed and where they want to go forward and make an inquiry into this.

Ms Penelope Tyawa, South Africa, asked about the world e-parliament conference and when the next report would be released?

Mr Andy Richardson, IPU responded that it is still an open question, not resolved. From 2008 – 2018 the world e-Parliament Conference was held every 2 years and hosted by different countries (Chile, South Africa etc). During the pandemic, a virtual e-Parliament Conference was held in June 2021 with 650 people online. He said they are currently somewhere between in person and virtual. Virtual is good but he also understands the value of the meeting in person. They will continue with regular small scale virtual events and possibly move to organise an in-person e-parliament conference in 2023 or 2024. They will seek expressions of interest from parliaments wishing to host such an event.

Theme: the implementation of a Code of Conduct and Ethics for staff and Members of parliaments

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President invited Mr Abdulla Almasri Fadel, Secretary General of the Libyan House of Representatives to present the first communication on the theme.

3. Communication: Mr Abdulla Almasri Fadel, Secretary General of the Libyan House of Representatives on ‘Implementing flexible codes of conduct and etiquette for staff and members of parliaments’

Mr Abdulla Almasri Fadel, Secretary General of the Libyan House of Representatives spoke as follows:

The interest in job codes of conduct and ethics comes as one of the entrances to the development of management that leads to homogeneity and ethical compatibility within the administrative apparatus of the organization. The public, high professional values and culture of employees, enhancing adherence to these standards and consolidating the foundations of good practices by educating employees and guiding them towards sound ethics that govern workflow and consistent with applicable laws and regulations, and clarifying their duties and job responsibilities and their role in improving performance. career and enhance credibility at work.

The standards of ethics and behaviour in the parliamentary institution are determined by a set of controls that should be followed during the performance of work to improve the employee’s image in general by establishing the principles of discipline, transparency, integrity, objectivity, efficiency, loyalty to the country and its leadership, effectiveness in the employee’s behavior, and instilling dignity Ethics and disassociation from the areas of suspicion that may undermine the dignity and prestige of the job and enhance accountability around job performance, trust and credibility to provide services with the highest levels of efficiency and quality, and provide a powerful and effective tool for internal self-control to increase respect and appreciation.

- In this regard, we review the summary of the Code of Conduct and Ethics attached to the members of the Libyan House of Representatives, which is implemented in accordance with Law No. 4 of 2014, as it relied on strengthening the values of democracy, citizenship and parliamentary responsibility, as it included many basic principles for the practice of parliamentary work, as well as duties and rules of conduct, the most important of which are:

Preferring the public interest in terms of working for the interest of the country and citizens and prioritizing the public interest over any other interest
Responsibility and commitment towards their decisions, statements and stances before citizens

Honesty and integrity by representing the nation in all honesty and working to renounce violence and incitement

Adherence to the constitution, especially in matters related to attending the council's general sessions, its committees' sessions, and its activities, and adhering to their electoral programs for which they were elected, in a manner that does not contradict the constitution and applicable laws.

On the other hand, the Code of Conduct and Ethics is implemented on the staff of the House of Representatives' office with the aim of consolidating moral values and values of citizenship and respecting job responsibility.

- The Code included many supreme values that ensure the performance of the Bureau's responsibilities and tasks in the legislative institution as the highest authority in the state, the most important of which are: To work for the interest of the country and citizens and to prefer the public interest over any political, regional, tribal, factional or private interests. Independence in terms of not being subject to or subordination to the influence of natural or legal persons, not engaging in political activities, not giving preference to a political group over another or a member of its members, or engaging in political disputes.

- Commitment to every behaviour that enhances professional competence and competence in terms of performing work to the fullest extent, adhering to professional standards and maintaining an appearance that is commensurate with the due respect for the House of Representatives.



Dr Beyom Malo Adrien, Tchad, asked whether the rules he is talking about are in a manual, or included under administrative rules? Is it part of the statutory texts of the parliament?

Mr Souleymane TOURÉ, Guinea, asked if there was a distinction between the implementation for parliamentary administration and the codes of conduct. He remarked it was a similar question to the one before.

Mr Said MOKADEM, Maghreb Consultative Council, asked in the case of violation of the rules, what are the sanctions which would be imposed on the personnel? When it comes to creation of the code, did it include input of all staff members? Thirdly, at the level of the Libyan parliament is there a specific committee that handles issues related to deontology? Finally, who is in charge of ensuring the code of conduct is implemented?

Mr Efoe Mawunyigan KINI, Togo, commenting on Ms Tyawa's presentation from yesterday, said Togo has seen many cases of harassment and asked whether this code of conduct would cover the issues of harassment of women in parliament? Is there a body in charge of protecting MPs from harassment from other MPs?

Mr Mahmoud Etman, Egypt, asked if the code of conduct is law and whether it goes through the rules of procedure and statute? He said staff members in parliaments have to respect the same code of conduct, which is the same as the civil service. He asked how do you make a distinction between MPs and staff with regards to code of conduct?

Mr Abdulla Almasri Fadel, Libya, responding to Tchad, he said they have their own rules of procedure which applies to staff working in secretariat, a professional set of rules, which every staff member has to sign at the beginning of their appointment. He said that Law No. 4 of 2014 stipulated the code of conduct and determined how MPs must conduct themselves. Regarding the sanction, yes, there could be a sanction on staff members, which are stated clearly in the rules of procedure, in case they violate the rules. When establishing the professional code of conduct, lots of different departments participated (HR, legal department etc) and it was finalised by the parliamentary secretariat. In response to the question about staff harassed by MPs, He said no. The General Secretary is always ready to stand up against abuse to his staff, and he calls upon the laws we have against abuse.

Mr Ahmed Manna, Egypt, asked about the legal path Libya went through to assure the code of conduct, whether staff sign off on rules on appointment and who signs off on the rules. He said that if Egypt were to do this, it would not need the signature of staff members, the rules would apply de facto on all staff members, it would apply because a higher colleague could sign on their behalf. He asked what the legal instrument was used to issue? In Egypt, he said they have a specific committee which handles internal affairs and decided how to hold MPs accountable. They use a legal instrument.

Mr Abdulla Almasri Fadel, Libya, gave a twofold response, he said the regulation itself is issued by virtue of a law from 2010, a law on employment, which they relied on to introduce the regulation. Secondly, it was binding by signing the document, simply by advising staff members about code of conduct they must respect it. He said this helps to communicate the code to staff because they must know their rights and

obligations. The MPs have their own code of conduct, from 2014, which related to the establishment of rules of internal procedure.

Mr Ahmed Manna, Egypt, asked a final question, when the document is issued, based on the law, which authority issues it? When we talk about staff, they have specific rules, in the parliament, the set of regulations they have to follow is issued by bureau of parliament. In Egypt, he said workforce law does not work for parliament, it is meant for private sector, parliament is public sector. Where there is violation by a civil servant, by which document and which authority?

Mr Abdulla Almasri Fadel, Libya, responded regarding the reference to the relevant body or authority that it is the General Secretariat that handles all details. It is finally issued with support of the Presidency of the Parliament. Which authority is competent to enforce sanctions? A disciplinary board that handles such cases relating to staff members, as for violations by MPs, the Presidency of Parliament sets up an ad hoc committee to determine the sanction. He said they do not have a standing committee for MPs.

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President thanked all members for their thoughtful questions and invited the next speaker to the platform to make their communication.

4. Communication by Mr Pramod Mody, Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha of India, on ‘Code of conduct and ethics for Members of Parliament and staff: raising standards and performance’

Mr Pramod Mody, Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha of India, spoke as follows:

Introduction

It has been widely held that Parliament is a place where hopes, aspirations and frustrations of the people ought to be reflected and echoed. Therefore, representative character of the legislature is considered to be the defining quality of a democratic polity. Though the basic framework of democracy is provided in the Constitution, yet a framework is just one aspect; its spirit is the more important one. It is the duty of the elected representatives of the people to deepen the spirit of democracy through their work and conduct.

2. Since Parliament is the central institution in a democracy, the personal conduct and credibility of the elected representatives can alone keep the public trust in parliamentary institutions undiminished, making the interface between people and their representatives lively and animated, thus strengthening the very foundation of democracy. This is true of all democracies and particularly so in a country like India with a billion plus population where the public opinion about the polity is shaped by the conduct and performance of public representatives both inside and outside the legislature.

3. It is instructive to recall the sagacious words of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution: “However good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad if those who are called upon to work it, happen to be a bad lot.” In other words, institutions are what its incumbents make of them. Thus, the quality, performance and conduct of Members are of seminal importance to make a parliamentary institution function effectively, while maintaining the public trust. To this end, framing a Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament goes a long way in guiding the conduct of legislators to ensure that they discharge their functions effectively and in so doing they do not bring disrepute to the Parliament, affecting their own credibility as also the credibility of the institution they belong to.

4. It is a common knowledge that Parliament performs the core functions of making legislations, articulating the concerns of the people and holding the Government to account. Given the enormous mandate, it is imperative that the Members of Parliament have qualified support staff to assist them perform these functions effectively. That is why there exists a separate well-organised secretarial set-up in every Parliament to provide such services to the Presiding Officers and the Members. But non partisan and relevant support to legislators calls for not only a competent workforce but also high standards of integrity and ethical behavior from them. It is for this reason that in parliamentary systems, the secretarial staff are also governed by rules of discipline and proper conduct to ensure that they remain committed to the spirit of service and professionalism and also enhance the transparency and accountability in the system.

5. This paper seeks to highlight the institutional arrangement, the practices and procedures, the compliance mechanism and other related matters available in the Rajya Sabha to ensure that Members follow a set of ethical code of conduct not only in their parliamentary work but also in their public life. Further, this paper also includes a set of conduct rules as ordinarily available to the Civil Service, that govern the work and conduct of the officers and staff of Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

Need for Code of Conduct

6. A well-written code of conduct clarifies an institution’s mission, values and principles, linking them with standards of professional conduct of its Members and employees. The code articulates the values the institution wishes to foster in its Members and, in so doing, defines the desired behaviour. That is why many democracies across the world have established written formal codes of behavioral standards in their legislatures. In India, we have a Code of Conduct not only in the legislature but also in other State institutions which include Ministers, Judiciary, Media, Civil Service, Political Parties and even the Private Corporate Houses. In nutshell, a code of conduct has been felt necessary in almost all institutions to maintain a standard of acceptable behavior.

I. Code of Conduct in Parliament

7. In view of the representative character of Parliament, the legislators become the fulcrum around which the democratic polity revolves. Truly, democracy thrives

only when people repose their unflinching trust on their leaders, emulating them as their role models, yet making critical assessment of their leaders' work and conduct. Today, with the live streaming of parliamentary proceedings through dedicated parliamentary television channel 'Sansad TV' and simultaneous webcasts of the live streaming on Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha websites besides YouTube, Facebook and Twitter interfaces, people get opportunity to make constant assessment of the performance and conduct of their representatives. India is home to the third largest internet users in the world and this number is likely to grow exponentially in years to come. With internet and social media usage particularly among the youth in the country constantly on the rise, it has further increased avenues of public assessment of legislators. Given this penetration of internet, whatever the Members of Parliament say or do spread fast, really very fast. Members of Parliament are constantly under public gaze. It would not be wrong to say that the people evaluate the performance of their representatives in the backdrop of the standards set out in the Code of Conduct of the legislature.

8. Parliament of India comprising two Houses – Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and House of People (Lok Sabha) is ever alive to the ethical imperatives of maintaining high standards of work and conduct of the Members of Parliament. To this end, each House has its own set of rules and procedure and also institutional arrangements to ensure that Members of Parliament as the representatives of the people maintain high standards of behaviour in public life as also in the Parliament, thereby deepening the democratic ethos in the society and making them the torchbearer of the democratic polity. However, here we will only focus on the Code of Conduct and Ethics that are applicable to the Members of the Rajya Sabha and its Staff.

Evolution of the Code of Conduct in Parliament

9. The first step towards the formation of a code of conduct and general ethical principles to be followed by the Members of Parliament can be traced to a Resolution that was adopted at the Presiding Officers Conference held in New Delhi in October, 1996. The Resolution desired the legislatures to explore the possibility of constituting an Ethics Committee to keep an eye on the unethical conduct of the Members. Following the Resolution, the Rajya Sabha became the first among the two Houses to form an Ethics Committee on 4th March 1997. In fact, it has the distinction of being the first such Committee by any legislature in India which was formed to act as an internal self-regulatory mechanism for the Members of the Rajya Sabha and ensure value-based politics. Lok Sabha, in contrast, formed an ad hoc ethics panel in May 2000 which was later given a permanent standing committee status. Ethics committees in both Houses endeavour to uphold the standards of the Parliament by ensuring that the ethical core of the members are strong and their conduct remain above board.

Role of Committee on Ethics

10. The broad mandate of the Ethics Committee of the Rajya Sabha is to oversee the moral and ethical conduct of the Members and also to examine the cases referred

to it regarding their unethical conduct. The Committee also works as a record keeper and oversees the declaration of assets and liabilities that all the Members have to declare every year. The Committee is also mandated to maintain a Register of Members' Interest.

11. Following the suggestion of the Committee, contained in its First Report and adopted by it in December 1999, to prepare a framework of Code of Conduct for the Members of Rajya Sabha, a 14 point Code of Conduct recommended by the Committee has been in force. The Code of Conduct, inter alia, requires the Members to work diligently to discharge their mandate for the common good of the public. They are also expected to act in a manner that holds them in high esteem vis-à-vis the Constitution, the Law, the Parliamentary Institutions and above all the general public. In case of a conflict between their personal interests and public trust, they are supposed to see that their private interests are subordinated to the duty of their public office. They are dissuaded to expect or accept any fee, remuneration or benefit or gift which may interfere with their honest and impartial discharge of official duties.

12. The Code lays equal emphasis on their conduct outside the Parliament. It says that Members must inter alia use public resources in such a manner that may lead to public good; they should not be disrespectful to any religion and work for the promotion of secular values and; they should not disclose any confidential information for personal interests.

Complaint and Inquiry Mechanism

13. The Committee of Ethics did not limit itself to outlining the Code of Conduct. It also stated that it would take action against any Member violating the Code. It provided that a Member or any person can make a complaint to it regarding alleged unethical behaviour or breach of the Code of Conduct by a Member or alleged incorrect information of a Member's interest. Cases may also be referred to the Committee by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha or Members or taken up by the Committee *suo moto*.

14. If there is a prima facie case of breach of the Code of Conduct, the matter is taken up by the Committee for examination and report. In fact, if a complaint is found to be false or vexatious, or made not in good faith, the matter may also be taken up as an issue of breach of parliamentary privilege.

Recommendations of Sanctions and Implementation

15. If established that a Member is guilty of indulging in unethical behaviour or that there is other misconduct, or that the Member has contravened the Code/ Rules, the Committee on Ethics is empowered to recommend sanctions to enforce its mandate which may include censure, reprimand, suspension from the Council for a specific period or any other sanction determined by the Committee to be appropriate.

16. The sanctions recommended by the Committee can be enforced only after the Council has adopted the report of the Committee containing its recommendations. That is to say that the final implementing authority in such cases is the House itself.

Cases so far

17. Although the Committee on Ethics has a robust mandate to inquire into allegations of breach of Conduct by Members and recommend sanctions against a Member if found guilty, fortunately there have been few occasions to investigate such gross allegations. However, on two separate occasions the Committee did implicate two Members of Rajya Sabha for their gross misconduct which was derogatory to the dignity of the House and inconsistent with the Code of Conduct and recommended their expulsion from the House. These precedents have exemplified the relevance of Ethics Committee and guided its future course of action.

Rules to be observed by Members while Present in the House

18. Apart from the 14-point Code of Conduct, the members are also expected to observe certain established parliamentary customs, conventions and etiquette while the House is sitting and Members are participating in discussions. They are inter alia not supposed to indulge in any frivolity during a debate, cause disruptions and use words that are offensive and unparliamentary. They are also required to declare their personal or specific pecuniary interests if the concerned matter is under discussion in the House or its Committees. These norms of behaviour have been codified in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha), which is over and above the Code of Conduct framed by the Ethics Committee. In such cases where Members fail to adhere to these norms the Chair is empowered under the rules to impose punishment in a case-to-case basis. The House, in extreme case of misconduct, may also expel a Member.

II. Code of Conduct for Parliamentary Staff

19. In parliamentary systems, the secretarial staff are also governed by rules of discipline and conduct. The employees of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat too are expected to maintain and demonstrate at all times, highest order of discipline, conduct, competence and performance befitting the stature of employees of Rajya Sabha, the Second Chamber of Indian Parliament. Cases of misconduct on the part of employees of the Secretariat are duly dealt with in accordance with the applicable rules and instructions under the Rajya Sabha Secretariat (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 1957 which regulates the recruitment, and the conditions of service of persons appointed, to the secretarial staff of the Rajya Sabha. Since these Rules are limited in scope, the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964 and the Central Civil Services (Control, Classification and Appeal) Rules, 1965 which govern the officers and employees of the Union Government have also been made applicable to the employees of the Secretariat.

20. The Chairman, Rajya Sabha, (in case of gazetted officials) and the Secretary General, Rajya Sabha, (in case of non-gazetted officials) are disciplinary authorities who may institute disciplinary proceedings and impose penalties on erring officials. While minor penalties may range from censure; withholding of promotion, pay recovery, demotion, major penalties may inter alia include compulsory retirement, removal or dismissal from service.

Procedure in disciplinary cases

21. The breach of the code of conduct and discipline or any errant behaviour by an official of the Secretariat is reported to Vigilance Section of the Secretariat. After examination, if it is found that the matter is not serious enough, a written warning, admonition or reprimand can be issued. The complaints received from outside the Secretariat are also examined by the Vigilance Section and suitable action is initiated.

III. Conclusion

22. To sum up, the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Rajya Sabha and the conduct rules for the parliamentary staff are a means to achieve an effectively functioning legislature which is able to discharge the assigned responsibilities in public interest. It calls upon the Members and the parliamentary staff to behave in the most disciplined and decorous manner and exemplify conducts worthy of emulation.

23. Needless to mention, scrupulous adherence to the Code of Conduct and Ethics is fundamental to address the growing concern of trust-deficit that parliamentary institutions often face. Public perception of a legislature comprising disciplined Members with high standards of ethics helps enhance public trust besides ensuring better performance of their multifaceted roles. Disciplined Members invariably contribute to making legislature effective and functional through their participation in legislative debates, scrutiny of Government budget or ventilating public grievances – all within the scarcely available parliamentary time.



Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President thanked the speaker and invited comments from the floor.

Ms Jeannine KAMBANDA, Rwanda said that Rwanda has a general statute regarding the public function of parliament and a Presidential Order which sets out how this code should be applied in practice. At the bi-cameral level, there is a committee organised by the Secretary General where representatives of the personnel are elected to sit. The representatives meet three times a year to discuss behaviour issues. She further said that there is a law which regulated the behaviour of MPs. There is also a discipline committee, membership is determined by the political parties and they try to reach consensus in decisions.

Dr Bharat Raj Gautam, Nepal, said you have two cases of grave breach of the code in your parliament, may I learn how the code was upheld in these cases and whether those MPs were expelled?

Mr Philippe Schwab, Switzerland, asked, when the chamber makes a decision concerning misconduct, can the parliamentarian take floor in chamber to present his view before a final decision is made?

Mr Said MOKADEM, Maghreb Consultative Council, said my question is the same as Philippe, the difference between MP and member of staff, an MP has a mandate but member of staff is tied to administration, with an indefinite contract. Are there any ways for the MP to defend themselves from the decision of the Committee? If the member of staff is expelled, how does the court deal with the relationship between the employer (parliament) who has expelled the Member in employment law. What did you mean by gazetted officials? Do they have immunity?

Mr Ahmed Manna, Egypt, asked when the code of conduct is applied on MPs or members of staff, who imposes the sanctions?

Mr Pramod Mody, India, said he was happy to know that the practice in India and Rwanda move along similar lines. He said they also have an ombudsman process in India. In response to Nepal's question about judicial review of sanctions he said yes, it is possible. He also emphasised that whenever any sanction is imposed it is not a unilateral decision (for either staff or MP) as principles of natural justice are strictly adhered to. It is not a unilateral view and proper opportunity is given to person who is alleged to have committed misconduct. The difference between gazette and non-gazette, there is no different rules, the only difference is the method of recruitment. In any case of misconduct or violation, the Chair can name the person, the suspension is for the day. In case the person continues the violation, the Chair can suspend the person for a week. In an absolutely extreme cases, the suspension can be for the rest of the session. He said they have 3 sessions of parliamentary proceedings and it is a graded sanctions process, depending on the gravity of the offence. The House is the final authority, a committee is formed on the request of house, the committee recommends the course of action, it is possible for the House to ignore the action recommended by the committee, it could decide a lesser sanction, the final authority remains with the house itself. In the case of staff, it is the Secretary General, as the ultimate head of the administration.

5. Communication by Mr Mehmet Ali Kumbuzoglu, Secretary General of Turkish Parliament on 'The implementation of a code of conduct and ethics for staff and Members of parliaments'

Mr Mehmet Ali Kumbuzoglu, Secretary General of Turkish Parliament, spoke as follows:

1. GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TÜRKİYE

Total number of GNAT members is 600.

Actual number of MPs is 581 due to reasons such as death, resignation or restriction.

In the GNAT, the representation of the people is ensured through MPs elected from 81 cities.

The city with highest number of MPs is Istanbul with 93 MPs.

Istanbul is followed up by Ankara and Izmir.

The Staff of GNAT can be categorized into three groups: Administrative Organization personnel, MP's assistant personnel and police officers.

MPs can recruit 3 personnel, including the first adviser, the second adviser and additional assistant personnel.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS FOR PERSONNEL AND THE MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT

Law No. 5176 on the Establishment of the Ethics Committee for Public Officials is the main judicial text in terms of the implementation of the code of conduct and ethics for public officials in Türkiye.

Members of Parliament are exempted from the Law No. 5176 on the Establishment of the Ethics Committee for Public Officials, which regulates the code of ethics and principles for public officials.

However, general provisions within the scope of ethical principles for MPs are determined in the Constitution and legislations.

Political parties have their own Ethics committees. Ethics committees of the political parties are related to the internal functions of the parties and do not have legal binding.

The actions of the MP's violating the ethical principles are discussed and decided on at the General Assembly of GNAT.

The major code of ethics that MPs should comply with can be listed as below:

1. Jobs that are incompatible with membership
(Regulated by Article 82 of the Constitution, and Law No. 3069.)
2. Not to engage in the income-generating activities
3. Not to make a declaration of assets
(Within 2 months from election results became final)
4. Prohibition of accepting gifts and advantage
5. Not to work in public institutions during the mandate.

The GNAT personnel are subject to the Law No. 5176 that regulates the code of ethics and principles for public officials, and the general provisions containing the ethical principles, and the Law No. 657 on Civil Servants. Decisions made by the Ethics Committee are recorded in the personal file of the relevant personnel.

In this context, the main ethical principles and responsibilities which the personnel must comply with while performing their duties are as follows;

1. Not to engage in income-generating activities
2. To make a declaration of assets
3. Prohibition of accepting gifts and advantage

4. Awareness of public service in fulfilling of duties.
5. Awareness of the public service
6. Commitment to target and mission
7. Integrity and impartiality
8. Not to use their duties and authorities for taking advantage
9. Usage of public properties and resources
10. Informing, transparency and participation
11. Accountability of administrators

In accordance with the Law No. 5176, the Ethics Committee of the GNAT was established under the roof of the GNAT. In addition, the GNAT Ethics Guide was published in order to increase the awareness of the partners regarding the code of ethics within the GNAT and to integrate the code of ethics into the corporate culture. Training activities are also continuing to embed the behavior and code of ethics into the corporate culture.

3. MAKING A DECLARATION OF ASSETS

The obligation of "making a declaration of assets" is a critically important code of ethics that is both binding and equal for all public officials, including the MPs.

MPs and the personnel declare their assets to the competent authority regarding their movable and immovable properties, receivables and debts belonging to them, their spouse/husband and the children under their trust, in accordance with the provisions of the "Law No. 3628 on the Declaration of Assets, Combating Bribery and Corruption".

In accordance with the Law No. 3628, the MPs should declare their assets within 2 months as of the finalization of the results of elections.

The personnel declare their assets together with the documents of initiation on the date of the first appointment.

It is obliged to declare the assets within 1 month whenever there is a change on the assets and within 1 month whenever MPs leave their duties.

Declarations of assets are renewed by the end of February for the years ending with (0) and (5) at the latest.

4. PROHIBITION OF ACCEPTING GIFTS AND ADVANTAGE

"Prohibition of accepting gifts and advantage" is another important code of ethics that binds both the MPs and personnel, and applicable to all public officials.

It is prohibited for public officials to ask for gifts both directly or through an intermediary, to accept gifts or to borrow money from business owners for the purpose of profits, even they are not on duty.



Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President thanked the speaker and invited comments from the floor.

Mr Liam Laurence Smyth, UK informed members that he submitted a short written presentation on the website but also had two things to add today. He said the Commons has a Committee which is currently deciding whether the PM misled the House regarding lockdown parties, the PM will be investigated by the Committee of Privileges. Secondly, that the House of Commons has a behaviour code in addition to a code of conduct. It is for bullying. The Commons has also recently concluded a complaint process from a former Secretary General, against the former speaker, whose behaviour fell very far below that which the public expects from any member of Parliament. The conduct was very serious, if he had still been member, the Commons would have determined he should be expelled. It was a very tough finding from an independent expert panel.

Mr Abdulla Almasri Fadel, Libya, commented on the 2000 staff members, out of 7000 accompanying staff members, and asked what is their duties, where do they operate? Is it all in the general secretariat or also in constituency of each MP?

Mr Mehmet Ali Kumbuzoglu, Türkiye, responded to Libya that of the 7,000 staff members at the General Assembly, 2000 work directly for MPs on a contract basis, this practice dates since before 2012. Before that, MPs had consultant secretaries and drivers, these people then earned the status of civil servants. Two thirds of the current staff members originate from old members offices. He said that new members bring new consultants and they become civil servants. After 2012, MPs have only 3 auxiliary staff members, 2 are contracted, not civil servants and 1 must be a civil servant. Many consultants and advisers help and assist MPs in the parliament. MPs in parliament may replace them on occasional basis or put them on a probation. Of the 2000 who work directly with MPs, the Secretary General is in charge of them with regards to disciplinary procedures.

6. Concluding remarks

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, thanked members for their contributions. He announced there were 3 candidates for the 2 vacant posts as ordinary member of the Executive Committee. As such, an election would be held the following day/

He closed the sitting.

The sitting ended at 17.25

FIFTH SITTING

Friday 14 October 2022 (morning)

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, in the Chair

The sitting was opened at 10.45am

1. Introductory remarks

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, welcomed everyone back to the fifth and final sitting of the ASGP.

He announced that an election would be held for the two vacant posts on the Executive Committee. The first election since the pandemic.

He said that after the election the general debate on ‘The role of the Secretary General in the budget of Parliament: adoption, spending and scrutiny’ would be an open debate, in which anyone can share their experiences spontaneously on the topic, rather than an group debate.

He reminded members there would be an ASGP-IPU joint meeting the following day. The focus of the joint session is a practical exercise to test Indicator 1.1 on Parliamentary autonomy. This indicator consists of four dimensions, on the institutional, procedural, budgetary and administrative autonomy of parliament. Participants will work in small groups to consider how they would assess these dimensions in their own parliamentary context.

2. Elections to the Executive Committee

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, said the deadline for candidates seeking election to the two vacant posts on the Executive Committee passed at 5pm yesterday. There are 3 candidates:

- Ms Fiona KALEMBA, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Malawi
- Mr Mehmet Ali Kumbuzoglu, Secretary General of Turkish Parliament
- Mr Amadou THIMBO, Deputy Secretary General of the National Assembly of Senegal

He then asked each of the candidates to give a brief speech, setting out why they should be appointed to the Executive Committee.

After the speeches, he set out the process for holding the election. The secretariat would verify each members’ right to vote before they deposited their ballot paper into the electoral urn. Members could choose one or two candidates from the three names listed.

In the absence of the President Najib El Khadi, the fourth member of the bureau, the Executive Committee propose that Ms Tyawa replace the President as the fourth member of the bureau to oversee the count of votes, under the terms of article 19 of the Association (length of service on the executive committee).

He reminded the Association the plenary session will be suspended during the voting process. Results would be presented immediately afterwards. Before the election, he reminded all colleagues that the ASGP rules state that membership of the Executive Committee should be gender balanced and representative of different languages, English and French, and geopolitical groups.

The vote opened at 11.10am

*** The vote closed at 11.25am***

*** The sitting was suspended until 11.50am while the votes were counted by the bureau ***

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President asked colleagues to take their seats, then announced that 53 votes had been cast, there were no spoilt ballots, 9 members had voted for a single candidate. The results were as follows:

Ms Fiona KALEMBA, Malawi: 36 votes

Mr Mehmet Ali KUMBUZOĞLU, Türkiye: 30 votes

Mr Amadou THIMBO, Senegal: 31 votes

Consequently, Ms Fiona Kalembe and Mr Amadou Thimbo were elected to the Executive Committee.

3. Orders of the Day

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, confirmed there were no changes to the Orders of the Day.

4. General Debate: The role of the Secretary General in the budget of Parliament (adoption, spending and scrutiny.

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President apologised that there was not very long for the general debate, due to time taken for the election process. He opened the debate by emphasising that Secretaries General are the right hand of the Speaker. He said many members of the Association were very experienced and had worked for parliament for a very long time. For his part, in Uruguay, he had held the post of Secretary General of the Uruguayan Senate for more than 20 years. Secretaries General often know how their parliament's function better than anyone else and understand its needs.

Mrs Barbara DITHAPO, Botswana, explained the rules that apply to the budget come from the Constitution, laws relative to public finance, and other instruments. The legal framework defines certain procedures and the different stages of the budgetary process. She added that the administration of the budgetary cycle is managed directly by the Minister of Finance. Parliament approves, at the end of the process, the budget in its entirety. The budget holder of Parliament scrutinises all of the expenses of Parliament.

Ms Dithapo clarified that the Secretary General is responsible for putting in place a number of financial control measures and for reporting to the competent authorities, at regular intervals, the expenses and resources used by parliament. The Secretary General is also responsible for the preparation of annual accounts of parliament and end of year expenses. She added that there was also an internal control.

In Botswana, the secretary general is responsible for the daily administration of parliament, that includes financial management, under the authority of the Speaker. The Minister of Finance names a person who is responsible for undertaking the audit. Finance laws compel the Secretary General to compile a dossier of documents on all the trips, under the supervision of the auditor.

She also explained that funds and resources used for trips and visits must be communicated directly to the Secretary General who can name an auditor responsible for verifying that all the rules have been followed. It is also the responsibility of the Secretary General to ensure that financial instructions have been respected.

She underlined that the most thorny questions related to non-declaration, within a 14-day period, of expenses which were tightly regulated. The Secretary General can even deduct expenses from the salary of MPs, as long as the expenses have been brought to the attention of parliament.

Mr Liam Laurence-Smyth, UK, explained that in the UK, the Government estimates are not presented in time for meaningful debate in parliament. He said that, by comparison with the process in Botswana, the UK parliament is lucky because the Finance Minister plays no role in the adoption of the budget.

He explained that the role of the Secretary General is two-fold: as an accounting officer, the Secretary General is personally responsible for expenditure and must report to the public accounts committee. The other role of the Secretary General is to ensure the budgetary process run smoothly and respect budgetary constraints.

Ms Silke Albin, Germany, said that the division of the budget, into two parts, was an essential part of its preparation. Firstly, a governmental stage, secondly a parliamentary process. Concerning the government draft budget, the process begins 2 years in advance of the year concerned. It's early because the negotiation process is very long.

The Secretary General plays a central role alongside the accounting officer who is an expert in financial matters. She clarified that the situation was different from that in Uruguay, because Secretary Generals do not remain in post as long in Germany and therefore they do not have the same expertise.

The parliamentary administration does not have parliamentary control but does have control over media and publication. A strict law applies to all public procurement.

Mr Ahcene DJOUAHRA, Algeria, explained that in Algeria, the Secretary General of the Chamber of Representatives plays an essential role in the adoption, process and scrutiny of the budget. Responsible for supervision of the budget, he directs the different lines of credit required by each part of parliament,. He also plays a role as arbiter, deciding how budget is assigned between different teams in parliament. Finally, he explained that other parties take a role, such as the accounting agent, who can be an MP or an external person hired by parliament.

Mr Sadeq Hameed, Iraq recalled that approving the budget is one of the greatest tasks facing the MPs. Each country legislates to allocate powers to parliament or other authorities.

In Iraq, it's the government who presents the draft budget which is then approved by the parliament. However, scrutiny is undertaken by an external authority applying the appropriate budgetary rules. A budgetary council compiles the documents which are then submitted to the State Council.

He explained that the Secretary General is responsible for what is included in the budget and must apply all his logistical and procedural skills to ensure the adoption of the budget. He added that the Secretary General works on the preparation of the budget and ensures important delays in the budget process are observed. Henceforth, a special team are dedicated to the preparation of the budget in order to ensure that it is properly examined during the required time period.

Dr José Pedro MONTERO, Vice-President indicated that there could be two further interventions but, after that, the debate would need to close.

Mr Éric TAVERNIER, France, indicated that, in France, in both chambers, financial affairs have a particular importance, to the extent that there is a distinct secretary general of financial affairs, who is responsible for the budget.

He told colleagues that he had noted both similarities and differences during the debate by comparison to how the process is regulated in France. With regards to the UK, he said the Senate also submits to an internal control before a committee, a committee which is specially charged with budgetary scrutiny.

He explained that for a very long time, the principle of the separation of powers means that the French assembles hold only an internal evaluation. The Committee approves the budget and gives an agreement in principle.

The situation was changed in 20130 with the introduction of a control by the Accounting Court, an institution which has existed since the 14th Century. By virtue of the strict application of the separation of powers, the court did not intervene in the accounts but offered its services to examine the accounts of the Senate to ensure correct management.

In the first phase, the court reviews the accounts and makes recommendations regarding the general approach of internal scrutiny, the quality of financial information provided, the formalisation of financial procedures across various cycles. During the second phase, consecrated towards the closure of the accounts – because the accounts of the assemblies are integrated with those of the State – the court assures that the assemblies have correctly submitted the budget. Oversight by the financial jurisdiction is therefore an integral part of the functioning of the financial services of the Senate.

Mr Mahmoud ETMAN, Egypt, explained that the counsel prepares the budget. The following year, the secretary general presents the budget to a financial committee. The draft is then sent to the Minister of Finance to be put into effect. Concerning expenses, there is no internal authority which intervenes. The controls take place via the finance committee only.

The role of the Secretary General is to prepare the budget. To this end, the persons in charge of the budget present to him their daily expenses. At the end of each month, a rapport is created on the basis of these reports. He explained that, in order to bring in measures for austerity, as Secretary General he had to reduce the budget by 20% each year.

Dr José Pedro MONTERO, Vice-President, thanked the speakers for their intervention.



5. Administrative questions

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, announced that the Executive Committee had formally approved the 2021 budget and the projected budget for 2023.

He asked Members to look at the budget projected on the screens, based on a spring session in Bahrain and an Autumn session in Geneva.

He drew the Association's attention to the importance of paying ASGP membership fees. He invited questions or comments from the Association regarding the budget?

Budget accordingly *agreed*.

6. Draft agenda for the next meeting in Manama, Bahrain March 2023

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, indicated that the Secretary General from Bahrain was not present in Kigali and invited a representative of the parliament to provide a short introduction to the next session.

*** A video presentation about Bahrain was projected on the screens****

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, informed members that the Executive Committee would like to propose the following themes and general debates for the Bahrain Plenary and asked for comments:

➤ **Possible subjects for General Debate**

Gender inequality in parliaments: what are the solutions?

[Informal discussion group format]

- *What are the obstacles to achieving gender parity in parliaments?*
- *Could you implement any of the solutions discussed today in your parliament?*
- *What solutions are you implementing in your parliament?*

MPs and conflicts of interest

- *What constitutes a conflict interest?*
- *Should MPs be able to work in other roles while also being parliamentarians?*
- *Where do you draw the line between helpful experience and maline influence on the work of MPs?*

➤ **Possible themes**

- *The role of parliaments in combatting climate change*
- *Participation of citizens in the work of Parliament*

The Assembly approved the draft agenda.

7. Concluding Remarks

Dr José Pedro Montero, Vice-President, thanked our Rwandan colleagues for organising an excellent programme. He thanked all colleagues for their patience with him over the last three days of the conference. He expressed his honour at having had the opportunity to preside over the session.

He thanked the interpreters, who make communication between all the countries of the world possible.

Finally, he thanked the secretariat of the Association: Ms Capucine Capon, Ms Elektra Garvie-Adams, Mr Daniel Moeller and Ms Karine Velasco.

The meeting concluded at 1pm