

# **STATUTES OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION<sup>1</sup>**

## **NATURE, PURPOSE AND COMPOSITION**

### **ARTICLE 1**

1. The Inter-Parliamentary Union is the international organisation of the Parliaments of sovereign States.

2. As the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue since 1889, the Inter Parliamentary Union shall work for peace and cooperation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative institutions. To that end, it shall:

(a) Foster contacts, coordination and the exchange of experience among Parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;

(b) Consider questions of international interest and express its views on such issues with the aim of bringing about action by Parliaments and their members;

(c) Contribute to the defence and promotion of human rights, which are universal in scope and respect for which is an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development;

(d) Contribute to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.

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

### **ARTICLE 2**

The Headquarters of the Inter-Parliamentary Union shall be at Geneva.

### **ARTICLE 3**

1. Every Parliament constituted in conformity with the laws of a sovereign State whose population it represents and on whose territory it functions may request affiliation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. A National Group representing any such Parliament and which is already affiliated at the time of the approval of this Article may choose to remain a Member of the Union.

2. In a federal State, only the federal Parliament may request to be a Member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

. 3. Every Member of the Union shall adhere to the principles of the Union and comply with its Statutes.

4. International parliamentary assemblies established under international law by States which are represented in the Union may, upon their request and after consultation with the relevant Members of the Union, be admitted by the Governing Council as Associate Members.

#### **ARTICLE 4**

1. The decision to admit or readmit a Parliament shall be taken by the Governing Council, to which requests for affiliation or reaffiliation are communicated by the Secretary General. The Governing Council takes its decision on prior advice given by the Executive Committee, which shall consider whether the conditions mentioned in Article 3 are fulfilled, and report thereon.

2. When a Member of the Union has ceased to function as such or is three years in arrears in the payment of its contributions to the Union, the Executive Committee shall consider the situation and express an opinion to the Governing Council. The Governing Council takes a decision on the suspension of the affiliation of that Member to the Union.

#### **ARTICLE 5**

1. Each Member and each Associate Member of the Union shall make an annual contribution to the expenses of the Union in accordance with a scale approved by the Governing Council (cf. Financial Regs., Rule 5).

2. A Member of the Union which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the organisation shall have no votes in the statutory bodies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The Governing Council may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member of the Union. Prior to examining this question, the Governing Council may receive a written explanation from the Member concerned. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 10.2 of the Statutes, such a Member shall not be represented by more than two delegates at meetings convened by the Union.

#### **ARTICLE 6**

1. All Members or Associate Members of the Union shall have their own Rules governing their participation in the Union's work. They shall make all structural, administrative and financial provisions required to ensure effectively their representation in the Union, the implementation of the decisions taken and to maintain a regular liaison with the Secretariat of the Union to which they shall send, before the end of January of each year, a report of their activities, including the names of their officers and the list or the total number of their members.

2. It is the sovereign right of each Member of the Union to decide on the manner in which it organises its participation in the IPU.

#### **ARTICLE 7**

It is the duty of the Members of the Union to submit the resolutions of the Union within their respective Parliament, in the most appropriate form; to communicate them to the Government; to stimulate their implementation and to inform the Secretariat of the Union, as often and fully as possible, particularly in its annual reports, as to the steps taken and the results obtained (cf. Assembly, Rule 39.2).

### **II. ORGANS**

#### **ARTICLE 8**

The organs of the Inter-Parliamentary Union are: the Assembly, the Governing Council, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat.

### **III. THE ASSEMBLY**

#### **ARTICLE 9**

1. The Inter-Parliamentary Union shall meet in Assembly twice a year.
2. The place and date of each session shall be determined by the Governing Council (cf. Assembly, Rule 4.2).
3. In exceptional circumstances, the Governing Council may decide to change the place and date of the Assembly or not to hold it. In an emergency, the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union may take such a decision with the consent of the Executive Committee.

#### **ARTICLE 10**

1. The Assembly shall be composed of parliamentarians designated as delegates by the Members of the Union. Members shall include male and female parliamentarians in their delegation and shall strive to ensure equal representation of men and women.
2. The number of members of Parliament appointed as delegates to the first annual session of the Assembly by a Member of the Union shall in no case exceed eight in respect of Parliaments of countries with a population of less than one hundred million inhabitants, or ten in respect of Parliaments of countries with a population of one hundred million inhabitants or more. The number of delegates to the second annual session shall not exceed five, or seven for Parliaments of countries with a population of one hundred million inhabitants or more.

3. Any delegation that for three consecutive sessions of the Assembly is composed exclusively of parliamentarians of the same sex shall automatically be reduced by one person.

#### **ARTICLE 11**

1. The Assembly shall be opened by the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union or, in the absence of the President, by the Vice-President of the Executive Committee designated in conformity with Rule 5.2 of the Rules of the Executive Committee.

2. The Assembly shall choose its President, Vice-Presidents and Tellers.

3. The number of Vice-Presidents shall be equal to that of the Members of the Union represented at the Assembly.

#### **ARTICLE 12**

The Assembly debates issues which, under the terms of Article 1 of the Statutes, fall within the scope of the Union, and makes recommendations expressing the views of the organisation on these questions.

#### **ARTICLE 13**

1. The Assembly is assisted in its work by Standing Committees, whose number and terms of reference are determined by the Governing Council (cf. Art. 21 (e)).

2. Standing Committees shall normally prepare reports and draft resolutions for the Assembly.

3. Standing Committees may also be instructed by the Governing Council to study an item included in the latter's agenda and make a report to that organ.

#### **ARTICLE 14**

1. The Assembly shall establish the agenda for its subsequent session (cf. Assembly Rule 10).

2. The Assembly may include one emergency item in its agenda (cf. Assembly Rule 11).

#### **ARTICLE 15**

1. Only delegates present in person shall have the right to vote.

2. The number of votes to which each Member of the Union is entitled shall be calculated on the following basis:

(a) Each Member of the Union shall have a minimum of ten votes;

(b) Each Member of the Union shall have the following additional number of votes in relation to the population of its country:

From	1	to 5	million inhabitants:	1	vote
From more than 5	to 10	"	"	2	votes
"	"	"	10 to 20	"	3 "
"	"	"	20 to 30	"	4 "
"	"	"	30 to 40	"	5 "
"	"	"	40 to 50	"	6 "
"	"	"	50 to 60	"	7 "
"	"	"	60 to 80	"	8 "
"	"	"	80 to 100	"	9 "
"	"	"	100 to 150	"	10 "
"	"	"	150 to 200	"	11 "
"	"	"	200 to 300	"	12 "
From "	"	"	300 "	"	13 "

(c) Any delegation that for three consecutive sessions is composed exclusively of parliamentarians of the same sex shall have a minimum of eight votes (instead of the ten for mixed delegations) at the Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. For delegations entitled to a certain number of additional votes, the overall calculation will be made on the basis of eight votes instead of ten.

3. A delegation may split its votes so as to express the diverse views of its members. No one delegate may record more than ten votes.

## **ARTICLE 16**

1. Voting at the Assembly shall be by roll call, except when the decision before the Assembly meets with no opposition.

2. For the election of officers, voting shall be by secret ballot if at least twenty delegates so request.

## **IV. GOVERNING COUNCIL**

### **ARTICLE 17**

1. The Governing Council shall normally hold two sessions a year (cf. Governing Council, Rule 5).

2. The Governing Council shall be convened in extraordinary session by the President if the latter or the Executive Committee deems this necessary, or a quarter of the Governing Council's members so request.

#### **ARTICLE 18**

1. The Governing Council shall be composed of three representatives from each Member of the Union (cf. Governing Council, Rule 1.2). The term of office of a member of the Governing Council shall last from one Assembly to the next.

2. All the members of the Governing Council must be sitting members of Parliament.

3. In case of the death or resignation of a representative, or a representative's inability to attend, the Union Member concerned shall appoint a substitute.

#### **ARTICLE 19**

1. The Governing Council shall elect the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for a period of three years (cf. Governing Council, Rules 6, 7 and 8). The President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union shall be ex officio President of the Governing Council.

2. The retiring President shall not be eligible for re-election for three years and shall be replaced by a person belonging to another Parliament. An endeavour will be made to ensure a regular rotation between the different geopolitical Groups.

3. The election shall take place during the second Assembly of the year. If, for exceptional reasons, the Assembly cannot be convened, the Governing Council may nevertheless hold the election.

4. In case of the resignation, loss of parliamentary mandate or death of the President, the functions of President shall be exercised by the Vice-President of the Executive Committee appointed by the latter, until the Governing Council has elected a new President. The same provision shall apply in the case of the suspension of the affiliation of the Member of the Union to which the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union belongs.

#### **ARTICLE 20**

1. The Governing Council determines and guides the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and controls their implementation in conformity with the purposes defined in the Statutes.

2. The Governing Council shall adopt its agenda. A provisional agenda shall be established by the Executive Committee (cf. Governing Council, Rule 12.2). Any member of the Governing Council may submit supplementary proposals to this provisional agenda (cf. Governing Council, Rule 13).

## **ARTICLE 21**

The Governing Council shall have, in particular, the following functions:

- (a) To decide on the admission and readmission of Members of the Union, as well as on the suspension of their affiliation, in accordance with Article 4 of the Statutes;
- (b) To decide the place and date of the Assembly (cf. Art. 9.2 and Assembly, Rule 4);
- (c) To propose the President of the Assembly;
- (d) To decide on the holding of all other Inter-Parliamentary meetings by the Union, including the creation of ad hoc committees to study specific problems; to determine the modalities thereof and to express its opinion on their conclusions;
- (e) To set the number and terms of reference of the Standing Committees of the Assembly (cf. Art. 13.1);
- (f) To set up ad hoc or special committees and working groups to assist the Governing Council in its work, while ensuring geopolitical, geographical (regional and sub-regional and gender balance in their composition);
- (g) To determine the categories of observers at IPU meetings and their rights and responsibilities and to decide which international organisations and other bodies shall have observer status at the Union's meetings on a regular basis (cf. Assembly, Rule 2; Governing Council, Rule 4; Standing Committees, Rule 3), in addition to inviting on an occasional basis observers that may contribute to the study of a particular item on the Assembly agenda;
- (h) To adopt annually the work programme and budget of the Union and to establish the scale of contributions (cf. Financial Regs., Rules 3 and 5.2);
- (i) To approve, each year, the accounts for the preceding fiscal year on the recommendation of two Auditors whom it shall appoint from among its members (cf. Governing Council, Rule 41; Financial Regs., Rule 12; Secretariat, Rule 12);
- (j) To authorize the acceptance of donations and legacies (cf. Financial Regs., Rule 7);
- (k) To elect the members of the Executive Committee (cf. Governing Council, Rules 37, 38 and 39);
- (l) To appoint the Secretary General of the Union (cf. Art. 26.1; Secretariat, Rule 3);
- (m) To adopt its own Rules and to express its opinion with regard to proposals to amend the Statutes (cf. Governing Council, Rule 45).

## **ARTICLE 22**

A Meeting of Women Parliamentarians shall be held on the occasion of the first annual session of the Assembly and shall report on its work to the Governing Council. This Meeting shall establish its own Rules which shall be approved by the Governing Council. The Meeting is assisted by a Coordinating Committee whose Rules it shall approve. The Coordinating Committee will meet during both annual sessions of the Assembly.

## **V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **ARTICLE 23**

1. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, fifteen members belonging to different Parliaments and the President of the Coordinating Committee of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians.

2. The President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union shall be ex officio President of the Executive Committee. Fifteen members shall be elected by the Governing Council; not less than twelve shall be elected from among the members of the Governing Council to which they shall continue to belong during their mandate. At least three of the members elected must be women.

3. In elections to the Executive Committee, consideration shall be given to the contribution made to the work of the Union by the candidate and the Member of the Union concerned. Only parliamentarians from States where women have both the right to vote and the right to stand for election are eligible to the Executive Committee.

4. The fifteen elected seats will be assigned to the geopolitical groups by applying the St. Laguë system to the total number of votes their members are entitled to cast in the Assembly. Should there be a change in the number of seats on the Executive Committee to which a geopolitical group is entitled, each seat concerned shall only be reassigned once the term of the existing holder of the seat has expired.

5. The term of office of members of the Executive Committee other than the President shall be four years. At least two members shall retire in rotation each year. A retiring member shall not be eligible for re-election for two years and shall be replaced by a member belonging to another Parliament. The President of the Coordinating Committee of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians shall serve a two-year term which can be renewed once (cf. Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, Rule 32.4).

6. If a member of the Executive Committee dies, resigns or ceases to be a parliamentarian, the Member of the Union concerned shall appoint a substitute to serve until the next session of the Governing Council, when an election shall be held. If the newly elected member is from a different parliament than the outgoing member, he/she will serve a full term. Otherwise, the new member shall complete the term of office of his/her predecessor. If the President of the Coordinating Committee of the Meeting of



Women Parliamentarians dies, resigns or ceases to be a parliamentarian, the First Vice-President or Second Vice-President, as the case may be, will complete the term of office of the predecessor.

7. If the President of the Coordinating Committee is already a member of the Executive Committee or belongs to the same Parliament as one of the fifteen members, she shall be replaced by the First Vice-President of the Coordinating Committee, or the Second Vice-President should the First Vice-President be a member of the Executive Committee or belong to the same Parliament as one of the fifteen members.

8. If a member of the Executive Committee is elected President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Governing Council shall elect a member to fill the vacant seat. In such a case, the question shall be included automatically in the agenda of the Governing Council. The term of office of the new member shall be four years.

9. Members of the Executive Committee shall not simultaneously hold office as President or Vice-President of a Standing Committee.

#### **ARTICLE 24**

1. The Executive Committee shall be the administrative organ of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

2. The Executive Committee shall have the following functions:

(a) To consider, whenever a Parliament makes a request for affiliation or reaffiliation to the Union, whether the conditions mentioned in Article 3 of the Statutes are fulfilled, and to inform the Governing Council of its conclusions (cf. Art. 4);

(b) To summon the Governing Council, in case of emergency (cf. Art. 17.2);

(c) To fix the date and place of the Governing Council sessions and establish the provisional agenda;

(d) To give an opinion on the insertion of supplementary items in the agenda of the Governing Council;

(e) To propose to the Governing Council the annual work programme and budget of the Union (cf. Financial Regs., Rule 3.4);

(f) To inform the Governing Council at its sessions about the activities of the Executive Committee, through a report by the President;

(g) To control the administration of the Secretariat as well as its activities in the execution of the decisions taken by the Assembly or by the Governing Council and to receive, for this purpose, all reports and necessary information;

(h) To examine candidates for the post of Secretary General with the aim of submitting a proposal to the Governing Council; to establish the terms of office of the Secretary General appointed by the Governing Council;

(i) To request the Governing Council to grant supplementary credits, should the budgetary credits voted by the Governing Council appear to be insufficient to cover the expenditure required for the execution of the programme and the administration of the Union; in case of urgency, to grant these credits with the reservation that it shall inform the Governing Council of such action at the latter's next session;

(j) To designate an External Auditor entrusted with auditing the accounts of the Union (cf. Financial Regs., Rule 12);

(k) To set the scales of the salaries and allowances of staff members of the Secretariat of the Union (cf. Staff Regs., Section IV);

(l) To adopt its own Rules;

(m) To carry out all the functions which the Governing Council delegates to it in accordance with the Statutes and Rules.

## **VI. GEOPOLITICAL GROUPS**

### **ARTICLE 25**

1. The Members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union may form geopolitical groups. Each Group shall decide on the working methods that best suit its participation in the activities of the Organisation. It shall inform the Secretariat of its composition, the names of its officers, and its rules of procedure.

2. The Members that belong to more than one geopolitical group shall inform the Secretary General which geopolitical Group they represent for the purposes of submitting candidatures for positions within the Union.

3. The Executive Committee may invite the Chairs of the geopolitical groups to participate in its discussions in an advisory capacity.

## **VII. SECRETARIAT OF THE UNION**

### **ARTICLE 26**

1. The Secretariat of the Union comprises the totality of the staff of the organisation under the direction of the Secretary General of the Union (cf. Staff Regs., Rule 2), who shall be appointed by the Governing Council (cf. Art. 21 (1)).

2. The functions of the Secretariat shall be the following:

- (a) To be the permanent Headquarters of the Union;
- (b) To keep records on the Members of the Union and endeavour to foster new requests for affiliation;
- (c) To support and stimulate the activities of the Members of the Union and to contribute, on the technical level, towards the harmonization of these activities;
- (d) To prepare the questions to be considered at the Inter-Parliamentary meetings and to distribute the necessary documents in due time;
- (e) To provide for the execution of the decisions of the Governing Council and of the Assembly;
- (f) To prepare proposals for a draft work programme and budget for the consideration of the Executive Committee (cf. Financial Regs., Rule 3.2, 3.3 and 3.7);
- (g) To collect and disseminate information concerning the structure and functioning of representative institutions;
- (h) To maintain the liaison between the Union and other international organisations and, in general, its representation at international conferences;
- (i) To maintain the archives of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

## **VIII. ASSOCIATION OF SECRETARIES GENERAL OF PARLIAMENTS**

### **ARTICLE 27**

1. The Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments shall be a consultative body of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
2. The activities of the Association and those of the organs of the Inter-Parliamentary Union competent in the study of parliamentary institutions are complementary. They shall be coordinated by means of consultations and close collaboration at the stages of preparation and implementation of projects.
3. The Association shall be administered autonomously. The Union shall make an annual contribution towards the budget of the ASGP. The Rules which the ASGP establishes shall be approved by the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

## **IX. AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES**

### **ARTICLE 28**

1. Any proposal to amend the Statutes shall be submitted in writing to the Secretariat of the Union at least three months before the meeting of the Assembly. The Secretariat will immediately communicate all such proposals to the Members of the Union. The consideration of such proposed amendments shall be automatically placed on the agenda of the Assembly.

2. Any sub-amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Secretariat of the Union at least six weeks before the meeting of the Assembly. The Secretariat will immediately communicate all such sub-amendments to the Members of the Union.

3. After hearing the opinion of the Governing Council, expressed through a simple majority vote, the Assembly shall decide on such proposals by a two-thirds majority vote.