



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA
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**REPORT OF THE 148TH INTER – PARLIAMENTARY UNION ASSEMBLY
AND OTHER RELATED MEETINGS HELD ON
21ST TO 28TH MARCH 2024
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**PRESENTED BY THE RT HON MS NELLY BUTETE KASHUMBA MUTTI, SC,
MP, FAPRA**

**DURING THE 55TH SADC PF PLENARY ASSEMBLY HELD FROM 1ST TO
7TH JULY, 2024
LUANDA, ANGOLA**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

148TH ASSEMBLY OF THE IPU AND RELATED MEETINGS

1.1 ATTENDANCE

The 148th Assembly which was held under the theme *“Parliamentary Diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding”* drew participation from over 1,479 delegates of which over 800 were Parliamentarians from 144 Member Parliaments. Fifty-one (51) Speakers and forty-eight (48) Deputy Speakers also attended the Assembly. Of these delegates, 36% were women while 27% were young Parliamentarians.

The Assembly and related meetings was also attended by observers from various Parliamentary Associations, the United Nations System and other key institutions that supported parliaments in the various Geo political groups.

1.2 OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 148TH ASSEMBLY

The meeting was officially opened by the President, Dr Tulia Ackson. In her immediate remarks, President Tulia indicated that the theme for the Assembly on Parliamentary Diplomacy with specific focus on peace and security as the key ingredients for 2024 was timely given the proliferation of conflict around the world. She added that the situation had brought back the IPU to its founding principles as the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue. She cited the Middle East, Ukraine and the Russian Federation and the Sahel among others and committed that during her mandate as President, the IPU would expand its promotion of parliamentary dialogue to the many other situations it was needed.

The Secretary General, Mr M Chungong, Mr D Carden, President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarian, Ms C Lopez Castro, President pf the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians Ms M Robinson, Chair of the Elders, former President of Ireland also addressed the Assembly.

The Assembly also adopted the reports from the following Standing Committee Reports:

- i) Standing Committee on Peace and International Security – *presented the resolution on addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon system and artificial intelligence;*
- ii) Standing Committee on Sustainable Development – presented the resolution on partnerships for climate action: promoting access to affordable green energy and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity;
- iii) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights; and

iv) Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs.

The Assembly also received and adopted reports from the various Advisory Groups of the IPU.

Further, the Assembly unanimously adopted the Geneva Declaration presented by two youngest female MPs from Thailand and Namibia respectively which encapsulated and re-affirmed the IPU's Commitment to Parliamentary diplomacy in addressing the growing challenges on peace and international security.

2.0 OUTCOMES OF THE 213TH GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING

2.1 ACTIVITY REPORT BY THE PRESIDENT:

The Governing Council noted the IPU President's report on the activities undertaken since she was elected as President in October, 2023. The meeting noted that the activities resonated under three deliverables as outline below.

- i) ***Reinforcing peace and security through dialogue*** – through this, the President, in November, 2023 visited the Middle East (Israel and Palestine) and met the Prime Minister of Palestine, H E Mohammad Shtayeh as well as the Speaker the Parliament of Israel. The meetings enabled the IPU President have a deeper understanding of the conflict. She emphasized that there was willingness by both parties to dialogue and resolve the matter at the time.
- ii) ***Reinforcing the IPU's visibility*** – among the key meetings attended by the President on visibility included a webinar preventing and responding to violence against women in Parliaments; 9th MIKTA Speakers' Consultation on Strengthening Multilateralism, Addressing Intergenerational Challenges held in Bali; Antalya Diplomacy Forum held in Turkey and the Women's Speakers Forum held in France.
- iii) ***Supporting the implementation of the IPU Strategy*** – The IPU President attended the High-Level segment on COP 28 held in the United Arab Emirates. In addition, the IPU President attended the 2024 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations as well as the Annual IPU – UN Women Parliamentary meeting at the 68th session of the Commission for women held in New York, USA.

2.2 IMPACT REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES BY THE OF THE IPU IN 2023

The Governing Council considered the Report presented by the Secretary General on activities undertaken since the Governing Council Meeting held in Luanda, Angola, in line with the five strategic IPU objectives and policy goals which anchor the IPU Strategy Plan (2022-2026).

The meeting also unanimously approved and authorized the Secretariat to proceed with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Non-

Aligned Movement given that the organization shared several strategic objectives which would be of mutual benefits to both institutions. It was, however, noted that, the full details of the standard agreement would be considered at a future date but would largely be on capacity building.

Some of the major highlights during the year under review included the following:

- An increase in Membership to 180 Member Parliaments and 15 Associate Members
- 762 Human Rights cases examined by the IPU
- Over 150,000 views on climate videos
- 35.3% of Women MPs at IPU Assemblies (IPU supported Sierra Leone with the quota system which saw more women elected in that Parliament.
- 26.6% of Young MPs at IPU Assemblies

2.3 IPU FINANCIAL REPORT

The Governing Council noted the financial statement of the Organisation together with the Audited Financial Report conducted by the Government of Indonesia in Accordance with Rule 13 of the IPU Financial Regulations. It was noted that the financial position remains stable with high solvency. The mobilization of voluntary funding had also increased including the \$USD 1 million donation by the United Arab Emirates. Other key funding agreements included the following:

- i) Swedish International Cooperation Agency (SIDA);
- ii) Shura Council of Qatar;
- iii) Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs Trade and Development (DFATD);
- iv) The Irish Aid; and
- v) The World Health Organisation.

The Governing Council also noted that external funding for the organization constituted only 27% while the rest was internally generated.

2.4 REPORT ON IPU MEMBERS AND SITUATION ON OTHER PARLIAMENTS

2.4.1 The Governing Council noted the status of non functional Parliaments, Transitional Parliaments and other challenges facing a number of parliaments as outlined below.

2.4.1.1 NON FUNCTIONAL PARLIAMENTS

- **Afghanistan** – Parliament dissolved by the Taliban but the Parliament had continued participating in IPU meetings as observers.

- **Guinea -Bissau** – The Parliament was dissolved by the President in violation with the Constitution which forbade dissolution of Parliament within 12 months. IPU will continue to give solidarity to the Parliament.
- **Haiti** – No functioning Parliament as the country was effectively under gangs with no prospects of elections being held in the near future. The Prime Minister had since left the country with no plans to return. IPU will continue to monitor the situation.
- **Myanmar** – situation was similar to Afghanistan as the military took over the country and bid not recognize democratic elections held in 2020. The Governing Council re-affirmed its decision to continue allowing representations by the MPs living abroad to attend meetings as observers.
- **Niger** – No functioning Parliament since the dissolution of the democratically elected legislature by the military. Plans were underway to establish a Consultative Council of the Transition which would serve as a legislative branch during the Transition. The IPU will continue to monitor the situation.
- **Sudan** – No functioning Parliament since the military took over in 2019. In 2021, the IPU suspended Sudan from being a member. In 2023 a civil war had broken out in the country and no prospects for elections. The Governing Council, therefore, maintained its earlier position to suspend Sudan.

2.4.1.2 TRANSITIONAL PARLIAMENTS

The Governing Council also received the update on Transitional Parliaments that included **Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Guinea, Libya, Mali and South Sudan**. For all the seven transitional parliaments, the Governing Council recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and provide assistance where drafting of new constitutions and legislative frameworks.

2.4.1.3 COUNTRIES WHERE THE POLITICAL SITUATION IS IMPACTING THE FUNCTIONING OF PARLIAMENT

The Governing Council received the update on countries with volatile political situations that was negatively impacting on the functioning of parliaments. Theses included **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Palestine and Yemen**. The IPU would continue to monitor the situation in the countries.

2.4.1.4 COUNTRIES WHERE THE POLITICAL SITUATION CONSTITUTES A POTENTIAL THREAT TO PARLIAMENT'S CAPACITY TO FUNCTION

The countries included **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eswatini, Peru and the Syrian Arab Republic**. The IPU would continue to monitor the situation and the secretariat was tasked to provide regular updates. In addition, the Governing Council noted the proposal by the Executive Committee's recommendation for Eswatini and Peru to be removed from the list following the positive developments in the two countries.

2.5 IPU OBSERVERS' REQUEST

The Governing Council approved the recommendation by the Executive Committee on the request by the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPPAL) to be observers for the IPU. This was premised on the similar objectives the two Organisations shared which would result in mutual benefits.

2.6 IPU REGIONAL OFFICES

The Governing Council noted the piloting of Regional Offices by the IPU following the request by Uruguay and Egypt to run the offices. It was also noted that a two-year agreement between Uruguay and the IPU had been signed after which a review would be undertaken. It was noted that the host countries would meet all the costs relating to the running of the offices while the IPU would only render logistical support.

It was expected that once the pilot was done, countries, through their Geo political Groups, would have the liberty to open the Regional Offices to not only foster engagements outside the Assembly meetings but also visibility in line with the IPU Communications Strategy.

2.7 IPU TASK FORCE ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE/ MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS

The Governing Council noted the progress that had been registered by the task force that was established to deal with the war in Ukraine. While acknowledging that the Task Force had encountered some challenges especially in having audience with the President of Russia, it was resolved that the IPU needed to continue with its efforts. The Governing Council upheld the recommendation by the Executive Committee to maintain the Task Force.

The Governing Council further resolved that the IPU should also entrench its presence on other similar peace initiatives being precipitated by other bodies such as the Geneva Peace Summit being organized to resolve the Ukraine War.

On the Middle East Questions, the Governing Council noted and acknowledged the efforts made the IPU President following her meetings with authorities from both Palestine and Israel over the conflict in Gaza. The report by the Committee on the Middle East Questions was adopted.

2.8 EMERGENCY ITEMS

In accordance with Rule 11,1 and Article 14.2 of the Statutes, six items were received for inclusion as emergency items. After engagements, only three proposals were included for consideration as emergency items. The Africa Geo Political Group submitted an emergency item through South Africa on *raising awareness of the International Court of Justice provisional measures for Israel in relation to Gaza and the need for urgent action on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza*.

Following the vote, none of the three proposals garnered the required two-thirds majority to be included as an agenda item pursuant to Rule 11.2(a) of the Assembly. This was sadly the second consecutive time were an emergency item was not included on the agenda. This was mainly attributed to divisions and pre determined positions by Geo political Groups. Suffice to mention that this is one of the items the Working Group on the Amendments of Statutes is considering following proposals to reduce the statutory threshold for the vote on the inclusion of an emergency item on the agenda from two thirds majority to simple majority.

2.9 ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS AT THE 148TH ASSEMBLY

A total of twenty - six (26) positions were filled during the Assembly as well as other appointments. The following were elected from the Africa Geo Political Group.

- i. **Executive Committee** – Ms I.K Godalena to replace Ms I K N Sabangu (DRC) who was no longer an MP.
- ii. **Vice President of the IPU** – Mr A Kharchi (Algeria) was elected Vice-President to represent the Africa Geo Political Group. Each Geo Political Group elected a Vice President.
- iii. **Bureau of Women Parliamentarians** – Ms Z Mashaba to replace Ms N Bujela (Eswatini) who is no longer an MP.
- iv. **High Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violence** – Mr E.J Mulembwe (Mozambique).
- v. **Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights** – Mr E Uwizeyimana (Rwanda) to be filled in during the 149th IPU.

2.10 AMENDMENT TO THE IPU STATUTES AND RULES

Following submissions on the proposed amendments to the Statutes and Rules of the IPU by the Geo political groups, the Executive Committee constituted a working group or sub-committee to scrutinise the proposed amendments and present a report to EXCOM before the Governing Council could approve them. I was elected to chair this important sub-committee and so far the committee has held three meetings. The final report will be presented to the Governing Council after approval by the Executive Committee during the 149th Assembly.

2.11 FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE IPU

The Governing Council approved the Executive Committee's recommendation for the hosting of the 150th IPU Assembly and related meetings by Uzbekistan in April, 2025. With regard to the 149th Assembly and related meetings slated for October, 2024, no Member Parliament had expressed interest to host it. The Governing Council, therefore, approved the recommendation by the secretariat for it to be hosted in Geneva.

2.12 2025 WORLD SPEAKERS CONFERENCE/ WOMEN SPEAKERS CONFERENCE

The Governing Council endorsed the composition of the Preparatory Committee for the sixth World Speakers Conference comprising sixteen (16) speakers from the six Geo political groups and two Executive Committee members of which I was one of the nominees. The Africa Geo Political Group was represented by the Speaker of Angola and the Speaker of Algeria respectively. The Conference is scheduled to take place on 29th July to 31st July, 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland. The first preparatory meeting was held on 16th and 17th of May, 2024 in Geneva. The second and final preparatory meeting will take place alongside the 149th IPU Assembly in October.

Further, the preparatory meeting for the Fifteenth Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament was also held on 17th May, 2024 at the IPU secretariat in Geneva. The committee comprised six speakers from each Geo political group. Rt Hon Carolina Cerqueira, the speaker of Angola was nominated to represent the Africa Geo political group. The conference was planned to take place on 28th July, 2025, just before the World Speakers Conference.

2.13 IPU CREMER – PASSY PRIZE

The 2024 Cremer – Passy Prize would be awarded during the 149th Assembly and related meetings in October 2024. The 2024 prize was open to sitting parliamentarians who make an outstanding contribution to the defence and promotion of the IPU objectives as well as those who contributed to a more united, peaceful, sustainable and equitable world.

The nominations were expected to be channelled through the Geo political Groups and must have two nominees, the substantive and an alternate. The deadline for submissions of nominees was on 30th April, 2024. I hope our regional group submitted nominations before the deadline.

3.0 CONCLUSION

As I conclude, allow me also to take this opportunity to thank the immediate past SADC Group representative on the IPU EXCO, Hon Advocate Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda, Speaker of the Parliament of Zimbabwe for his immense contribution to the IPU EXCO and the effective representation of SADC Geo political Group and by extension, the Africa Geo Political Group.

I thank you all.
