



UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Constitutional & Parliamentary Information

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

The latest developments in Parliament and the issue of modernisation
(Gholamreza Nouri GHEZELJEH, Islamic Republic of Iran)

Using technology inside a smart hall
(Allam Ali Jaafer AL KANDARI, Kuwait)

Transcription of debates
(Najib EL KHADI, Morocco)

The Georgian Parliament's experience in implementing the Open Government Partnership Goals
(Givi MIKANADZE, Georgia)

Public and private sittings and their effect on the decision-making process
(General debate)

Raising matters of urgent public importance in the House by suspending rules and through Zero Hour Submission
(Desh Deepak VERMA, India)

The requirement for government to consult parliament before carrying out certain acts
(General debate)

Introduction to the Maghreb Consultative Council
(Saïd MOKADEM, Maghreb Consultative Council)

Challenges and achievements of legislative media systems: the Brazilian case
(Angela BRANDÃO, Brazil)

Public appointments
(Charles ROBERT, Canada)

A new legislature: legal and administrative procedures
(General debate)

Review of the ASGP / 68th year / N° 216 / Geneva, 15 – 17 October 2018

ASSOCIATION DES SECRETAIRES
GENERAUX DES PARLEMENTS

UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE



ASSOCIATION OF SECRETARIES-
GENERAL OF PARLIAMENTS

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

MINUTES OF THE SPRING SESSION

GENEVA

15 – 17 OCTOBER 2018

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 2018

Geneva
15-17 October 2018

List of attendance

MEMBERS PRESENT

NAME	COUNTRY
Mr Abdul Muqtader NASARY	Afghanistan
Mr Khudai Nazar NASRAT	Afghanistan
Mr Gjonçaj GENCI	<i>Albania</i>
Mr Mohamed Drissi DADA	Algeria
Mr Juan Pedro TUNESSI	Argentina
Dr Juan de Dios CINCUNEGUI	Argentina
Mr Ara SAGHATELYAN	Armenia
Dr Md. Abdur Rob HOWLADER	Bangladesh
Mr Marc VAN DER HULST	Belgium
Mr Gert van der BIESEN	Belgium
Mr Chencho TSHERING	Bhutan
Mrs Barbara DITHAPO	Botswana
Mr Mauro LIMEIRA MENA BARRETO	Brazil

Mrs Stefana KARASLAVOVA	Bulgaria
Mr Renovat NIYONZIMA	Burundi
Mr Marc RWABAHUNGU	Burundi
Mr OUM Sarith	Cambodia
Mr Désiré Geoffroy MBOCK	Cameroon
Mr Charles ROBERT	Canada
Mr Mario LABBE	Chile
Mr Miguel LANDEROS PERKIC	Chile
Mr Jean NGUVULU KHOJI	Congo (Democratic Republic of)
Mr Ahmad Saad EL-DIN MUHAMED	Egypt
Ms Maria Belén ROCHA DIAZ	Ecuador
Mr Victorino Nka OBIANG MAYE	Equatorial Guinea
Mr Peep JAHILO	Estonia
Mr Kayima KEBEDE	Ethiopia
Mr Timo TUOVINEN	Finland
Mr Christophe PALLEZ	France
Mr Givi MIKANADZE	Georgia
Dr Ulrich SCHÖLER	Germany
Mr Emmanuel ANYIMADU	Ghana
Mr José Carlos RODRIGUES DA FONSECA	Guinea Bissau
Dr Jean Rony GILOT	Haiti
<i>Mrs Snehlata SHRIVASTAVA</i>	India
<i>Mr Desh Deepak VERMA</i>	India

Mr Indra ISKANDAR	Indonesia
Mrs Damayanti HARRIS	Indonesia
Mr Salaheldeen AL ZANGANA	Iraq
Mr Gholamreza NOURI GHEZELGEH	Iran
Ms Elaine GUNN	Ireland
Mr Helgi BERNÓDUSSON	Iceland
Mr Jeremiah M. NYEGENYE	Kenya
Mrs Serah KIOKO	Kenya
Mr Yoo Ihn-tae	Korea (Republic of)
Mr Allam Ali Jaafer AL-KANDARI	Kuwait
Mr Adnan DAHER	Lebanon
Mr Lebohang Fine MAEMA	Lesotho
Mr Claude FRIESEISEN	Luxembourg
Ms Cvetanka IVANOVA	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Mrs Fiona KALEMBA	Malawi
Mr Najib EL KHADI	Morocco
Mrs Marija MIRJAČIĆ	Montenegro
Mrs Lydia INDOMBO	Namibia
Mrs Lydia KANDETU	Namibia
Mr Mohammed Ataba SANI-OMOLORI	Nigeria
Dr Khalid Salim AL-SAIDI	Oman
Mr Sheikh Ali bin Nasir bin Hamed AL-MAHROOQI	Oman

Mr Amjed Pervez MALIK	Pakistan
Mr Ibrahim KHRISHI	Palestine
Mrs Myra Marie VILLARICA	Philippines
Mr Dante Roberto MALING	Philippines
Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO	Portugal
Mr Fahad ALKHAYAREEN	Qatar
Ms Izabela CHENCIAN	Romania
Mr Sergey MARTYNOV	Russian Federation
Mr Mohamed ALMETAIRI	Saudi Arabia
Mr Baye Niass CISSÉ	Senegal
Ms Penelope Nolizo TYAWA	South Africa
Mr Masibulele XASO	South Africa
Mr Fernando DORADO FRIAS	Spain
Mr Carlos GUTIÉRREZ VICÉN	Spain
Mr Dhammika DASANAYAKE	Sri Lanka
Mr Abdelgadir ABDALLA KHALAFALLA	Sudan
Mr Mohamed YAGOUB	Sudan
Mr Philippe SCHWAB	Switzerland
Mrs Pornpith PHETCHAREON	Thailand
Mr Sorasak PIENVEJ	Thailand
Mr Fademba Madakome WAGUENA	Togo
Mr Mehmet Ali KUMBUZOĞLU	Turkey
Ms Jane LUBOWA KIBIRIGE	Uganda

Mr Paul GAMUSI WABWIRE	Uganda
Mr Petro BODNAR	Ukraine
Mr Ahmed Shabeeb AL DHAHERI	United Arab Emirates
Mr Simon BURTON	United Kingdom
Dr José Pedro MONTERO	Uruguay
Mrs Cecelia MBEWE	Zambia
Mr Kennedy Mugove CHOKUDA	Zimbabwe

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mr Wojciech SAWICKI	Council of Europe
Mr Said MOKADEM	Maghreb Consultative Council
Mr Sergio PIAZZI	Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)

SUBSTITUTES

Mrs Isabelle BARRA (for Mr Benoit REITER)	Luxembourg
Ms Marija MIRJAČIĆ (for Mr Aleksandar JOVIĆEVIĆ)	Montenegro
Mr Przemyslaw SOBOLEWSKI (for Agnieszka KACZMARSKA)	Poland
Ms Agata KARWOWSKA-SOKOLOWSKA (for Mr Jakub KOWALSKI)	Poland
Mr Mark HUTTON (for Sir David NATZLER)	United Kingdom
Mr Dino OEDIT (for Ms Ruth de WINDT)	Suriname
Mr HOANG Thanh Tung (for Mr NGUYEN Hanh Phuc)	Vietnam

ALSO PRESENT

Mr Fernando SABÓIA	Brazil
Ms Juliana Carla de FREITAS	Brazil
Ms Angela BRANDAO	Brazil
Mr Danilo AGUIAR	Brazil
Mr Jean Claude M. KALALA	Congo (Democratic Republic of)
Mr Stjepan VUKAS	Croatia
N. Nugraha	Indonesia
Ms Catia FABI	Italy
Mr Stefano THAULERO	Italy
Mr Trond GABRIELSEN	Norway
Mr Pakpoom MINGMITR	Thailand
Ms Kanteera LEELANOND	Thailand
Mr Pattapong ISSARIYAPRUET	Thailand
Ms Kawisara PRATHOOMCHAT	Thailand
Mr João Rui AMARAL	Timor Leste
Mr Barnabas BWALYA	Zambia
Mr Ndamuka MARINO	Zimbabwe
Mr Charles Ngeleja KADONYA (for Mr Alex Lumumba OBATRE)	East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
Mrs Mireille EZA	Parliamentary Assembly of Francophone Countries
Mrs Boemo SEKGOMA	SADC Parliamentary Forum

APOLOGIES

Dr Georg KLEEMANN	Germany
Dr Ute RETTLER	Germany
Dr Horst RISSE	Germany
Mr Kyaw SOE	Myanmar
Dr John BENGER	United Kingdom
Mr Edward OLLARD	United Kingdom

Table of contents

MINUTES OF THE SPRING SESSION	1
List of attendance	4
FIRST SITTING	14
Monday 15 October 2018 (morning)	14
1. Opening of the session	14
2. Members	14
3. Orders of the day	15
4. Election to the Executive Committee	19
5. Financial matters	19
6. Official languages	19
7. Communication by Mr Gholamreza Nourighezeljeh, Secretary General of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran: “The latest developments in Parliament, and the issue of modernization”	20
8. Communication by Mr Allam Ali Jaafer AL-KANDARI, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Kuwait: “Using technology inside a smart hall”	22
9. Concluding remarks	26
SECOND SITTING	28
Monday 15 October 2018 (afternoon)	28
1. Introductory remarks	28
2. Communication by Mr Najib EL-KHADI, Secretary General of the Chamber of Representatives, Morocco: “Transcription of debates”	28
3. Communication by Mr Givi MIKANADZE, Secretary General of the Parliament of Georgia: “The Georgian Parliament’s Experience in implementing the Open Government Partnership Goals”	29
4. General debate: Public and private sittings, and their effect on the decision-making process	33
5. Elections	35
THIRD SITTING	37
Tuesday 16 October 2018 (morning)	37
1. Introductory remarks	37
2. Orders of the day	37
3. Members	37
4. Elections	37
5. Communication by Mr Desh Deepak VERMA, Secretary-General of the Rajya Sabha of India: “Raising matters of urgent public importance in the House by suspending rules and through Zero Hour Submission”	38

6. General debate with informal discussion groups: The requirement for government to consult parliament before carrying out certain acts	43
7. Concluding remarks	43
FOURTH SITTING	44
Tuesday 16 October 2018 (afternoon)	44
1. Introductory remarks	44
2. Election	44
3. General debate with informal discussion groups: The requirement for government to consult parliament before carrying out certain acts	46
4. Communication by Mr Saïd MOKADEM, Secretary General of the Maghreb Consultative Council: Introduction to the Maghreb Consultative Council	49
5. Communication by Ms Angela BRANDÃO, Director of Communications of the Brazilian Federal Senate: “Challenges and achievements of legislative media systems: the Brazilian case”	54
6. Communication by Mr Charles Robert, Clerk of the House of Commons, Canada: “Public appointments”	57
7. Concluding remarks	57
FIFTH SITTING	58
Wednesday 17 October 2018 (morning)	58
1. Introductory remarks	58
2. Orders of the day	58
3. New Member	58
4. General debate with informal discussion groups: A new legislature: legal and administrative procedures	58
5. Concluding remarks	62
SIXTH SITTING	63
Wednesday 17 October 2018 (afternoon)	63
1. Introductory remarks	63
2. General debate with informal discussion groups: A new legislature: legal and administrative procedures	63
3. Presentation on recent developments in the IPU	67
3. Administrative and financial questions	68
4. Draft agenda for the next meeting in spring 2019	68
5. Concluding remarks	69

FIRST SITTING

Monday 15 October 2018 (morning)

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, was in the Chair

The sitting was opened at 11.15 am

1. Opening of the session

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, opened the session by welcoming members to Geneva in the sunshine

2. Members

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, said that the secretariat had received requests for membership which had been put before the Executive Committee and agreed to, as follows:

For membership:

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---|
| 1. | Mr Abdul Muqtader NASARY | Secretary General of the House of Elders, Afghanistan |
| 2. | Mr Gjonçaj GENCI | Secretary General of the National Assembly, Albania |
| 3. | Ms Lérya KOUNDE | Deputy Secretary General of the National Assembly, Benin |
| 4. | Mrs Maria Belén ROCHA DIAZ | Secretary General of the House of Representatives, Ecuador
(replacing Mrs Libia Rivas ORDOÑEZ) |
| 5. | Mr Indra ISKANDAR | Secretary General of the House of Representatives, Indonesia |
| 6. | Mr Michael SIALAI | Clerk of the National Assembly, Kenya
(replacing Mr Peter Charles OMOLO) |
| 7. | Ms Serah KIOKO | Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly, Kenya |

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|--|
| 8. | Ms Fathimath NIUSHA | Secretary General of the People's Majlis, Maldives |
| 9. | Ms Marija MIRJAČIĆ | Deputy Secretary General of the National Assembly, Montenegro |
| 10. | Mrs Lydia INDOMBO | Deputy Secretary General of the National Council, Namibia
(replacing Mrs Juliet MUPURUA) |
| 11. | Mr Dante MALING | Secretary General of the House of Representatives, Philippines
(replacing Mr Cesar PAREJA) |
| 12. | Ms Myra Marie VILLARICA | Secretary General of the Senate, Philippines
(replacing Mr Lutgardo BARBO) |
| 13. | Mr YOO, Ihn-tae | Secretary General of the National Assembly, Republic of Korea
(replacing Mr WOO, Yoon-keun) |
| 14. | Ms Izabela CHENCIAN | Secretary General of the Senate, Romania
(replacing Mr Ion VARGAU) |

The new members were agreed to.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, said that the Executive Committee had agreed to put forward the following ex-member of the Association for honorary membership:

Mr Geert Jan A. HAMILTON	Formerly Clerk of the Senate of the States General, Netherlands, and Vice President of the ASGP
--------------------------	---

The honorary member was agreed to.

3. Orders of the day

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, read the proposed orders of the day as follows:

Monday 15 October (morning)

9.30 am

Meeting of the Executive Committee

11 am

Opening of the session
Orders of the day of the Conference
New members

Theme : In the news

- **Communication by Mr Gholamreza Nourighezeljeh, Secretary General of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran: “The latest developments in Parliament, and the issue of modernization”**
- **Communication by Mr Allam Ali Jaafer AL-KANDARI, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Kuwait: “Using technology inside a smart hall”**

Monday 15 October (afternoon)

2.30 pm

Theme : Transparency

- Communication by Mr Najib EL-KHADI, Secretary General of the Chamber of Representatives, Morocco: “Transcription of debates”
- Communication by Mr Givi MIKANADZE, Secretary General of the Parliament of Georgia: “The Georgian Parliament’s Experience in implementing the Open Government Partnership Goals”
- General debate: Public and private sittings, and their effect on the decision-making process
- Moderator: Mrs Lydia KANDETU, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Namibia

5pm: Deadline for nominations for the post of ordinary member of the Executive Committee

Tuesday 16 October (morning)

9.30 am

- Meeting of the Executive Committee

10.00 am

Theme : Parliament and government

- Communication by Mr Desh Deepak VERMA, Secretary-General of the Rajya Sabha of India: “Raising matters of urgent public importance in the House by suspending rules and through Zero Hour Submission”
- General debate with informal discussion groups: The requirement for government to consult parliament before carrying out certain acts

Themes for informal discussion groups: Each group will take a separate category of decision and discuss the merits of any requirement for the government to consult parliament in such cases.

- Theme 1: Going to war

- (French, moderator: Mr Christophe PALLEZ)
- **Theme 2: Public appointments**
- (Spanish, moderator to be confirmed)
- **Theme 3: Constitutional changes (Brexit, for example)**
- (English, moderator: Mrs Jane LUBOWA KIBIRIGE)
- **Theme 4: Responses to national emergencies**
- (Arabic, moderator: Mr Allam Ali Jaafer AL-KANDARI)

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

Breakout groups in plenary, ExCo and secretariat rooms, and in the Montreux meeting room in the CCV.

Tuesday 16 October (afternoon)

2.30 pm

Theme: Parliament and government continued

- **General debate with informal discussion groups:** The requirement for government to consult parliament before carrying out certain acts

Rapporteurs to report back to the plenary, and general debate.

- Communication by Mr Saïd MOKADEM, Secretary General of the Maghreb Consultative Council: Introduction to the Maghreb Consultative Council
- Communication by Ms Angela BRANDÃO, Director of Communications of the Brazilian Federal Senate: “Challenges and achievements of legislative media systems: the Brazilian case”
- Communication by Mr Charles Robert, Clerk of the House of Commons, Canada: “Public appointments”

2.30pm: Election to post of ordinary member of the Executive Committee

Wednesday 17 October (morning)

9.30 am

- Meeting of the Executive Committee

10.30 am

Theme: Renewal

- **General debate (with possible informal discussion groups):** A new legislature: legal and administrative procedures

Themes for informal discussion groups:

- **Theme 1: Welcoming new MPs** (measures for the day of their arrival in parliament, the circulation of written information, and tours of the estate etc)
- (Arabic, moderator: Mr Najib EL KHADI)
- **Theme 2: Training of new MPS** (in legislative procedure, IT, etc)
- (French, moderator: to be confirmed)

- Theme 3: The distribution of key posts (the election of a Speaker and deputies, and of committee chairs, etc)
- (English, moderator: Mr Desh Deepak VERMA)
- Thème 4: Logistics (pay, transport, communications etc)
- (Spanish, moderator : to be confirmed)

Moderator: Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO, Deputy Secretary General of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal
Breakout groups in plenary, ExCo and secretariat rooms, and in the Montreux meeting room in the CCV.

Wednesday 17 October (afternoon)

2.30 pm

- General debate with informal discussion groups: A new legislature: legal and administrative procedures
Rapporteurs to report back to the plenary, and general debate.
- Presentation on recent developments in the IPU, including an update on the Centre for Parliamentary Innovation, by Kareen JABRE, Director of Programmes
- Administrative and financial questions
- Draft agenda for the next meeting in April 2019

Thursday 18 October (morning)

11.00 am (Geneva room, CCV)

Joint workshop with the IPU: “How good is parliament at holding government to account? How well am I performing my oversight role?”

The focus of the workshop will be on how to be more effective, as parliaments and as individual parliamentarians, in holding government to account. What actions might parliaments undertake to improve parliamentary oversight and its impact on citizens? How can individual MPs use oversight to make a difference? How can self-assessment of parliamentary oversight capacity and performance help in identifying those opportunities and reaching these goals?

The second Global Parliamentary Report (GPR), entitled *Parliamentary oversight: Parliament’s power to hold government to account* was launched during the 137th IPU Assembly in October 2017. This flagship publication provides a global perspective on how oversight is practiced by parliaments and makes 28 recommendations, notably for parliaments and parliamentarians, which amount to a scenario for change in favour of stronger oversight and accountability.

In order to help parliaments to address challenges in oversight, the IPU is preparing a self-assessment toolkit, which draws directly from the GPR recommendations. The toolkit will provide a method for parliaments and parliamentarians to assess their overall capacity for effective oversight and to formulate priorities for reform and development.

During the workshop, in an open and interactive discussion, parliamentarians and secretaries general will exchange views and share experiences on the challenges of improving oversight. Participants will exchange good practice on holding government to account and being effective parliamentarians.

During the final part of the workshop, participants will have an opportunity to provide their opinions, comments and suggestions on a selection of questions in the self-assessment toolkit. The feedback and suggestions from members of parliaments and secretaries general would bring an added value to this toolkit in the IPU’s efforts to make it as useful and beneficial to parliaments as possible.

The agenda for the Session was agreed to.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, reminded members that the usual time limits would apply: 10 minutes for the introduction of a debate or communication and five minutes for all other interventions. Further limitations could be imposed if necessary.

He reminded members that the Association had agreed to observe certain deadlines for the submission of subjects or texts. These had not been widely observed, and some items had been removed from the agenda at very short notice. He asked members who had not yet submitted their texts to do so at the earliest opportunity, not only to facilitate the work of the Association but also to build up institutional memory.

4. Election to the Executive Committee

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, announced that there was one post of ordinary member of the Executive Committee that would need filling during the session. The deadline for the receipt of nominations was at 5pm on that day. If necessary, an election would be held on Tuesday 16 October at 2.30pm.

He reminded members of the need to ensure balanced linguistic, regional and gender representation on the Executive Committee.

5. Financial matters

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, reminded the Association of the changes to the statutes that had been made in Dhaka in order to impose more stringent sanctions in the event of repeated non-payment of subscriptions. Any country whose payments were in arrears should approach the secretariat to rectify the situation.

6. Official languages

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, announced that interpretation was available into both English and French and, thanks to the Association of Secretaries General of Arab Parliaments, into Arabic.

He thanked the Mr Allam Ali Jaafer AL-KANDARI for the initiative of publishing a booklet containing details of all the members of the Association. This booklet was now being distributed.

7. Communication by Mr Gholamreza Nourighezeljeh, Secretary General of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran: “The latest developments in Parliament, and the issue of modernization”

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited Mr Gholamreza NOURIGHEZELJEH, Secretary General of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to give his presentation.

Mr Gholamreza NOURIGHEZELJEH (Iran) spoke as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am Gholamreza Nouri. Secretary General of the Islamic Parliament of Iran. I took the office 6 months ago. I am so pleased to visit you my colleagues once more.

I try to present a short history of our parliament and then I will speak about the trend of modernization in our parliament.

1. Iran’s Parliament is unicameral. Iran has the oldest parliament in Asia.
2. The first known parliament in Iran dates back to Parthian era. In this era, Megisthanes composed of two groups: nobles and monarchs.
3. However, the establishment of Iran’s first National Parliament dates back to Constitution Revolution under the order of Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar on Wednesday, August 8, 1906.

1. Since the Islamic Revolution, there have been 10 parliamentary elections. The voter turnout in the first and incumbent parliament has been 52/14% and 61/83% respectively.

1. Majlis has a ‘library’, ‘Center for Documents’ and ‘Moddaress Chamber’.
2. Iran’s Islamic Parliament Library, holding more than 570000 published books, 28000 manuscripts, more than 5000 journals and millions of documents, is an institute with more than 100 year background.
3. There are three distinct museums in Majlis Parliament. The oldest museum is called “Majlis Museum” keeping artistic and historical elements. The second museum is “History of Iran’s Publishing Industry Museum” demonstrating the history of publication and relevant equipment in Iran. The third museum is named “Manuscript Museum”.

In order to facilitate communication between constituents and their MPs, a place for protests and demonstration has been provided in front the Majlis building.

1. All people including academics, students and other group of people could see the public plenary from the Visitors’ Seat.

Number of female MPs: the highest number in the current Parliament compared to previous terms; (17 female MPs)

Majlis Female staff: 10 percent of Majlis staff are women who are assigning in all posts and their job promotion opportunity of male and female staff is equal.

“Protection and Renovation Management” is one of the active division in Majlis Library. Their activities are carried out by technically and professionally relevant repairers and experts through taking advantage of modern tools and proper and reversible substances in order to protect paper resources namely manuscripts, documents and journals from harmful environmental factors such as light, humidity, irregular temperature, as well as biological factors like microbe, mildew and physical factors such as rupture, paper sticking, etc.

MPs and staff are constantly providing with regular training courses aimed at improving their scientific and technological expertise.

In order to meet its energy needs, Majlis is using solar energy by installing solar cells inside the parliament. Each employee can improve his/her career ranking and according to the law, can use one score in case of increasing his/her training level.

Mr Baye Niass CISSÉ (Senegal) asked what percentage of the membership of the Iranian Parliament women accounted for. He stressed that the Senegalise had achieved gender balance overall and that, when the bureau had been renewed, four men and four women had been appointed as vice presidents.

He wanted to know about the possibility for the public to take the floor during debates, and what measures would be taken if this got out of hand. In Senegal the public did not have the right either to approve or reject proposals made by parliamentarians.

Mr Christophe PALLEZ (France) returned to the subject of biometric data being used to determine the attendance of parliamentarians. He asked for some clarification of how the system worked, particularly whether it applied only to plenary sessions or to all types of parliamentary business.

Mr Givi MIKANADZE (Georgia) asked about the accessibility of parliamentary buildings, in particular for people with disabilities.

Mr Mohamed Drissi DADA (Algeria) asked what consequences there would be for parliamentarians who were absent from either the plenary or committees.

Mr Renovat NIYONZIMA (Burundi) asked about how the system enabled ministers to be deposed.

Mr NOURIGHEZELJEH said that 6% of parliamentarians were women, but 12% of candidates were women.

The calling of the roll was done electronically and biometrically, using finger prints. There was a portal that opened with the use of finger prints. This enabled the

calculation of the quorum. The names of those who were absent was published, which enabled the public to monitor their representatives.

The entire parliamentary site was fully accessible to wheelchair users.

Enhanced security measures had been taken to protect the public and parliamentarians.

Draft laws could be proposed by members of the public, who were the people who would experience the impact of the law. 11 of the 56 laws passed in a previous session had come from suggestions made by the public. All parliamentarians had welcomed this initiative. It was digitalization that had made this possible.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked Mr NOURIGHEZELJEH for his communication.

8. Communication by Mr Allam Ali Jaafer AL-KANDARI, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Kuwait: “Using technology inside a smart hall”

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited Mr Allam Ali Jaafer AL-KANDARI, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Kuwait, to make his communication.

Mr Allam Ali Jaafer AL-KANDARI (Kuwait) spoke as follows:

Methods of Public Participation and Communication in the National Assembly of Kuwait

The march to democracy in Kuwait

After the declaration of the independence of the State of Kuwait on 19 June 1961, the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah decided to establish a democratic approach to the system of the state and its essence, to transform it to a civil state governed by a constitution in which the people participate in governance.

The late Emir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah called on the Kuwaiti people to elect a Constitutional Assembly on August 26, 1961, whose task is to draft a constitution for the country. The Assembly concluded drafting the Constitution and submitted it to the Emir on 11 November 1962, consequently in 1963 the Emir called upon the Kuwaiti people to participate in the first parliamentary elections in accordance with the provisions of the new constitution.

Since then, the Kuwaiti people have continued to elect their representatives to the National Assembly which composed of 50 elected members, representing the will of the people.

Public Participation and Communication

The Kuwaiti National Assembly seeks to enshrine the concept and culture of community participation among citizens in parliamentary affairs and urge them to express their views on the issues affecting them and to inform their representatives in Parliament about those issues. The Assembly believes that the role of the citizen does not stop at the ballot box.

This comes as a translation of Article 115 of the Constitution, which stipulates within its text that the Assembly forms amongst other yearly formed committees, a special committee that examines the petitions and complaints sent by citizens to the Assembly. The Committee shall clarify the matter from the competent authorities and inform the concerned party of the result. It is the only parliamentary committee which the constitution clearly states its formation. The Standing Orders of the National Assembly gives this committee the right to propose bills that that may provide solutions to the complaints it receives.

"Contribute to legislation" initiative

As part of the continuous connection with the public, the General Secretariat of the National Assembly launched a new service (contributed to the legislation), which is page on its website (kna.kw) dedicated to receiving citizens' suggestions on bills and motions on the laws submitted by the legislative and executive authorities which have been tabled on the agendas of the various parliamentary committees, thus, broadening the people's participation. This has enabled the citizens to interact daily and directly with what is going on in the Assembly and what will take place in Abdullah Al-Salem Hall in the future and involve them in the legislation process.

This service has won an award for the best project for community participation in the fourth GCC e-government held in the Kingdom of Bahrain in 2015.

Video

Citizens are now able to participate directly in the legislative process in Kuwait

"Contribute to legislation" which is a service provided by the National Assembly allows the citizens to contribute to legislation by directly commenting and submitting proposals on bills that are discussed by the legislative committees in the Assembly.

To submit your proposal from your mobile phone or personal computer, go to www.kna.kw and then click on "contribute to the legislation" service. Then choose the committee you wish to submit your proposal to from the list of committees that appear to you and choose the legislation you want to submit your proposal on from the list of bills which are currently being discussed by the Committee by clicking on "show and comment".

You will be presented with a page displaying all the information related to the bill you have chosen. After viewing the information about the bill, enter your full name, telephone number, e-mail address and Civil ID number in the designated places and then submit your proposal, you may attach any files related to your proposal to be presented and discussed in the committee. Make sure that the information you

provided is correct and then press the OK button, then your proposal will be sent to the committee directly.

Contribute to the legislation of laws that affect your life.

Parliamentary information system

The Secretariat of the National Assembly has launched a new service for documents and information on its website (<http://search.kna.kw>). This page provides archival information dating back to the beginning of the democratic experiment, which includes all minutes since the Constitutional Assembly to the last setting of the last session.

The service also provides parliamentary questions and replies of the Executive Authority to those questions, interpellations, government programs, motions, bills and other information of interest to each researcher in parliamentary affairs.

The aim of this service is to provide MPs and Ministers with parliamentary information that may assist them in their legislative work and oversight, in addition to connecting with researchers and those interested in parliamentary affairs to help them reach their research goals easily.

Panel Discussions

On the same path, the parliamentary committees of the National Assembly proceeded to devote the principle of public participation when reviewing some of the laws by communicating with public. The committees held several panel discussions in which they called for specialists in the public and private sectors, and all those interested in this matter were invited to take a look into how to amend some legislations in order to keep up with legislative and legal developments.

The discussions resulted in radical and substantive legislative changes that resulted in approving new laws and important amendments to previous laws.

The most important challenges facing the State of Kuwait and the region at present.

Panel Discussion

“To rotate the wheel” to discuss the problems and solutions on intrapreneurs.

A new approach adopted by the National Assembly during the fourth session of the fourteenth legislative term by launching a number of activities related to community participation for its importance in establishing a democratic culture based on listening to the views of others and strengthening bridges of communication, dialogue, freedom of expression, exchange of views, and respecting them regardless of their differences.

The General Secretariat of the National Assembly also organized a series of panel discussions which dealt with a number of important topics such as social advocacy, changes in the social structure of Kuwait, the emigration of national talent and the

isolation of creatives, with the participation of a number of Kuwaiti intellectuals and specialists.

It should also be noted that these panel discussions are open to the public to attend and participate. The Assembly formed a special committee to consider the recommendations issued at the conclusion of each panel discussion, to be submitted to parliament in order to develop solutions to the topics discussed.

Students Parliament

The National Assembly has not ignored the importance of the role of young people, who make up 60 per cent of Kuwaiti society. The National Assembly began in 2013 with the establishment of the First Student Parliament under the patronage of the Speaker of the National Assembly, Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanim.

The National Assembly receives on a yearly basis a number of high school students from different provinces and educational districts in Kuwait which make up the Student Parliament.

These settings enjoy broad parliamentary and governmental attention, these settings are presided by the Speaker of the National Assembly and are attended by the Minister of Education and Higher Education, and a wide range of MPs and Ministers whom are keen to listen to the students' concerns and problems and to try to work on solutions and overcome obstacles facing them.

Through this program the Assembly aims to introduce the concept of democracy, to raise parliamentary awareness and to train students to exercise their right to express their views objectively and to accept the different viewpoints and to allow them to be familiar with the nature of the sound parliamentary and political practice and the nature of the relationship between the legislative and executive branches.

Video

Media and Public Relations Sector

Media Department

Parliamentary Awareness Sector

National Assembly Sitings

Students Parliament

2014 Setting

I welcome you to the opening of the First Session of the First Legislative Term of the 2014 Student Parliament

We, the undersigned, submit to the Assembly a motion to present the subject for discussion in order to clarify the Government's policy and exchange views.

Approval ?

Those attending the setting 59

Those who approve 53

Those who disapprove 5

Thus approval of the bill and it is referred to the Government.

Honoring the participating students.

We are here in the National Assembly, ready to hear from you and to interact with you. This is your right, and it is our duty. Thank you very much for honoring us under the dome of Abdullah Al-Salem in the people's house.

In conclusion, the communication of the legislative institution with the public and its interaction with them, is a continuation to walk on the path laid out by the Founding Fathers (the Rulers and the people) to the democratic life in Kuwait.

Today, The National Assembly seeks to consolidate democratic principles more effectively and focus on the youth and educate them on constitutional concepts and raise their awareness on their rights and duties towards their homeland.

Mr Givi MIKANADZE (Georgia) asked for some statistics on the number of citizens who had made applications under the system, and asked what the system required of MPs and committees.

Mrs Angela BRANDÃO (Brazil) asked how students were elected to the student parliament.

Dr Jean Rony GILOT (Haiti) asked whether sittings ever had to be suspended because of a lack of quorum discovered during a roll call.

Mr AL-KANDARI said that submissions were shared on the website and thus taken into account.

Students were selected by means of free and transparent elections held in schools and provinces. Representatives from the parliament attended the student parliament and the elections.

A session had only been adjourned once due to lack of quorum.

Mr Salahdeldeen AL-ZANGANA (Iraq) said that, in Iraq, proposals were submitted by the National Assembly. He asked if the Kuwaiti Parliament had the authority to require the government to publish submissions on their website.

Mr AL-KANDARI said that all proposals were published on the National Assembly website once they had been received in parliament.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked Mr AL-KANDARI for his communication.

9. Concluding remarks

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, closed the sitting.

The sitting ended at 12.32 pm.

SECOND SITTING

Monday 15 October 2018 (afternoon)

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, was in the Chair

The sitting was opened at 2.43 pm

1. Introductory remarks

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, opened the sitting.

2. Communication by Mr Najib EL-KHADI, Secretary General of the Chamber of Representatives, Morocco: “Transcription of debates”

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited Mr Najib EL-KHADI, Secretary General of the Chamber of Representatives, Morocco, to make his communication.

Mr Najib EL-KHADI (Morocco) spoke as follows:

[\[Text is available here\]](#)

Mr Baye Niass CISSÉ (Senegal) specified that, in the Senegalese Parliament, the system was time-consuming because it relied on editors who checked reports of sessions. He said that the Moroccan example was an inspiring one, and asked if committee reports were also produced in this way.

Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO (Portugal) asked whether the system in Morocco had been tested on different voices. He asked if the 80% success rate was the result of a series of tests, or whether this was just a first result in a system that was still being improved. The Portuguese Parliament had doubts about the ability of its own system to adapt to the large number of people who were likely to speak in any given plenary session.

Mr Simon BURTON (United Kingdom) asked how the development coped with the many different languages in Morocco. Hansard would be very open to a collaboration with the Moroccan parliament.

Mr Mehmet Ali KUMBUZOĞLU (Turkey) said that a similar project was underway in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. When an MP objected to any proceeding, the Speaker had to consult the minutes. This process took 20 minutes, which was too long. For this reason, a voice recognition system was being trialed, which it was hoped would only take five minutes.

In Turkey 65 note-takers were employed. Their notes were matched with the voice recognition system to create the minutes. The system could not cope with overlapping voices.

He asked whether the Moroccan parliament still employed manuscript transcriptions.

Mr EL-KHADI said that the parliament was in the first phase of activation of the system in committee meetings. It was hoped that the system would help reduce delays in the production of minutes. Committee reports were not a simple record of what was said so were separately drafted.

The parliament had found that the system adapted well to the different languages and dialects used in about 85% of the cases. The remaining 15% of the transcripts required correction. The artificial intelligence used gradually adapted and developed over time.

Eight staff were employed.

Mrs Jane LUBOWA KIBIRIGE (Uganda) asked who had the right to make corrections, given that MPs might want to make changes for their own benefit. She asked how the system recognized members, and whether her staff could visit Morocco to conduct some benchmarking

Mr Marc VAN DER HULST (Belgium) spoke in French

Ms Penelope Nolizo TYAWA (South Africa) said that in South Africa, there were 11 languages, and sign language. She asked whether the Moroccan system had been tested for sign language, too.

Mr EL-KHADI regretted that the system was not yet able to cope with sign language, but noted that a sign language specialist was nonetheless available during all public sessions.

He noted that, in Morocco, transcripts were factual and reported everything that happened in a sitting, and could not be amended.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked Mr EL-KHADI for his communication and suggested that further questions were taken up during the coffee break. Digitisation presented a series of interesting issues in relation to transcription.

3. Communication by Mr Givi MIKANADZE, Secretary General of the Parliament of Georgia: “The Georgian Parliament’s Experience in implementing the Open Government Partnership Goals”

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited Mr Givi MIKANADZE, Secretary General of the Parliament of Georgia, to make his communication.

Mr Givi MIKANADZE (Georgia) spoke as follows:

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a global initiative that was launched in September 2011 and lists more than 70 participating countries. OGP member states commit to ensuring citizen awareness and engagement in decision-making process as well as implementing high professional and ethical standards in state services, conducting governance reforms and improving public services by means of innovative technologies.

Georgia was one of the first countries to join the OGP. In 2014, the OGP was expanded to cover the activities of national legislatures. As a result, the Parliaments of Chile, France, Georgia in 2015 and later other countries joined the global initiative.

In September 2017, Georgia was elected as a Chair of the OGP initiative for a one-year term and in July 2018 hosted the 5th OGP Global Summit. The first day of the 3-days event was an Open Parliament Day, involving parliamentary delegations from more than 25 countries.

During the past one year, together with the OGP Secretariat, Georgia has done a great deal to advance the OGP's strategic goals at the international level, such as enhancing citizen engagement, increasing transparency and fight against corruption, implementing innovations in the delivery of public services, and establishing better partnerships.

The Parliament of Georgia has implemented numerous reforms since our accession to the Declaration on Parliamentary Openness in 2015. Today we stand proud of our efforts and accomplishments in making the legislative body more transparent, more accessible to citizens, and more accountable to them. Nevertheless, challenges remain. Therefore, we are moving forward because the road to success and improvement is always a “work in progress”.

In this context, the 2018-2019 Open Parliament Action Plan makes our goals even more ambitious. For example, the Georgian Parliament took the commitment to institutionalize a parliamentary self-assessment toolkit designed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The toolkit invites parliaments to evaluate their performance against a set of criteria based on the core values. The purpose is not to rank parliaments, it is to help them to identify their strengths and weaknesses against international criteria to determine priorities for strengthening the parliamentary institution. Furthermore, we plan to launch a new, flexible and interactive website of the Parliament, which will be customized for users with impaired vision; to increase citizen engagement in budget preparation and adoption process; to establish citizen engagement center in the Parliament; to publish information on parliamentary oversight; and to strengthen the effectiveness and transparency of the Parliament using innovative Technologies. Moreover, the new Rules and Procedures of Parliament envisages additional guarantees to ensure greater accountability and transparency.

Fortunately, we are not alone in this process. In order to successfully implement the initiative, together with the Permanent Parliamentary Council on Open Governance, its Consultative Group consisting of Civil Society and partner international organizations representatives, has been established. Civil Society Organizations were influential in increasing public debate on a wide range of issues related to transparency and good governance.

I would highlight number of achievements of the Parliament of Georgia within the framework of the OGP activities, which can be split into the following blocks:

Block #1 - Citizen Engagement

- Amendments made to the Rules and Procedures of the Parliament of Georgia enable citizens to submit e-petitions to the Chairperson of the Parliament (at least 300 signatories);
- As a result of legislative changes, citizens are able to collect e-signatures for legislative initiatives (at least 25000 citizens);
- Reconstruction of the Tbilisi Palace of the Parliament of Georgia for adapting it to the needs of people with impaired mobility and vision (to be completed by the end of 2018);
- Citizens can now electronically comment on draft laws posted on the web-site of the Parliament. Moreover, the Parliamentary Committees have been mandated to review citizens' comments and opinions on the draft laws and if necessary, include them in the Committee conclusions.

Block #2 - Access to Information

- The web-site of the Georgian Parliament (www.parliament.ge) is under reconstruction to become customized for users with disabilities;
- Amendments made to draft laws are displayed on the Parliament's web-site in a visible format (through using the track changes function).
- Audio protocols of plenary sessions of the Parliament are proactively disclosed.

Block #3 - Accountability

- Since 2018, Parliamentary Committees are mandated to elaborate and publish their action plans and annual reports;
- Civil Society Day has been institutionalized at the Parliament of Georgia. The first meeting with the civil society organizations, led by the Chairman of the Parliament, held in March 2018;
- In accordance with the new Rules and Procedures, the Parliament is obliged to develop and publish its annual activity reports.

Block #4 - Transparency

- A Public Information Module was created. The Module collects and regularly updates parliamentary information that is of high public interest (for example: reports on the parliamentary budget execution, information on parliamentary wages, detailed contact information of MPs, etc.);
- The list of Proactively Disclosed Information was significantly expanded and includes the following information:
 - Statistical data on the quantity of legislative initiatives and adopted laws;

- Plenary and committee hearings of reports submitted by the Government and other bodies accountable to the Parliament;
- Establishment of temporary and investigation commission of the Parliament;
- Conclusions, proposals and opinions elaborated in relation to draft laws;
- Statistical data on questions sent by MPs, committees and factions;
- Budget execution report of the Parliament;
- Justified absence of the MPs during plenary and committee sessions;
- Statistical data on the amount of plenary and committee hearings were postponed due to lack of quorum;
- Business trip expenses and reimbursement of MPs.

🚦 **Block #5 - Technologies and Innovations**

- In order to inform citizens about legislative activities, the Parliament's Mobile Application – GeoParliament – was developed. By using this application, the citizen can:
 - Post a comment on draft laws;
 - Track draft laws through all hearings;
 - Check the Parliamentary Calendar;
 - View the agenda of the Parliament Bureau.

Finally, allow me to finish by sharing with you the key lesson learnt from our efforts: everything is to be done to increase transparency and accountability of state institutions, and to improve functioning of governance system using innovative technologies. It can be challenging in short-term, but it provides long-term stability, legitimacy, and ultimately, effectiveness of public institutions. The Georgian Parliament firmly believes that this is a strategic investment in a better future of our countries and societies.

The Open Government Partnership is a unique opportunity for us to revisit our efforts in making the public institutions more open, more accountable and more responsive to citizens. But more importantly, it is also an opportunity to look ahead in future and jointly address the remaining challenges in many areas of our citizens' interest.

Mr Abdul Muqtader NASARY (Afghanistan) asked what the difference was between the application and the website.

Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO (Portugal) asked about whether signatures were collected from within the website or on a separate platform. He also asked about travel expenses, and whether details on these were personalized.

Mr Abedelgadir ABDALLA KHALAFALLA (Sudan) asked about the impact of publishing attendance statistics.

Mr MIKANADZE said that the mobile application was directly linked to the website and simply made the system more accessible. The application was free to download.

Signatures could be collected electronically or in hard copy, and both were acceptable at the same time. It was part of the parliamentary website. The parliament was also in contact with the Ministry for Justice, which verified the signatures.

Travel expenses were published on an individual basis and itemized. It was also possible for members of the public to obtain a summary of expenditure.

Attendance statistics had a significant impact because the media and public became immediately aware of cases where politicians were repeatedly absent.

Dr Md. Abdur Rob HOWLADER (Bangladesh) he asked how comments were incorporated into legislation.

Mr MIKANADZE said that all comments from the public were taken into account, and that committees then decided whether or not to incorporate them.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked Mr MIKANADZE for his communication.

*** Coffee break between 3.35 pm and 4.00 pm ***

4. General debate: Public and private sittings, and their effect on the decision-making process

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited Mrs Lydia KANDETU, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Namibia, to moderate the general debate.

Mrs Lydia KANDETU (Namibia) spoke as follows:

[text is not available]

Mr Charles ROBERT explained that, in the Canadian Chamber of Commons, sittings were public and broadcast. It was almost impossible to hold a sitting in private. Secret sittings had been held during the Second World War, but only because very sensitive issues had been discussed. Committees could also receive confidential evidence, and it was up to the Chamber to decide whether they could be published.

Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO (Portugal) said that, in Portugal, committee sessions had previously been conducted behind closed doors. Since 2007, their sittings had been made public. To illustrate this, he gave the example of a man who suffered from a disease and appeared before a committee to plead for a policy change in his case. The appeal was made in public and government policy was altered.

Mr Salahdeldeen AL-ZANGANA (Iraq) said that, in Iraq, there were two methods for legislating. Both of them required the intervention of committees at various stages in the process.

Mrs Pornpith PHETCHAREON (Thailand) said that sittings were public according to the rules of procedure. The President made broadcasting arrangements. Certain sittings were held in private for reasons of security and confidentiality, and could only be made public with permission from the president.

Mr Mark HUTTON (United Kingdom) said that plenary sittings were only in public. There were procedural mechanisms that could be deployed to try to force private sittings, but these were subject to game-playing. The House of Commons was wrestling with how to hear from people on personal or confidential matters, without subjecting them to unwanted publicity.

The chairs of select committees were elected by secret ballot, which meant that it was much more difficult for the whips to be involved.

He also referred to by-elections, the process for which meant that it was usually the opposing party that got to select the candidate.

Mr Najib EL KHADI (Morocco) underlined the importance of transparency, which had an effect on the quality of parliamentary publications. He reminded his colleagues that the media and pressure groups could have a significant impact on the decision-making process, and that this could be problematic if parliament acted in favour of special interests.

In Morocco, plenary sittings were public, but committee meetings were held in private, unless the bureau decided to open them up to the press. Once they had been opened to the press, they would be broadcast by the media, which could present problems. He suggested that this be made a topic for general debate at the following session of the ASGP.

Mrs KANDETU said that, in Namibia the public accounts committee was chaired by the opposition. She asked whether the same was true in other countries.

Mrs Jane LUBOWA KIBIRIGE (Uganda) said that in Uganda, accountability committees were chaired by the opposition. Only a committee dealing with security sat in private.

Mr Desh Deepak VERMA (India) said that in 2011, House proceedings were opened to the media, by means of live television. One unintended result was that disruptive members became even more disruptive, presumably thinking that they had a good opportunity to showcase their behaviour. The Chair then ruled that disturbances would not be broadcast on television, which called a reversal in this trend.

Committee proceedings were conducted in private. Only witnesses were admitted into the room. Closing committees to the media meant that members had no electoral incentive to behave according to their party's position, and consequently compromises could be achieved.

Mr Kennedy Mugove CHOKUDA (Zimbabwe) said that committee proceedings were open to the public and media, except when committees were in deliberative

mode. As in India, broadcast proceedings tended to encourage members to play to the gallery, but the public seemed to like this.

Mr Barnabas BWALYA (Zambia) said that proceedings in Zambia were public, and broadcast on television and radio. The same applied to committee meetings, except when it came to the House business committee, public appointments, and changes to the standing orders. It could be difficult to strike a balance: sometimes in private, members were free to be objective, whereas in public they were tempted to try to impress the public.

Mr Gholamreza NOURI GHEZELGEH (Iran) said that it seemed that everyone agreed that the plenary should always be open. It was impossible for every member of the public to attend committee meetings. For this reason, in Iran, committees invited representatives of, for example, NGOs. This ensured that all views could be heard in peace. Only parliamentarians were present for votes, which protected the privacy of parliamentarians in casting their ballots.

Mrs KANDETU thanked all the contributors to the debate.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, said that, in Switzerland, private plenary sittings had been provided for in the rules. However, no such sitting had taken place since the Second World War and, in practice, because of the ubiquity of mobile phones, it would be difficult to arrange one. The Swiss Parliament had decided that it would be necessary to have 24 hours' notice to ensure that the chamber was free of all means of recording the sitting. All telephones and bags would have to be left outside. In the modern world, private sittings were almost impossible.

Private sittings did allow parties to abandon their more dogmatic and partisan postures, but this had to be balanced with public interest in parliamentary work.

He noted that, on occasion, speakers addressed their remarks to dear colleagues and viewers, which showed that they valued the public following that their sittings attracted.

5. Elections

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, announced that he had received five nominations for the post of ordinary member of the Executive Committee, as follows:

- Mr Ahmed Shabeed AL DHAHERI Secretary General of the Federal National Council, United Arab Emirates
- Mr Givi MIKANADZE Secretary General of the Parliament of Georgia
- Mr José Pedro MONTERO First Secretary of the Senate, Uruguay
- Mr Abdul Muqtader NASARY, Secretary General of the Upper House (Meshrano Jirga), Afghanistan

- Mr Gholamreza NOURI GHEZELGEH, Secretary General of the Islamic Parliament of Iran

The sitting ended at 5.05 pm

THIRD SITTING

Tuesday 16 October 2018 (morning)

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, was in the Chair

The sitting was opened at 10.05 am

1. Introductory remarks

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, welcomed members back.

2. Orders of the day

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, noted that there were two additional communications on the agenda for that afternoon.

The orders of the day were agreed to.

3. Members

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, said that the secretariat had received requests for membership which had been put before the Executive Committee and agreed to, as follows:

For membership:

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|---|
| 1. | Mr Molete SELETE | Secretary General of the Senate,
Lesotho |
| 2. | Mr João Rui AMARAL | Deputy Secretary General of the
National Assembly, Timor Leste |

For observer status:

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|--|
| 1. | Mrs Boemo SEKGOMA | Secretary General of the SADC
Parliamentary Forum |
|----|-------------------|--|

The new members were agreed to.

4. Elections

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President,

5. Communication by Mr Desh Deepak VERMA, Secretary-General of the Rajya Sabha of India: “Raising matters of urgent public importance in the House by suspending rules and through Zero Hour Submission”

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, Vice-President, invited Mr Desh Deepak VERMA, Secretary-General of the Rajya Sabha of India, to make his communication.

Mr Desh Deepak VERMA (India) spoke as follows:

I. Introduction

The Parliament of India¹ is the highest body representing the sovereign will of the people. It performs, among others, the function of representing all the States and the people of India. Parliament of India has been a microcosm of the country, giving voice to the changing mores of the society, its urges and aspirations. Like a reflecting surface, Parliament mirrors the country.

Deliberative function is a subset of the representative function in the sense that Parliament has to deliberate on issues confronting the States and the people, as it represents them. The deliberative function remains a dynamic feature that brings to the fore Parliament's constructive as well as adversarial role. Parliament's centrality in the country's representative democracy is reflected in its deliberative functions.

Raising of matters of public importance on the floor of the House is one of the foremost duties of the Members of Parliament. This serves two important purposes - of securing executive accountability and of bringing to the notice of the Government the issues of abiding public importance. Ventilating public grievances to address the concerns of the people is a constant task to which the Members of Parliament as public representatives are committed. Through a host of procedural devices,² Members raise matters of urgent public importance on the floor of the House and hold the Government to account on behalf of the people. From time to time, procedural reforms are also being made to make these devices more effective.

II

In the present paper, an attempt has been made to delineate the deliberative functions, with particular reference to the functioning of Rajya Sabha, under the following provisions:

- Suspension of Rules under Rule 267; and
- Matters Raised with the Permission of the Chair : Zero Hour Submissions

¹ Comprises two Houses, namely the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and the House of the People (Lok Sabha).

² For Example, Questions, Short Duration Discussion, Calling Attention, Special Mentions, Motions and Resolutions, etc.

Suspension of Rules under Rule 267

At times, there may arise situations when Members seek to raise issues beyond the available tools depending upon the urgency of the matter. Envisaging such eventuality, Rule 267 has been provided in the Rules and Procedures of the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) to raise urgent issues of public importance by suspending normal operation of Rules.

(a) The procedure

According to Rule 267, a Member may, with the consent of the Chairman, move a Motion that any Rule may be suspended in its application related to the business listed before the House for that day. It further provides that 'this rule shall not apply where specific provision already exists for suspension of a Rule under a particular Chapter of the Rules'. The Chairman alone has the power to give consent for moving of a motion for suspension of a rule and it is for the House to decide whether a particular rule should be suspended or not. If the Motion is carried, the Rule in question is suspended.

A Member can give notice under above-mentioned Rule 267 addressed to the Secretary-General for the suspension of Rules for raising an issue of urgent public importance. The Notice should contain the text of the proposed Motion to be moved with specific reference to Rule 267 and should be given after the adjournment of the last sitting day and before 10.00 am on the day on which suspension is sought. The primary objective of such a Motion is to draw the attention of the Government to a matter of urgent public importance in regard to which a motion or a resolution with proper notice will be too late.

The Member whose Motion is admitted by the Chairman moves the Motion when called upon. He may make a brief statement in favour of the Motion. Thereafter, the Motion is put to vote. The House may reject or adopt the Motion by voice vote or by Division. Adoption of the Motion results in the suspension of the listed business and commencement of the discussion on the subject of the motion.

(b) The Chair's Discretion

Although the Chairman has the discretion to give or deny his consent to such a Motion to suspend any Rule, such discretion is invariably exercised with utmost caution. Every such request is judged on its merit before the consent is given.

(c) Demands for Suspension of Question Hour

There had been very frequent demands from some Members to seek suspension of Question Hour to raise certain issues. Though there is no separate provision for suspending the Question Hour, most of the Notices under aforesaid Rule 267 pertained to suspension of Question Hour. The successive Chairmen have been very reluctant to allow the suspension of Question Hour under Rule 267 as it affected the interests of the House as a whole. On several occasions, the Question Hour was not dispensed with but proceedings could not be conducted due to persistent demand for suspension leading to disruptions. In order to salvage the Question Hour from such demands of suspension, with effect from 24 November, 2014, the Question Hour had been shifted as the second hour of the day and the Zero Hour, which used to be in the second hour, became the first business of the day wherein 'Matters with the Permission of Chair' are raised.

(d) Rule 267 - A Procedural Challenge to Regular Business

Despite such change in the schedule of daily business, often, Members tend to make mention of an issue in the House invoking Rule 267 instead of giving prior Notice under that Rule for the consideration of Chairman. On 26 July 2017, during the Monsoon Session of Rajya Sabha, a Member objected to this practice on the ground that consent of the Chairman was necessary before raising an issue under Rule 267. He argued that listed business should be given precedence over such notices under Rule 267. The Deputy Chairman, who was presiding at that time, explained that the Notice under Rule 267 for suspension of Rule gets the precedence and has to be disposed off first by the Chair. The Chair may ask the mover of Notice to make a brief statement and then decide its admissibility after listening to the statement. He further said that the Treasury benches should not move for suspension of business by invoking Rule 267 because day's business is decided primarily by the Government in consultation with the Chairman and that it was the duty of the Treasury benches to ensure that the House runs as per the listed business.

However, the Leader of the House offered a counter argument saying that while the Chair has been using its discretion for allowing Members to raise motions and propose motions under Rule 267 but in every case, it has been found that the issues raised do not merit consideration under Rule 267. He said that it was a practice, which is being abused.

(e) Rule 267 - Present Scenario

Though demands for suspension of business under Rule 267 were raised, but they seldom found favour with the present Chairman. With the availability of other specific tools for raising issues of urgent public importance, the Chairman has discouraged the Members to seek suspension of Rules and advised them to make use of other devices. As such, suspension of regular business of the House can be justified to discuss a matter of very urgent importance and that too not as matter of routine but in rare circumstances. Therefore, the Chairman has disallowed the Notices and, instead, suggested the Members to give separate Notices to raise the issue in Zero Hour as a 'Matter to be raised with permission of Chairman'. As the Members still persisted to move a Motion to suspend the Rules, the Chair cautioned them that they cannot even move the Motion without Chair's permission. The Chairman's firm approach in not allowing the notices under Rule 267 has yielded positive results. The Members belonging to all sections of the House now get more opportunities to raise matters of public importance as Zero Hour submissions.

Matters Raised with the Permission of the Chair : Zero Hour Submissions

With instant information access through real-time media, issues of serious and emergent nature come to the notice of the Members almost on a daily basis. Members feel it their duty to raise such matters at the first available opportunity in the House without having to wait for complying with the normal rules of procedure. A very important device which does not have any specific sanction of the rule book but has evolved over the years and has gained conventional recognition for raising

such matters of urgent public importance is the 'Zero Hour' submissions. These submissions have come to be known as 'Matters Raised with the Permission of the Chair'.

(a) Zero Hour : Change in Timing

Though not provided in the Rules of Procedure, Zero Hour submissions have emerged as an effective tool for raising the urgent issues of public interest at short notice without detailed procedural requirements. The Question Hour in Rajya Sabha used to be earlier held from 11.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon, and as such the zero hour used to begin at 12.00 noon after the end of the Question Hour. However, since November 2014, the Question Hour having been shifted to 12.00 noon - 1.00 p.m., the first item that is taken up at the commencement of the sitting at 11.00 a.m. is the laying of papers, etc., followed by matters of recent and urgent public importance raised with the permission of the Chair.

(b) Regulating Zero Hour

A set of guidelines have been evolved over the years to regulate the zero hour proceedings. These guidelines provide for raising of only those matters which have occurred very recently. Any Member wishing to raise a matter of urgent public importance on a particular day has to give notice of his or her intention to the Chairman latest by 9:30 a.m. on that day. A synopsis of the matter to be raised justifying its urgency as well as importance has to be clearly indicated in the notice. The Chairman after due consideration and examination of all such notices received, may permit them to be raised. It is the prerogative of the Chairman to admit notices on issues, which are urgent and important. The Chairman also has the prerogative to decide the order in which the admitted matters will be permitted to be raised in the House. Any issue, which in the discretion of the Chairman requires structured discussion is not considered for being raised as zero hour submission.

A Member can make only one submission in a week. There are a maximum of 15 submissions to be made during Zero Hour in a day. On any particular subject not more than one submission is permitted on a day. In case of there being notices from more than one Member on the same subject at the same time and for the same day, the Chairman has the discretion to decide which Member will be permitted to make the submission irrespective of the order in which the notices were submitted. Other Members may associate themselves with it if they so wish. A Member is allowed a maximum of three minutes to make his or her submission. To enforce the time limit a count-down clock installed in the House makes the mike go off automatically after three minutes of the Member raising the matter. Only the Member who gave notice for raising a matter is permitted to raise the matter in the House. No Member can give notice on behalf of any other Member.

(c) Zero Hour Submissions : A New Orientation

The present Chairman has been providing more opportunities to the Members to make Zero Hour submissions. On the one hand, the Chairman has been discouraging the Members to eschew the practice of seeking suspension of the rules under Rule 267, and on the other, he has been encouraging them to make greater use of Zero Hour submissions for raising matters of urgent public importance in the House.

There has been a perceptible change in the approach of the Members towards these procedures. As a result, the receipt of notices under rule 267 has gone down considerably in the last three Sessions under the present Chairman, whereas the Zero Hour submissions have shown a rise in number indicating a more regulated way of adhering to the regular business of the House.

III

Way Forward

Parliament of India, in particular Rajya Sabha, has been alive to the concerns of the Members to allow them more opportunities to raise matters of public importance. Successive Chairmen through numerous rulings and directions have strengthened the framework of rules that govern the proceedings of the House. Since some Members expressed concerns about the way the notices under Rule 267 were dealt with, relegating the importance of the Zero Hour submissions, and also to address other procedural inadequacies, the Chairman, Rajya Sabha in May 2018, has constituted a Committee to review the rules of procedure. The Committee, inter alia, will go into the whole gamut of operation of Rule 267. The Report of the Committee is expected in a couple of months and, it is hoped, that the recommendations will go a long way in making the rules and procedures of the House effective. A strong regimen of rules is imperative to utilise the scarce legislative time efficiently and also to enhance the productivity of Parliament. Being a dynamic institution, Parliament has to remain sensitive to the issues of procedural innovation and time management while focusing on its core activities.

Mr Mohamed ALMETAIRI (Saudi Arabia) asked about the zero-hour provision. In Saudi Arabia some time was allocated before a session began for urgent matters in the public interest. He asked whether an issue submitted under the zero-hour provision fell within the area of specialism of a committee was referred to the committee or to the plenary.

Mr Salahdeldeen AL-ZANGANA (Iraq) said that the word “urgent” was a common one, and asked who decided what was urgent, and what was not. He asked whether urgency affected the general situation or applied to security matters.

Dr Jean Rony GILOT (Haiti) said that he was also surprised at the ability of the President of India to open a legislative session. He asked what would happen if the President delayed or refused to open a session, and whether this had ever happened.

Mr Gholamreza NOURI GHEZELGEH (Iran) asked about the speaker’s opinion.

Mr VERMA said that the procedures were provided for in the rule book. If someone raised a question under the special mention procedure, the matter was referred to the ministry, rather than to a committee. However, the chairman had discretion in the case of an urgent issue, to require a minister to go to the House to make a statement, or to write to the MP in question. This occurred quite frequently.

Urgency had not been formally defined, so relied on the chairman’s interpretation. Members could ask for urgent matters to be raised on the same day, or on a future

date. He gave the example of a flash flood, which might be an issue raised on the same day, or climate change, which might be raised a week later.

The president of India had never decided not to convene a session. The government made a recommendation to the president to convene a session, and the president then conveyed the message to the parliament, which was then convened. In his opinion, the discretion of the president was technical in nature only.

Mr VERMA said that matters of urgent importance were by their very nature exceptions, and that it was because of this that the discretion of the chairman was invoked.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked Mr VERMA for his communication.

6. General debate with informal discussion groups: The requirement for government to consult parliament before carrying out certain acts

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited Mr Charles ROBERT, Clerk of the House of Commons, Canada, to moderate the general debate.

Mr Charles ROBERT (Canada) introduced the theme of the debate.

He explained that the plenary would split into four informal discussion groups, as follows:

- Group 1: Going to war (French-speaking group, moderated by Mr Christophe PALLEZ)
- Group 2: Public appointments (Spanish-/Portuguese-speaking group, moderated by Mr José Pedro MONTERO)
- Group 3: Constitutional changes (English-speaking group, moderated by Mr Desh Deepak VERMA)
- Group 4: Responses to national emergencies (Arabic-speaking group, moderated by Mr Allam Ali Jaafer AL-KANDARI)

7. Concluding remarks

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, wished the groups the best of luck for their work.

The sitting ended at 10.50 am

FOURTH SITTING

Tuesday 16 October 2018 (afternoon)

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, was in the Chair

The sitting was opened at 2.40 pm

1. Introductory remarks

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, welcomed everyone back.

2. Election

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited each of the five candidates for the post of ordinary member of the Executive Committee to make a short personal statement before the election took place.

Mr Ahmed Shabeed AL DHAHERI (United Arab Emirates) said that he was delighted to introduce himself. In the United Arab Emirates there was only one parliament.

He hoped that, if he became a member of the Executive Committee by lending his experience and knowledge to his colleagues there, and by collecting and representing the views of his colleagues.

Mr Givi MIKANADZE (Georgia) said that he was grateful to the Association, and in particular to those of his colleagues who had nominated him for this position.

The ASGP gave secretaries general the opportunity to meet each other and exchange information and innovation, both on a bilateral and a multilateral basis.

He felt that the ASGP could encourage countries to establish regional collaboration. This was work that he had himself carried out as a minister. He had helped to find areas of common interest and for joint development. His experience in this area would be his contribution to the Executive Committee.

He believed that there should be work done on a regional basis between ASGP meetings.

He noted that there was no representation from central or eastern Europe on the Executive Committee and he hoped to fill that role.

Mr José Pedro MONTERO (Uruguay) introduced himself. He had previously served for 15 years as Secretary General of the House of Representatives in Uruguay.

He had been a member of the ASGP since 2005, and he felt that his experience would allow him to make an active contribution, particularly on behalf of southern American countries.

Mr Abdul Muqtader NASARY (Afghanistan) said that he had only recently joined the upper house in Afghanistan and was new to the ASGP. He was, however, not new to international organisations.

He noted that his CV was available on the website, and that he had two degrees.

He wanted to stand for the Executive Committee so that he could bring his international experience to the ASGP. With new energy would bring impetus to the ASGP. The Executive Committee required commitment and time, both of which he had to offer.

Afghanistan suffered from insecurity, which was poor, and had only recently acquired its democratic institutions. The Executive Committee had never had a member from Afghanistan on its Executive Committee, and appointing him would send a message of support to other poor countries.

He regretted that there was no woman standing for the Executive Committee.

Mr Gholamreza NOURI GHEZELGEH, (Iran) said that he had decided to present his candidacy in the next round of elections to the Executive Committee.

The candidacy of Mr Gholamreza NOURI GHEZELGEH was thus withdrawn.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited members to cast their vote by secret ballot.

**

Voting took place between 2.45 pm and 3.15 pm. Counting took place between 11.20am and 11.34am. The election was conducted by Mrs Perrine PREUVOT, Mrs Emily COMMANDER, Mr Daniel MOELLER and Mrs Karine VELASCO observed by Mr Philippe SCHWAB, Mr Najib EL-KHADI, and Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO.

**

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, announced the results of the election, as follows:

Number of ballots distributed:	68
Number of ballots cast:	67
Number of spoiled ballots:	1
Abstentions:	0
Mr Ahmed Shabeed AL DHAHERI (UAE):	21 votes
Mr Givi MIKANADZE (Georgia):	16 votes
Mr José Pedro MONTERO (Uruguay):	25 votes
Mr Abdul Muqtader NASARY (Afghanistan):	4 votes

Mr José Pedro MONTERO was thus declared elected as ordinary member of the Executive Committee.

Mr Sheikh Ali bin Nasir bin Hamed AL-MAHROOQI (Oman) said that, in order to ensure the transparency of elections, in future the votes should be counted in front of everyone.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, drew the attention of members to the election procedure note, which stated that votes should be counted in the presence of the President and two Vice Presidents of the Association. The elections had thus been conducted in accordance with the rules. If members wished to propose an amendment to the rules they would be welcome to do so.

3. General debate with informal discussion groups: The requirement for government to consult parliament before carrying out certain acts

Mr Charles ROBERT (Canada) welcomed everyone back from their discussion groups. He invited each of the rapporteurs to give their reports.

Mr Christophe PALLEZ (France) represented the French-speaking group, which had discussed the topic entitled “going to war”.

Declarations of war were a matter of executive privilege, up to the head of state and the head of the army. However, under the democratic system, parliamentary authorization could also be deemed necessary for an act of such gravity. In some countries represented within the group, the constitution specified that parliamentary authorization should be sought. Switzerland was an important exception: it was a neutral country and, because of its neutrality, could not declare war.

There were different ways of securing parliamentary authorization, usually arising from a government bill or proposal submitted to debate or vote by parliament, rather than a parliamentary initiative. The vote could take place in both chambers in bicameral parliaments, and that gave rise to difficulties if one of the chambers withheld their consent.

In some cases, declarations of war were the exclusive provenance of the head of state, as exemplified by Burundi that year. The head of state constrained themselves to organizing a security council on which sat representatives from different sections of the population. In Haïti, declarations of war were made under executive authority: parliament was then informed. In Congo, there was no parliamentary authorization.

Mr Pallez noted that these steps sometimes existed only in theory, and parliamentary authorization for war was only rarely sought. France, for example, last declared war in 1939, and Haïti in 1941.

Some types of war were not declared, for example external military operations. These could be put into two categories: military interventions abroad; and peace-keeping

missions, particularly under the aegis of the United Nations. These new forms of conflict raised issues about parliamentary powers once these operations were underway. Speed was frequently a characteristic of such decisions, whilst on the other hand, the public demanded accountability.

Faced with these new phenomena, diplomacy and strategy, parliamentary practice had evolved. In an ideal situation, parliamentary consent would be given before the start of any external military operation. However, except for Switzerland, the group had not uncovered a single case where, before sending its army on a peace-keeping mission, the Government immediately and confidentially informed the chairs of the defence and foreign affairs committees. More frequently, the only requirement was for parliament to be informed after a short interval, such as the three-day interval required under the French constitution. The information could be provided in a number of different ways: it didn't really matter so long as a parliamentary debate took place.

Sometimes, however, parliament was frustrated by simply being informed, which is why there was also a procedure for authorizing extensions of external operations. In Switzerland, the authorization of both chambers was required after three weeks; in France it was after four months, and the final say rested with the lower house.

Parliaments had other means of applying pressure, via, for example, questions to, and scrutiny of, the government.

Mr José Pedro MONTERO (Uruguay) represented the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking group, which had discussed the topic entitled "public appointments".

During the discussion, different points of view were expressed, as well as some important differences. In Uruguay, the Parliament voted upon the appointment to important State posts. In other countries, it was the Executive that took such decisions.

In all cases, the parliament had a scrutiny function over appointments made by the Executive. The system used was often mandated by either the constitution or the law.

Under presidential systems it tended to be the Senate that controlled appointments, and in parliamentary systems, it tended to be second chamber.

Mr Simon BURTON (United Kingdom) represented the English-speaking group, which had discussed the topic entitled "constitutional changes".

He noted that one of the strengths of the ASGP was its diversity and that it was by learning about different political systems that secretaries general could improve their own parliaments.

Four main themes had emerged during the discussion: parliament's constitutional place; the role of federalism; the tools and modalities of constitutional change; and the role of the Courts.

In relation to parliament's constitutional place, there were several relevant questions: did the constitution make provisions for parliament? Was parliament's freedom to act constrained in its ability to change the constitution or in other ways? Was the constitution, or were constitutional statutes, in some way entrenched? Was the age of the constitutional settlement a factor in the security of the place of parliament in the constitution? Was there a role for a second chamber as the guardian of the constitution?

Federalism could be a factor, when there was a need for the approval or consent of provincial or other regional parliaments and assemblies, or because of the need to combine that provision with other requirements, such as majorities, which made change difficult to achieve.

Constitutional change could be subject to special timings and majorities, and the interaction between them; or to special formations, such as parliament as constituent assembly. Sometimes enacting legislation by parliament was required. There was some variation in the extent to which the procedures of parliament were themselves constitutional.

Some systems used referendums either before or after changes. There were other interactions between parliaments and the people, such as public consultation. In one case the monarchy played a role. The power of initiation could belong to the government, backbenchers or citizens.

The courts played a different role under different systems. Privilege and exclusive cognizance in some cases limited the extent to which the courts could amend or interpret the constitution. They also set constraints on the powers of executive, or of parliament in certain cases.

Despite this diversity, several inferences could be drawn. There was a need for a mechanism of constitutional change because the aspirations of the population evolved over time. The group had also agreed that constitutional change must not be arbitrary: it was exceptional and must not affect fundamental rights.

Different countries had different layers of approval, but all countries involved their parliament or parliamentarians in at least some way.

Mr Ahmed Shabeed AL DHAHERI (United Arab Emirates) represented the Arabic-speaking group, which had discussed the topic entitled "responses to national emergencies".

He said that the subject had been divided into three areas: presidential systems, parliamentary systems, mixed systems.

Each country had their individual laws and procedures which governed how they responded to national emergencies. Sometimes such situations required an amendment to the law; sometimes the president had to seek advice from the parliament, or to inform the parliament.

Examples of emergencies and crises included floods, heavy rains, or the spread of disease. Whenever the state was required to act in general, parliament needed consulting, sometimes to give the authority to act, or to approve the budget.

Some countries had special authorities established for emergencies or civil defense. They may have needs, such as refugee camps, or medicines. One issue was the situation in which such authorities were not performing their role, and intervention was required.

Society tended to support the Executive and the parliament in taking action when it was needed.

Mr Charles ROBERT said that the workshops demonstrated the difference between all of the systems, and the difference in response. Some of the differences in responses were structural in nature: whether a country had a presidential or parliamentary system, for example, had a big impact on what happened.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked Mr ROBERT for moderating the debate.

*** Coffee break between 3.50 pm and 4.10 pm ***

4. Communication by Mr Saïd MOKADEM, Secretary General of the Maghreb Consultative Council: Introduction to the Maghreb Consultative Council

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited Mr Saïd MOKADEM, Secretary General of the Maghreb Consultative Council, to make his communication.

Mr Saïd MOKADEM (Maghreb Consultative Council) spoke as follows:

The General Secretary of the Consultative Council of the M.A.U tries to give through this fold, a global idea on the organization, the objectives and the activities of the Council . The reader will find the essential information the likely to light it this Maghreb parliamentary authority .

Creation

The Consultative Council of the Maghreb Arab Union is a consultative parliamentary authority, created by virtue of the article 12 of the constituent treaty of the Union, in February 17th, 1989.

It directly comes under the presidential Council of the Union.

This Council has the legal entity and the necessary protection according to the conditions of the agreement of seat signed with the Algerian Government on November 9th, 1994, ratified by the presidential decree N 96-78 of February 05th, 1996.

The Objectives of the Council

The Consultative Council of the Maghreb Arab Union is a parliamentary authority, called to express its opinion on the projects of decisions which are subjected to it by the presidential Council. At the same time, it is authorized to subject to the Presidential Council any resolution which he considers useful for the strengthening of the unified action and the realization of the purposes fixed by the constituent treaty, in particular:

- The strengthening of the links of brotherhood between member states and their peoples;
- The realization of the development and the progress for peoples of the Union, as well as the defense of their interests;
- The contribution to the preservation of the peace based on the justice and the equity;
- the implementation of a common policy in various domains;
- Work for progressive way to insure the free circulation of the people, the properties and the capital between the countries of the Union.

Seat of the Council

The seat of the consultative Council of the Maghreb Union Arab and his General Secretariat is fixed in ALGIERS and it is true according to the decision of the Presidential Council of the union during its 4th session held in CASABLANCA (Morocco) on September 15th and 16th, 1991

Composition

The Consultative Council of the M.A.U consists of 150 members, at the rate of 30 representatives by member state. They are chosen by the parliamentary authorities of member states according to their respective internal rules.

He is renewed every 5 years and his members benefit from the parliamentary immunity on the whole territory of the Union. The mandate comes to an end further to the death or to the resignation of the member, at the request of the parliamentary authority to which belongs the interested or in application of the internal regulation of the same authority.

The organs of the Council

The Council is endowed with the following organs:

- A) The General assembly (150 members).
- B) The office, compound of 2 members representing each of the groups (that is 10 members) of which Serving president
- C) Standing committees, among 7, each consisting of a president and two members representing each of the groups. The Council can create a temporary commission.

Each member country insures the presidency of a commission.

Besides, a " Parliament of the maghreb child " was created and installed in TUNIS July 12th, 2008.

The missions of this parliament :

- The consolidation of the feeling of membership in the Arabic Maghreb and the consecration of the citizenship from the Maghreb;
 - The contribution to the implanting of the values of the democracy, tolerance and the solidarity;
 - The strengthening of the bonds of friendship and the brotherhood between the children from the Maghreb, as well as with the corresponding regional and international parliaments;
 - To allow the children of the Arabic Maghreb to contribute to the distribution of the culture of children rights; - to offer them a frame of expression of their point of view and concerns by virtue of the principle of the participation;
- The Parliament of the child from the Maghreb consists of 50 representatives, at the rate of 10 by member state of the Union.

It is endowed with 5 standing commissions, worth knowing:

- The commission of children rights,
- The commission of the Education, the Culture and the information,
- At commission of the health and the environment,
- The commission of social affairs and solidarity,
- The commission of the cooperation from the Maghreb and international.

Presidency of the Council

The chairmanship of The Consultative Council is held annually and in turn by the group chairmen. The presidential term ends at the end of the current session. The powers of the President of the consultative Council of M.U.A. are the following:

- ~ The President of the Council, or his replacement, as the case may be, shall chair the meetings of the Council and the Bureau;
- ~ He coordinates the work of the commissions;
- ~ It ensures the material organization of the sessions;
- ~ He represents the Council at the various events;
- ~ It presents the resolutions and proposals of the Consultative Council to the Presidency of the Union;
- ~ He presents at each session a report on the activities of the Council.

The Office of the Consultative Council

The office consists of 10 members, two members per group. The office is responsible for:

- ~ Set the date and place for holding the meetings following the opening of the session;
- ~ Prepare the draft agenda of Council sessions, in coordination with the General Secretariat and other unitary bodies;
- ~ Divide between the commissions, the items on the agenda;
- ~ Propose in camera sessions, as appropriate;
- ~ Prepare the work program of the Council;
- ~ Supervise the work of the Council as well as its organizational and financial affairs;
- ~ Present the draft budget to the Council and monitor its implementation; The decisions of the office are made by a majority of 4/5 of its members.

Council Commissions

The Council currently has 7 standing commissions. It can create other temporary commissions or sub-commissions. The seven standing commissions are:

- ~ The Political Affairs Commissions;
- ~ Commission of the Economy, Finance, Planning and Food Security;
- ~ The Commission of the Legal Affairs;
- ~ The Human Resources Commission.
- ~ The Commission of the Basic Infrastructure;
- ~ The Commission of the Women and Children;
- ~ The Commission of the Youth and Sport;

The commissions are responsible for:

- ~ The study of the questions submitted to them by the bureau;
- ~ The presentation of resolutions and proposals to the Consultative Council for their approval and presentation to the Presidential Council of the Union;

The commissions can also take care of any current issue, within their area of expertise.

Commission meetings are held in the capital cities of the M.U.A.

Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Reporters of commission are equally and divided among member countries.

The General Secretariat of the Council

The consultative Council has a permanent General Secretariat headed by a Secretary-General appointed by the Chair of the Advisory Council on the proposal of his Government.

The Secretary-General is responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the Council's administration, as well as the facilitation and coordination of the structures and services under the General Secretariat.

As Secretary of the Budget, the Secretary-General is also responsible for facilitating and strengthening relations between the different groups of the Council on the one hand and the organs and structures of the Council on the other.

Finally, the Secretary-General is responsible for relations with regional and international organizations with which the Council maintains relations.

Council sessions

In accordance with its rules of procedure, the Council shall meet in ordinary session once a year in one of the countries of the Union, in alphabetical order. It may also meet in extraordinary session at the request of the Presidential Council or at the request of its Bureau.

The Council must hold a session at least once a year. This session ends when the agenda is exhausted or until the end of the session.

The Consultative council of the Maghreb Union Arab has so far held several sessions in the various countries of the Union.

General observations on the composition of the Maghreb groups of the Council

All groups of the .M.U.A. Consultative Council are constituted. The updating or confirmation of the component of these groups takes place periodically, in any case, before the sessions of the Council and this, in accordance with the provisions contained in the regulations governing each of the parliaments of the member countries.

The different categories of Council members

a) The permanent members: have the status of permanent members, the 150 members coming from the parliaments or the corresponding authorities, from the member countries.

(b) Associate members: to give the Advisory Board the weight it deserves at the regional and international levels, with a view to strengthening its action for the achievement of the objectives of the Union in a harmonious and cooperative manner; bridges were opened with the governments of the countries of the Union. This concern is reflected in, inter alia, participation in the sessions of the Council, ministers responsible for relations with parliaments, or corresponding bodies, the Secretary General of the U.M.A, the President of the Maghreb Court of Justice, the President of the Maghreb Academy of Sciences and the President of the Maghreb University.

c) Observer members: have the status of observer members:

- ~ The Parliamentary Union of the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference;
- ~ The African Parliamentary Union;
- ~ The Arab Parliamentary Union.

d) The invited members: the guests at the advisory council sessions are:

- ~ Presidents of parliamentary assemblies, or corresponding bodies, of member countries;
- ~ The Maghreb Affairs Commission within the Delegation of the European Union;
- ~ The diplomatic corps of the Maghreb countries accredited in the host country.

The Council publications

To raise awareness of the Consultative Council of the M.U.A, the General Secretariat has published many publications. It should be mentioned in this regard:

- ~ A collection of basic texts and regulations governing the Consultative Council of the M.U.A.

~ A booklet containing the proceedings of the conferences and seminars organized by the various standing commissions.

Dr Jean Rony GILOT (Haiti) asked how the Council submitted the results of its deliberations to member parliaments.

Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO (Portugal) explained that there was a parliament of Portuguese-speaking countries, as well as an Association of Secretaries General of Portuguese-speaking countries, which allowed for cooperation between countries. He wanted to know if the creation of a similar association for the Maghreb had been envisaged.

Mr Saïd MOKADEM said that there was no hierarchy between member countries, which meant that they could only coordinate, not impose their recommendations. He emphasized that the thirty members were chosen or elected according to the rules of each national parliament. The Council's mission was to work towards the creation of a common law for the Maghreb, which would have precedence over national law.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked Mr MOKADEM for his communication.

5. Communication by Ms Angela BRANDÃO, Director of Communications of the Brazilian Federal Senate: "Challenges and achievements of legislative media systems: the Brazilian case"

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited Ms Angela BRANDÃO, Director of Communications of the Brazilian Federal Senate, to make her communication.

Ms Angela BRANDÃO (Brazil) spoke as follows:

Almost 40 years after the first experiences worldwide, broadcast of parliamentary proceedings are an established preferred source of reliable information about the work and debates conducted at legislative bodies.

Technological advancements in the past decades permitted parliaments throughout the world to build the infrastructure that allowed constituents to follow the legislative work unedited. Once limited to private or publicly funded networks, new telecommunications opened up such possibility to the legislatures.

Early enough, the Brazilian Senate noticed the importance of such initiative. In February 1996, it inaugurated its televised transmissions through cable TV and, in the next year, it was already available through satellite. By the year 2000, TV Senado began its terrestrial UHF transmissions in the nation's capital, Brasília, expanding the service to other 48 major cities in the next two decades.

If, at first, traditional analogical broadcast pioneered this process, today, the internet has evolved to allow the development of full systems designed to 'translate' what happens in the legislative world to the country's electorate. Today, websites of

parliaments around the world carry news, live footage and audiovisuals on demand, supplying the people and the press with the ideas and decisions that take place in the legislatures.

To make the most out of this direct connection to the audience, without mediation that could distort the essence of parliamentary proceedings, the Brazilian Senate developed one of the most modern legislative communications system in the world composed of a TV channel, a radio station, internet news and social media services as well as a daily newspaper.

TV Senado is accessible to more than 66 million people through terrestrial broadcast or satellite (no subscription required). The 25 million families that subscribe to cable or satellite services also have the Senate's channel in their menu. That makes the channel available to 89% of the country's population.

On YouTube, the Senate offers up to eight different live transmissions of parliamentary activities taking place at committees, at the floor or elsewhere in Congress. Its YouTube channel has more than 55 million annual views and 230 thousand followers.

The institution's website (www.senado.leg.br) has more than 10 million active users per year and 3 million followers in different social media.

Moreover, the Senate keeps a radio station in Brasília and nine other state capitals. It airs – along with every radio station in the country – “Voz do Brasil” an hour-long newscast about governmental and legislative affairs that potentially reaches 89% of the Brazilian population. In addition, offers audio news to more than 1,300 radio stations throughout the nation. These stations have aired 11 thousand stories produced at the Senate's news headquarters so far in 2018.

Besides its mass media operations, the Brazilian Senate's Communications Services is responsible for public relations initiatives, offering guided tours of the Senate's facilities. More than 177 thousand people had such an experience in 2017. Other initiatives include the organization of ceremonies, including the presidential inauguration, and support to media professionals – national and international – covering parliamentary activities, providing access to senators, contents and technical facilities for video, radio, multimedia and photo production.

In its efforts to deliver services that narrow the distance between representatives and senators to the population, the Brazilian Senate is aware that it has to modernize not only its services, but also its management. For this matter, the institution's personnel follow with keen interest the practices of other parliaments throughout the world.

Other managerial models are available and have to be dynamic enough to keep up with the ever-changing technological advancements and the challenges of democracy. After all, where are they leading us? What should be the priorities of these institutions efforts and investments in this essential field?

The Brazilian Senate suggests that the IPU should maintain a permanent committee dedicated to analyzing such issues, providing its members with comprehensive data of how this public policy – fundamental for the transparency of the legislative bodies – can reach the best results with the best cost-benefit ratio.

Mr Christophe PALLEZ (France) asked about the creation of specific content proposed by the Senate with the goal of enriching the information available about the Senate.

Dr Jean Rony GILOT (Haiti) asked if the turnover rate of 85% amongst members was necessarily a good thing given the need to retain institutional culture and memory. He wanted to know if Brazil was looking for a complete renewal of its membership. In his opinion, retaining 50% of those elected was necessary for the training of new arrivals.

Mr Simon BURTON (United Kingdom) said that he would be very happy to share details of the network of communications professionals used in Westminster.

Mrs Jane LUBOWA KIBIRIGE (Uganda) asked how big the budget was, and whether staff were available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Ms Penelope Nolizo TYAWA (South Africa) also asked about capacity. She wanted to know whether the parliament used independent media agencies, and what proportion of the media output they represented.

Ms BRANDÃO said that content was every story, whether written, televised, or diffused by some other means. Brazil was the size of a continent, and each state had a very different system of communication, so the parliament had a big and diverse communications section.

The Senate used television, but also YouTube and the internet. It had created its own agency to distribute radio stories to stations that did not have the resources to produce their own material about politics. Journalism was expensive. In parliament there were not only big stories, but hundreds, or thousands of much smaller stories. Not all stations and agencies could afford to send a correspondent to the parliament, but if they were provided with content by the parliament, they were delighted to be able to use it.

Photographs and text content was put onto the website and could be downloaded from there. There were no statistics as the numbers would be too high.

She noted that in Brazil nobody knew how much would change over the next four years. She was, however, pleased that the public had turned to the official Senate website for information to help them decide how to vote.

The budget for the department was very sizeable but this was not surprising because it employed more than 500 people. It had to learn how to achieve the same result with fewer people.

It was very useful for her to hear about what other parliaments were doing, and she was grateful to the House of Lords for its offer of help.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked Ms BRANDÃO for her communication.

6. Communication by Mr Charles Robert, Clerk of the House of Commons, Canada: “Public appointments”

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited Mr Charles Robert, Clerk of the House of Commons, Canada, to make his communication.

Mr Charles ROBERT (Canada) spoke as follows:

[late addition; text is not available.]

Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO (Portugal) asked whether, in the future, parliaments will tend to increase the number of appointments they scrutinized.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, asked whether he could explain the situation in the United States of America.

Mr ROBERT said that each time the administration changed, all the officials changed. Under the constitution, the Senate had to confirm all senior appointments. There was a process that allowed the relevant committee to interview each candidate. Recent events showed how partisan that process had become. It was a matter of considerable surprise to Mr ROBERT that the system in Canada had not become partisan. Within the parliamentary system, there had been some success in trying to avoid partisanship in the appointment of candidates to become part of the apparatus of government.

He did not think there was any appetite on the part of parliament to assume the role of scrutinizing more of the possible 1,700 public appointments that were made. It was recognized that the Executive had certain rights in administering its departments and that this should not be tampered with.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked Mr ROBERT for his communication.

7. Concluding remarks

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, announced that the Association would meet the following morning at 10.30 am.

The sitting ended at 5.21 pm.

FIFTH SITTING

Wednesday 17 October 2018 (morning)

Mr Najib EL KHADI, Vice President, was in the Chair

The sitting was opened at 10.43 am

1. Introductory remarks

Mr Najib EL KHADI, Vice President, welcomed everyone to the sitting.

2. Orders of the day

Mr Najib EL KHADI, Vice President, noted that there had been no changes made to the orders of the day. He reminded members that they could suggest subjects for inclusion on the agenda for the spring meeting of the ASGP.

The orders of the day were agreed to.

3. New Member

Mr Najib EL KHADI, Vice President, said that the secretariat had received one request for membership which had been put before the Executive Committee and agreed to, as follows:

Mr Désiré Geoffroy MBOCK

Secretary General of the National Assembly,
Cameroon

The new member was agreed to.

4. General debate with informal discussion groups: A new legislature: legal and administrative procedures

Mr Najib EL KHADI, Vice President, invited Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO, Deputy Secretary General of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, to moderate the general debate.

Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO (Portugal) spoke as follows:

In 2018 there were general elections in, at least, 21 countries in the world, which means that a very significant number of them had to organise electoral processes and Parliaments had to prepare for a new legislature, from a count of

mandates and legal point of view, as well as for the elections for parliamentary bodies, and for every administrative procedure necessary to the exercise of the mandates by MPs.

As a contribution to the General Debate which will be held at the ASGP Meeting, this document aims to offer some lines of debate on the specific themes chosen, and to mention the most relevant activities our Parliaments must carry out and, at the same time, the main concerns facing parliamentary administrations at the start of each new legislature.

Recently, at the end of May, within the framework of ECPRD, the German *Bundestag* organised a conference on this specific issue, where the following topics were debated:

1. The role of the parliamentary administration and the establishment of parliamentary groups
2. The Parliament's constitutive sitting: the first plenary sitting of each legislature
3. The establishment of parliamentary committees and other bodies
4. Preparing the MPs for the new legislature: parliamentary procedures and MP activities; ways of providing information to MPs; infrastructure and equipment

This approach is very similar to what our aim is with this Meeting and, as such, it is important to mention this organisation, and our *Bundestag* Colleagues may offer additional information on this conference.

Regarding this General Debate, a decision was made to split it into 4 separate themes, namely:

1. Welcoming new MPs
2. Training of new MPs
3. The distribution of key posts
4. Logistics

1. Welcoming new MPs

Parliaments follow various models when welcoming MPs, but most of them focus on the days close to the beginning of the legislature, seizing the moment to identify and collect data for administrative purposes and to provide the most urgent logistical resources, such as the MP card, basic IT resources or, also, some relevant information in paper format (handbook).

Using the example of Portugal, an area is set up at the Hall of Honour in São Bento Palace for the MPs to enter (in case they are new) or confirm (in all other

cases) their personal data, get their Member of the Assembly of the Republic's Card, as well as a set of information on the Rules of Procedure, register of interests or use of IT equipment.

These days may also include tours of the estate or information regarding the first use of the electronic voting system. Parliamentary groups play an important role in this regard, since it is also in their interest to have their MPs fully performing their duties as soon as possible.

Lastly, and depending on their previous knowledge of the parliamentary setting, there may be distinctions between new and old MPs, allowing for a more effective and rational allocation of resources.

2. Training of new MPs

This is a very sensitive issue, which has been addressed in previous ASGP meetings and clearly varies depending on the tradition of each country or Parliament.

If, in some cases, training is mandatory and ultimately leads to credentials which enable the full exercise of the mandate, in other situations (clearly identified as being the majority) this training is optional and aims to provide MPs with legal tools to help them fully exercise their mandate.

There are several examples of MPs refusing to attend training activities, based on their own experience, but there are also explicit requests made by parliamentary groups or individual MPs who request some training on the parliamentary procedures.

When available, whether it is mandatory or optional, training focuses especially on the parliamentary legislative procedure and the implementation of the Rules of Procedure, as well as on the use of the Parliament's internal IT tools, such as access to applications used during their mandate.

3. The distribution of key posts

It is common practice in our Parliaments to elect the Speaker on the first plenary sitting of a new legislature, which is followed by elections for other parliamentary key posts, such as the Bureau, the Board of Administration or standing delegations to international parliamentary organisations, where applicable.

The formation of parliamentary groups, previously to most elections, enables the internal organisation of MPs within their parties, as well as the organisation of applications to several bodies.

Parliamentary committee chairmanships are usually assigned through a proportional rotation system and elected in the committees, but this system naturally depends on individual Rules of Procedure.

Naturally, Rules of Procedure provide for different situations in each Parliament, but the election of bodies usually is the most relevant part of the first days of a new legislature, which will truly make the Parliament fully operational.

4. Logistics

30 years ago, resources provided to MPs were only books and documentation, such as the Constitution, the Parliament's Rules of Procedure or compilations of parliamentary legislation.

Nowadays, technological resources are given special priority and their evolution led to requirements which must be respected by the parliamentary administrations. Thus, it is possible to mention a set of resources which are usually made available:

- a) Work offices
- b) Office staff, with very different systems, from the parliamentary assistant to the comprehensive support per parliamentary group
- c) Desk and/or laptop computers
- d) Smartphones with easy access to the internal networks of Parliaments
- e) Meeting rooms
- f) Social benefits, such as day-care, gym, etc.

The availability of these resources follows different systems, with a higher or lower degree of participation of the parliamentary budget in the expenses, but these situations will not be reversed in what regards the "minimum services" a Parliament must provide its MPs.

CONCLUSION

A Parliament or a maze?

In order to open the debate, there's nothing like picturing a maze, which for a great majority of MPs illustrates their arrival to the Parliament.

The “parliamentary maze” has led administrations to look for better solutions, since these continuous evolution efforts raise a set of challenges and reflections which we hope will be debated during this ASGP Meeting.

Challenges/Reflections

- Setting the date for the first plenary sitting, which stipulates the set of internal procedures for welcoming MPs
- Easy communication with the elected MPs
- A big number of new MPs is a rising challenge for the administration
- The distribution of offices per parliamentary groups after the new Parliament composition
- Proportional representation in the various parliamentary bodies
- Training of new MPs in terms of procedures and in relation to the available IT applications
- Training for old and new MPs
- Coordination of the various services encompassed by the Secretary General

Mr ARAÚJO explained that the plenary would split into four informal discussion groups, as follows:

- Group 1: Welcoming new MPs (Arabic-speaking group, moderated by Mr Najib EL KHADI)
- Group 2: Training of new MPs (French-speaking group, moderated by Dr Jean Rony GILOT)
- Group 3: The distribution of key posts (English-speaking group, moderated by Mrs Jane LUBOWA KIBIRIGE)
- Group 4: Logistics (Spanish-/Portuguese-speaking group, moderated by Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO)

5. Concluding remarks

Mr Najib EL KHADI, Vice President, wished the groups the best of luck for their work.

The sitting ended at 11.05 am.

SIXTH SITTING

Wednesday 17 October 2018 (afternoon)

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, was in the Chair

The sitting was opened at 2.33 pm

1. Introductory remarks

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, welcomed everyone back.

2. General debate with informal discussion groups: A new legislature: legal and administrative procedures

Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO (Portugal) welcomed everyone back from their discussion groups.

Mr Mohamed Drissi DADA (Algeria) represented the Arabic-speaking group, which had discussed the topic entitled “welcoming new MPs”.

He said that the groups had found many similarities amongst members of the group. The arrival of new members involved many logistical and administrative measures, as well as procedural ones.

Members who lived at a distance from the parliament, they were sent plane or train tickets to enable them to travel to work. Hotel rooms were also booked. In most parliaments, they were also given a pack of documents that enabled them to put their administrative files together. They were shown where to sit, and their rights and responsibilities were explained to them. Information was provided about the parliament.

In some parliaments, MPs were given a laptop on which all the necessary information was stored in electronic format.

In some jurisdictions, it was up to the ministry that had supervised the election to provide information to MPs, in others it was the parliament that fulfilled this role.

In some parliaments, new MPs had to swear an oath. Many parliaments had discussed providing training for new MPs, but this was a sensitive issue and MPs did not always believe that they needed training, so parliaments had to find other ways to provide the necessary information.

Mr Désiré Geoffroy MBOCK (Cameroon) represented the French-speaking group, which had discussed the topic entitled “training of new MPs”

Terminology was key: sometimes “seminar for the exchange of information” had more success than the term “training”.

In Togo, information meetings were held on legislative initiative, the right to amend, discussion in public meetings, scrutiny of the finance bill, parliamentary scrutiny, participation in international forums, and IT.

Before they took up office, the Democratic Republic of the Congo organized an information forum: members went to each thematic stand, handed over the relevant forms, and received in return information on parliamentary procedure, their mandate, and IT. These events were organized by retired MPs.

In Burundi, training focused on logistics, parliamentary procedure, scrutiny and IT. At the end of each information session, a summary was provided, as well as ethical guidelines.

The Cambodian Parliament used a training provider, but sessions were organized with the agreement of the Parliament on the following subjects: the role and competences of parliamentary groups, the use of the budgets allocated to the groups, and the role of senators.

In Haïti, before the start of a new Parliament, an away-day was organized, during which information was provided and documents distributed to newly-elected MPs.

Mr Barnabas BWALYA (Zambia) represented the English-speaking group, which had discussed the topic entitled “the distribution of key posts”.

The focus of the discussions had been on business immediately following a general election, particularly the election of a speaker, his deputies, and the chairs of committees.

Soon after a general election, a speaker had to be elected, usually before members were sworn in. This issue of whether members could conduct business before they were sworn in was the subject of some debate. Another question revolved around the identity of the person in the chair to preside over the election of the speaker.

In some jurisdictions, the secretary general presided over the election of the speaker. The group had discussed the powers bestowed upon the secretary general in such cases. A case had arisen in Zimbabwe where members took advantage of this situation to be disruptive, knowing that they could not be called to order.

In most cases, the speaker was elected by secret ballot. Sometimes candidates nominated themselves, and sometimes they were nominated by another member.

In the election of deputy speakers, gender balance was usually a factor.

Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO (Portugal) represented the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking group, which had discussed the topic entitled “logistics”.

The group had identified very few differences between the countries represented when it came to the salaries, indemnities, staff and offices that could be made available to parliamentarians.

Parliamentarians generally had a fixed salary, to which were added expense payments for accommodation, travel, communication and staff. These expense payments differed between countries depending on culture, but it was often a tool used to manage the problem of distance between the capital and the provinces.

Often parliamentarians had access to an office, and a personal staff: they had a budget for recruiting these staff. Audits of this expenditure were carried out at the end of the year.

All parliamentarians were given a computer and a smart phone. Some parliaments had agreements with telecommunications companies which gave them a preferential monthly tariff. Sometimes parliamentarians used their own phones and were given a maximum budget for this expenditure.

Social benefits, such as creches and gyms, had also been discussed. The trend seemed to be away from such provision because of accusations of abuse of public funds.

Mr Araújo noted that it was sometimes simpler to give parliamentarians a computer on which all the necessary information was stored.

When it came to training, the issue was often one of presentation and terminology. The most important thing was that the MP understood the legislative process that they would have to follow during their mandate. He asked if parliamentarians actively participated in the training sessions organized for them.

When it came to setting up the Bureau, he emphasized that the election of a chair was always the first act of a plenary session, usually by secret ballot. The election of committee bureau could be organized according to different criteria, such as party proportions.

He concluded that, when a large proportion of parliamentarians had been elected for the first time, the challenges they faced were considerable. The action taken by the administration was, therefore, key to ensuring a positive start to their mandates.

Mr Désiré Geoffroy MBOCK said that, in Cameroon, parliamentarians received health cover for themselves and their families.

The number of parliamentarians who attended training sessions had traditionally been very low. To overcome this problem, the administration had appointed retired parliamentarians to provide the training.

In order to maintain attendance rates, some parliaments had organized four mornings of four hours each time. The information week organized in Haïti allowed parliamentarians to forge links which might later inform their choice of committee membership.

Mr Givi MIKANADZE (Georgia) asked Mr MBOCK whether any countries that had legislation making it obligatory for new MPs to participate in induction training, and what percentage of new MPs chose to take part where it was available.

Mr Abdelgadir ABDALLA KHALAFALLA (Sudan) said that MP training was a sensitive issue in some parliaments. In the Sudanese parliament there was a special committee composed of experienced MPs, which set the training programme, with a particular focus on procedure. There was also an MP Affairs Committee, which dealt with the logistical and administrative issues faced by MPs. This work was carried out in conjunction with the secretaries general.

Mr Mark HUTTON (United Kingdom) said that he had no magic solution to compel new MPs to attend training. The UK had, however, established a “buddy” system, whereby new MPs were paired with a member of parliamentary staff to whom they could turn with any questions. This had been successful and of benefit to both MPs and staff.

Mr Mehmet Ali KUMBUZOĞLU (Turkey) said that two thirds of the Turkish MPs were renewed at each election. When the administration had asked them what form of training they wanted, they had said that they did not need training because they could ask questions of existing parliamentarians. However, they regularly asked for language lessons.

It could be very difficult to recruit retired MPs to train new ones. Using the group presidents was sometimes a good solution.

Mr MBOCK said that it had seemed difficult to convince new MPs to attend training because, once they had been anointed by public vote, they were no longer required to comply. The administration nonetheless persisted in offering their help to new arrivals. Poor attendance could not be a reason for not providing training.

Mr ABDALLA KHALAFALLA said that MPs’ training only began about a month after the start of a new parliament. The committee charged with organizing this was comprised of members selected by the speaker. The committee was provided for by the rules of procedure.

Mr ARAÚJO said that two previous speakers, one from Portugal and one from Timor Leste had been invited to give a seminar for new MPs in Timor Leste. It had been a great success. In Portugal, one MP had decided to organize training for 60 new MPs in one political group. The training had been cancelled by the second scheduled session because attendance was so low that it was not worthwhile.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked Mr ARAÚJO for moderating the debate.

3. Presentation on recent developments in the IPU

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, invited Ms Kareen JABRE, IPU Director, Division of Programmes, to present the recent work of the IPU to the Association.

Ms Kareen JABRE (IPU) said that the Centre for Innovation in Parliament was a project to maximise the benefit parliaments could obtain from digital tools. The centre was based on an inclusive approach with a dual structure comprised of a central secretariat to lead the work with a global reach; and global hubs based on either regions or parliaments. About ten parliaments had expressed an interest in hosting a hub, and memoranda of understanding were due to be signed with Zambia and Chile. It was expected that the centre would be launched at the next e-parliament conference, due to take place in Geneva between 3 and 5 December. During that conference, the world e-parliament report would also be launched.

A new parline database had been launched. It provided many more information entry points. She encouraged members to look at the database and check and complete the information contained within it. Parline was the main source of global information on parliaments, so it was very important that the information was kept up to date.

The Global Parliamentary Report had been presented a year earlier, and was available in multiple languages. The following day the IPU and the ASGP would host a joint workshop on parliamentary oversight. There would be an interactive polling function used during the session.

The IPU had been working to promote the Common Principles on Support to Parliaments, particularly by means of a set of guidelines. It was hoped that parliaments would remain in charge of the development support they received. Feedback on the guidelines would be sought from members of the ASGP.

A study on sexism and violence and harassment of women in European parliaments had been launched in the IPU. It was the first time that parliamentary staff had been included in a study. It confirmed the global trend towards psychological abuse within parliaments. Young female MPs were more frequently targeted. The findings in relation to female parliamentary staff were particularly alarming. It was also worrying that the level of reporting was very low. This needed to change. The next step for the IPU would be the development of guidelines. ASGP members were asked to help in the formulation of these guidelines.

Mr Charles ROBERT (Canada) said that harassment had become an issue in the Canadian parliament. Tough measures to address it had been introduced, including mandatory training, including for the speaker. Another very concerning issue was the overwhelming stress experienced by some staff members, which had driven one staff member to attempt suicide. Without proactive measures, it would be very difficult to reach those who would otherwise be reluctant to express the difficulties they were experiencing.

Mr Abdelgadir ABDALLA KHALAFALLA (Sudan) said that the parline database was a very important resource. He noted, however, that the information

had to come from national parliaments, and thought it would be helpful for the IPU to design a format for the delivery of this information.

Ms JABRE said that she would take the feedback on parline to her colleagues at the IPU.

She noted that training for MPs was a sensitive issue, but was definitely one important element of good practice in the field of violence against women.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked Mrs JABRE for her presentation. He noted that members had been invited to meet IPU staff on the issue of violence against women; to participate in a workshop the following day, to verify the information on parline, and to contribute to the project on the coordination of support to parliaments.

3. Administrative and financial questions

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, announced that the Executive Committee had approved the budget for 2019 earlier that day.

Hasked members whether they had any financial or administrative questions to raise.

The budget for the Association for 2019 was approved.

4. Draft agenda for the next meeting in spring 2019

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, presented the draft agenda for the next meeting, due to take place in spring 2019, as follows:

Possible subjects for general debate

1. How do we evaluate parliamentary performance?
Moderator: Mr Christophe PALLEZ

2. How do we make better legislation?

To include the following themes:

- impact assessments
- omnibus legislation
- public consultation

Moderator: Mr José Manuel ARAÚJO

Communications

Theme: Parliament's people

What do you expect of the Secretary General in the 21st century?

Mr Simon BURTON, Clerk Assistant, House of Lords, United Kingdom

The immunity of parliamentarians: what are the proper boundaries in an era of transparency and accountability?
Mr Charles ROBERT, Clerk of the House of Commons, Canada

Theme: Inter-parliamentary cooperation

Regional Cooperation: benefits and perspectives
Mr Givi MIKANADZE, Secretary General of the Parliament of Georgia

Theme: Parliament and the public

Safety in parliament in the internet age

The impact of opening committee meetings to the public on the decision-making process
Mr Najib EL KHADI, Secretary General of the Chamber of Representatives of Morocco

Other business

1. Presentation on recent developments in the Inter-Parliamentary Union
2. Administrative questions
3. Draft agenda for the next meeting in spring 2019

The draft agenda was approved.

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President noted that any proposals arriving after the deadlines specified in the document would be referred directly to the Executive Committee for decision.

5. Concluding remarks

Mr Philippe SCHWAB, President, thanked members for their active participation in the session; thanked the secretariat and the interpreters for their work.

He noted that it was Emily Commander's last session. She had arrived at the ASGP in 2013, and he thanked her for her hard work. He announced that the Executive Committee had decided to make her an honorary secretary of the Association, and he invited members to give her a standing ovation.

He announced that Dr Ulrich Schöler would be retiring. He had joined the ASGP in 2004, and had been a member of the Executive Committee and then Vice President. He had made numerous communications and contributions to general debates. He praised his critical acumen, and thanked him on behalf of the Association and the Executive Committee.

Dr Ulrich SCHÖLER (Germany) thanked the Association for fourteen happy years. It was with very mixed feelings that he left. He thanked members for their

contributions and said that he had enjoyed getting to know them all, and indeed making friends with them.

He wished the Association the best of luck for its future work.

He closed the sitting.

The sitting ended at 4.15 pm.