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Approved for tabling

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KENYA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



TENTH PARLIAMENT – FOURTH SESSION (2011)

**REPORT OF THE KENYAN DELEGATION TO THE 125TH
ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER – PARLIAMENTARY UNION
HELD IN BERN, SWITZERLAND,
16TH -19TH OCTOBER 2011**

Clerk's Chambers
Parliament Buildings
NAIROBI

NOVEMBER 2011

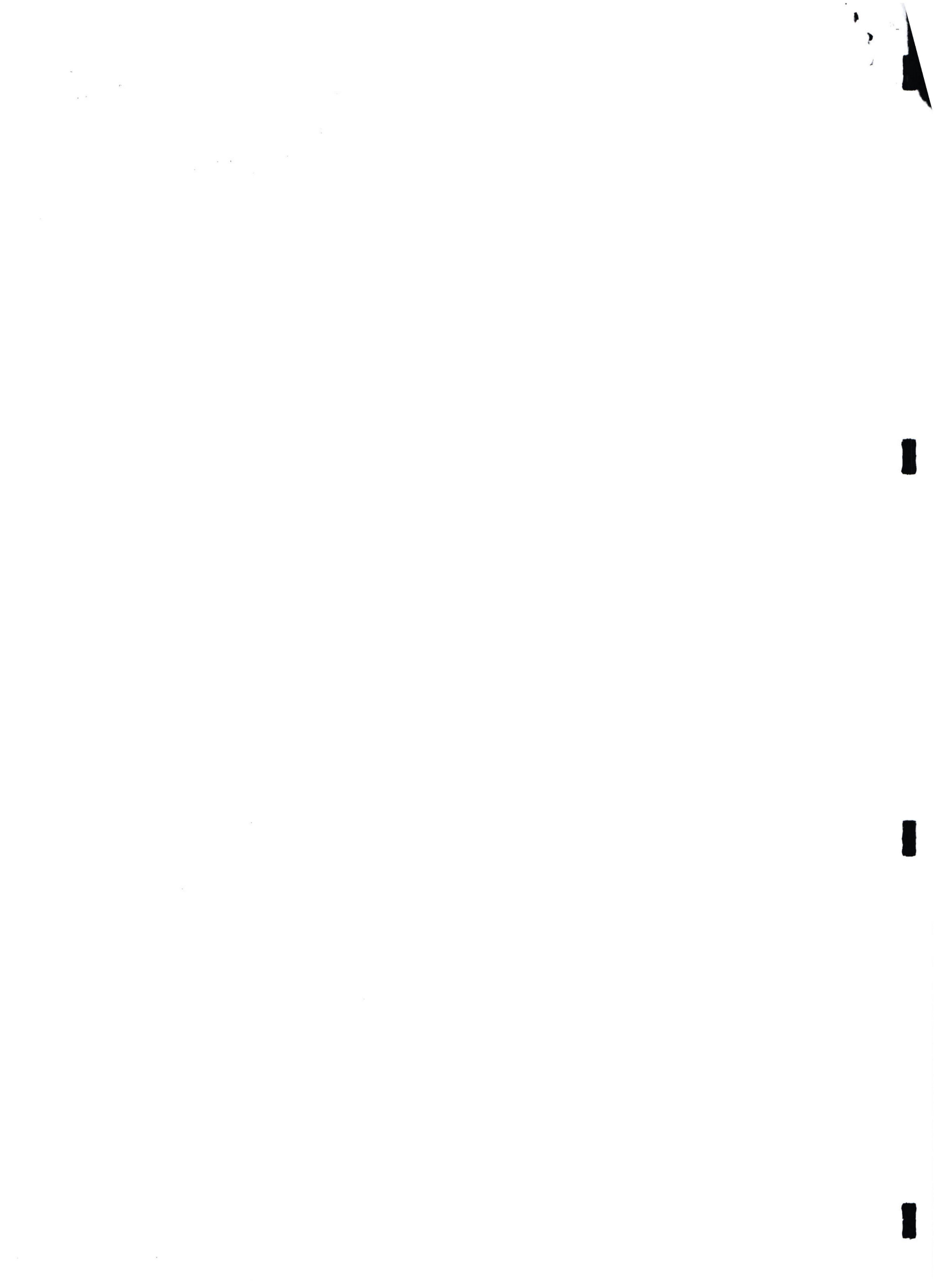


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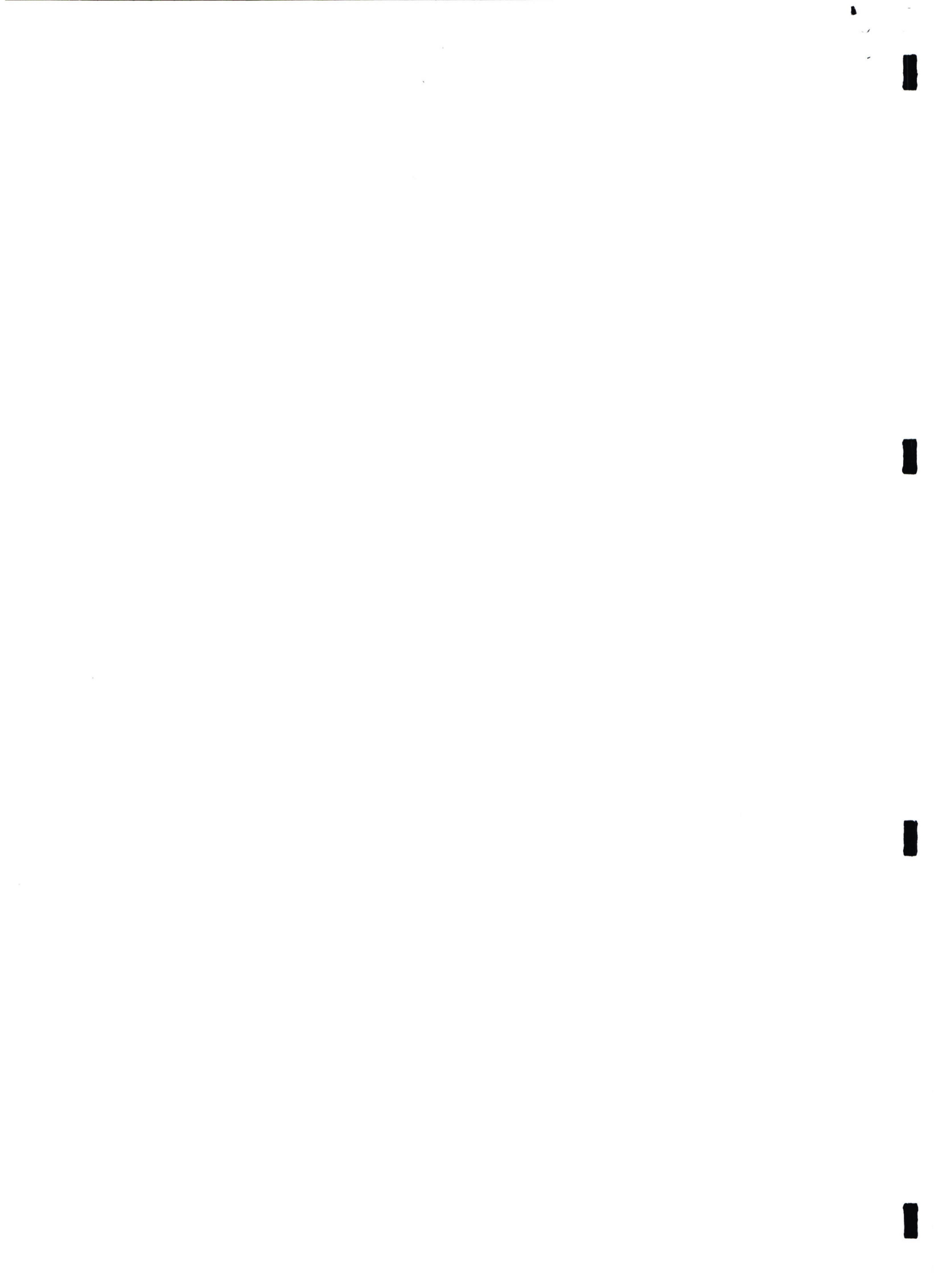
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1. FOREWORD

Mr. Speaker Sir,

The IPU, the world organization of parliaments, is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue, cooperation and action. It advances democracy and assists parliaments and parliamentarians throughout the world to fulfil their mandates. The IPU facilitates political parliamentary debate, dialogue and cooperation. It promotes and defends democracy and the rule of law. It assists parliaments in coping with a growing international agenda and in contributing a Parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and similar multilateral institutions.

The IPU Assembly is the principle statutory body that expresses the views of the Inter Parliamentary Union on political issues. It brings together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations for action. The Assembly meets twice a year and is held each time in a different country, providing participants with an opportunity to see various national realities. It is on this basis that the 126th Assembly will be held in Kampala, Uganda, in March 2012.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

The 125th Assembly was held at the BERNEXPO, Bern, Switzerland from the 16th to 19th October 2011. The Kenyan delegation comprised the following Members;

- i. Hon. Farah Maalim ,EGH,MP –Deputy Speaker and Leader of the Delegation
- ii. Hon. Ntoitha Mithiaru, MP
- iii. Hon. Chachu Ganya, MP
- iv. Hon. Shakilla Abdalla, MP
- v. Hon. Alfred Odhiambo Bwire, MP

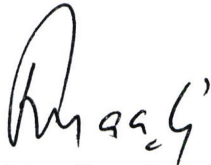
The Members were accompanied by;

- i. Mr. P.C.Omollo – Senior Deputy Clerk
- ii. Mr. J.N.Mwangi – Deputy Clerk
- iii. Ms. Josephine Kusinyi – Clerk Assistant
- iv. Mr. Hassan Odhwa – PA to the Deputy Speaker

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of the delegation for bestowing upon us this important task of representing Kenya in one of the most important forums for parliamentarians. The overall theme of the IPU in 2011 was **"What do citizens expect from their parliament?"**

Mr. Speaker Sir, it is therefore my pleasure to submit this report, summarizing the proceedings and resolutions of the 125th Assembly of the Inter Parliamentary Union and related meetings, in accordance with Article 7 of the Statutes of the IPU.

Thank you.



Hon. Farah Maalim, EGH, MP

Leader of Delegation

2. BACKGROUND

The IPU is the international organization of Parliaments, established in 1889.

The Union is the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy.

To that end, it:

- ▶ Fosters contacts, co-ordination, and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;
- ▶ Considers questions of international interest and concern and expresses its views on such issues in order to bring about action by parliaments and parliamentarians;
- ▶ Contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights -- an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development;
- ▶ Contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.

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

Promoting the concepts of peace and international arbitration, the IPU provided the origins for today's form of institutionalized multilateral co-operation and advocated the establishment of corresponding institutions at the inter-governmental level, which eventually came into being as the United Nations.

The IPU was also instrumental in setting up what is now the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. The IPU has transformed itself from an association of individual parliamentarians into the international organization of the Parliaments of sovereign States. It is a centre for dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy among legislators representing every political system and all the main political leanings in the world, constituting a unique platform for observing political opinions and trends around the world.

IPU statutory Assemblies and specialized meetings serve as a testing ground for new ideas and initiatives leading to important breakthroughs in the search for peace and advancing international co-operation.

The IPU is financed primarily by its members out of public funds. It is a public organization funded in a transparent way by Member Parliaments and Associate Members, whose annual fees are assessed in accordance with a scale of contributions approved by the Governing Council.

In addition, a growing volume of financial resources is mobilized through voluntary contributions, most of which are provided by donor governments.

3. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN BUREAU

On 15th October, 2011, before commencement of the Assembly, the African Bureau held its informal meeting to elect its president and take a common stand on the emergency item.

The Hon. Farah Maalim, MP. , Deputy Speaker of the Kenya National Assembly was unanimously elected to be the President of the African Geopolitical Group, a caucus of African parliaments within the Inter Parliamentary Union. The caucus is used as a forum for African parliaments to discuss and take a common stand on various issues within the Inter Parliamentary Union. It works in conjunction with the African Parliamentary Union, whose main objective is to encourage contacts among African Parliamentarians and Parliamentarians from other continents.

The Deputy Speaker was proposed for the presidency by Uganda and seconded by Southern Sudan. Tanzania endorsed the proposal.

The former President of the group was Mr.Edouard Mokolo wa Mpambo from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The presidency is usually held on a rotational basis and this time round, it was East Africa's opportunity to propose a president from its region.

4. 125TH ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER – PARLIAMENTARY UNION

4.1 Inaugural ceremony

The inaugural ceremony of the 125th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union took place on 16th October 2011 at the Bernexpo Convention Centre in Bern, Switzerland, with Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey, the President of Switzerland, in attendance.

The President of the IPU, Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, explained that a great deal of what was going to be discussed in the Swiss capital in the coming days reflected the preoccupations facing the world today. "Wherever we look, we see people suffering the consequences of crises and mismanagement, which are not of their making. As representatives of the people, we cannot let this sorry state of affairs continue".

The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, recalled that the United Nations Charter began with the words "We the Peoples ...". That was why, he said, "wherever I go, I seek out parliamentarians. You represent the peoples' voice ... the peoples' hopes ... the peoples' will". 2011 was a year of remarkable advances, he added: "We heard the peoples' call in Côte d'Ivoire, South Sudan, North Africa and beyond. Now we must do our utmost to help these nations in transition. And we must put new emphasis on preventive diplomacy to preserve peace and build healthy democracies elsewhere. Women make up half the world's population. They represent even more of its unrealized potential. In many ways, women are the world's next emerging economy. We must expand women's role in every sphere. And that means in parliament too".

The ceremony concluded with a statement by Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey, who welcomed some 1,400 delegates from 130 countries and said that the IPU had a role to play in seeking answers to the challenges facing States and the international community today. She declared the 125th Assembly officially open.

4.2. Opening of the Assembly and election of its President

The 125th Assembly opened at the Bernexpo Convention Centre in the morning of Monday, 17 October, with the election by acclamation of Mr. J.-R. Germanier, Speaker of the Swiss National Council, as President of the Assembly.

He gave the floor to the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Japan, Mr. T. Yokomichi, who thanked the IPU Members for their support following the earthquake and tsunami which had affected his country, and gave an update of the measures taken to rebuild and secure the affected areas.

4.3. Participation

Delegations of the following 127 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Assembly: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The following Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: Andean Parliament, East African Legislative Assembly, Parliament of Economic Community of West African States, European Parliament, Latin American Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Inter-Parliamentary Committee

of the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the Transitional Arab Parliament.

Observers included representatives of: (i) United Nations system: United Nations, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO); (ii) International Organization for Migration (IOM), World Trade Organization (WTO); (iii) African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA), Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Confederation of Parliaments of The Americas (COPA), Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC), Inter-Parliamentary Commission of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), League of Arab States, Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IPU-IGAD), Maghreb Consultative Council, Pan-African Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries (TURKPA), Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and the Russian Federation, Parliamentary Union of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Member States (PUOICM); (iv) Socialist International; and (v) International IDEA, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Of the 1,253 participants who attended the Assembly, 534 were members of parliament. The parliamentarians included 36 Speakers, 37 Deputy Speakers and 158 women parliamentarians (29.6%).

4.4. Choice of an emergency item

The Assembly had before it three requests for the inclusion of an emergency item: one submitted by the delegation of Namibia, entitled *The plight of the people of famine-stricken Somalia and relief efforts by IPU Member Parliaments*, a proposal submitted by the Palestinian delegation entitled *Realizing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination* and a third proposal, submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran, entitled *The need to further mobilize international support and strengthen international efforts to assist the Somali people suffering from famine*.

After taking the floor, the delegations of Palestine and the Islamic Republic of Iran withdrew their proposals in favour of the one presented by Namibia, which was adopted by acclamation and added to the agenda as Item 6.

4.5. Debates and decisions of the Assembly

(a) Debate on the emergency item

The plight of the people of famine-stricken Somalia and relief efforts by IPU Member Parliaments

The debate on the emergency item was chaired by Mr. J.-R. Germanier, President of the 125th Assembly, and by the Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, Mr. M.V. Sisulu, in his capacity as Vice-President of the Assembly.

During the debate, speakers expressed their deep concern over the situation in Somalia and expressed their support, urging all parliamentarians to promote global inter-parliamentary cooperation aimed at advancing relief efforts to mitigate human suffering and hunger in the Horn of Africa.

Hon. Farah Maalim, MP, Deputy Speaker and Leader of the Kenyan delegation was the fourth Speaker to take the floor. He urged Members to seriously look into the Somalia issue and called for the IPU to set up a Commission to look into the Somalian Crisis, which has been long ignored by Parliamentarians world over. Kenya having carried the greater burden of Somali refugees the Deputy Speaker informed Members that the crisis was real and needed immediate intervention.

The concerns expressed during the debate were reflected in the draft resolution, which was prepared by a drafting committee composed of representatives of the parliaments of: Argentina, Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Malaysia, Mexico, Namibia and the United Kingdom. It appointed Ms. U. Stephens (Australia) as its president and Ms. S. Tioulong (Cambodia) as its rapporteur.

(b) Report of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs

The IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs began its first session with a briefing and discussion with Mr. J. Sampaio (Portugal), UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). The session was chaired by Senator D. Dawson (Canada), and highlighted the need to enhance the role of parliaments in dealing with popular concerns over culture, identity and migration, which challenged the core values of democracy around the world.

The Committee stressed that parliaments and parliamentarians should consider various initiatives to enhance intercultural dialogue and cooperation, inter alia by organizing regular debates in parliament, establishing specific mechanisms to help maintain key issues on the parliamentary agenda, and taking follow-up action with a view to implementing the recommendations of the relevant IPU resolution adopted in 2007 on ensuring respect for peaceful co-existence.

The second session took the form of a panel discussion on *Nuclear Weapons: The Road to Zero*. The event, chaired by Speaker H. Jenkins of Australia, was held as a follow-up to the IPU resolution adopted in 2009 on advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The Committee heard presentations by prominent experts and engaged in a discussion on various ways of addressing the threats and challenges posed by nuclear weapons.

The Committee reaffirmed that nuclear weapon States had an obligation to implement the commitments they had undertaken through the Non-Proliferation Treaty and non-nuclear weapon States could help build a framework by prohibiting and criminalizing nuclear weapons in their national legislations, establishing regional nuclear weapons-free zones, and promoting common security models as alternatives to nuclear deterrence.

The Committee devoted its third session to the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) and follow-up to the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC IV), held in Istanbul in May 2011. The session was moderated by Mr. M. Traore (Burkina Faso), and featured a keynote address by Mr. C.S. Diarra, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS). The presentations addressed the main outcomes of LDC IV and plans for follow-up and the important role of parliaments in the achievement of national development commitments. Participants were briefed on the joint IPU-UN-OHRLS project in support of LDC parliaments and a related Guidance Note developed by the IPU.

The Committee took stock of preparations for the UN General Assembly debate on *Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU* - a stand-alone item on the agenda of the current 66th session. While underscoring the importance of the previous resolution (65/123) and the need to further consolidate the gains achieved, it was agreed that there was room for further progress.

The Committee held a panel discussion on *The green economy: A breakthrough for sustainable development?* The debate was held in the run-up to the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as the Rio+20 Conference. It was moderated by Brazilian MP H. Napoleão, and featured a prominent group of parliamentarians, UN officials, international experts, and representatives of civil society and the private sector.

The Committee stressed that the sustainable development agenda related to both developed and developing countries and by most standards, remained largely unrealized. The economy was using up far more resources than could be replaced or preserved at the cost of a lower quality of life, and poverty and inequality persisted in spite of an overall increase in total wealth.

At its last sitting, the Committee discussed preparations for the 2011 session of the UN Climate Change Conference, to be held in December 2011 in Durban, South Africa. The session was chaired by Mr. C. Frolick, coordinator at the South African Parliament. The Committee was briefed on the current negotiations, challenges and requirements for the conclusion of a global agreement on climate

policies that encompassed adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology, forests and capacity-building. It exchanged views on a draft parliamentary message to the UN Conference, which should be a succinct but powerful political declaration.

The Advisory Group to the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs also met during the 125th Assembly. It underscored that, although the Committee was still a fledgling structure, additional efforts should be made to sensitize Member Parliaments to the Committee's mandate with a view to increasing participation by legislators and enhancing the Committee's status.

(c) Panel discussion (First Standing Committee subject item at 126th Assembly):

Promoting and practising good governance as a means of advancing peace and security: Drawing lessons from recent events in the Middle East and North Africa

The panel discussion was chaired by Mr. S.H. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), the Committee's President. The co-Rapporteurs, Mr. M. Gyöngyösi (Hungary) and Mr. J.J. Mwiimbu (Zambia), presented their draft reports, which identified the elements of good governance how it contributed to peace and security. The reports analysed the recent events in the Middle East and North Africa, with particular reference to the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt.

Participants heard keynote presentations from Mr. M. El Galad, Editor-in-Chief of the Egyptian daily newspaper *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, Ms. S. Sekkenes, Senior Adviser, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP, and Ms. K. Jabre, Manager of the IPU Gender Partnership Programme.

There was broad agreement among delegates on the importance of good governance, which inter alia presupposed political accountability, efforts to curb corruption, and the promotion of gender equality. Participants provided a number of good practices, as well as suggestions on ways to enhance democratic governance. Many delegates underscored that the Arab Spring was an expression of peoples' fundamental desire for dignity and freedom, and that the revolts in several Arab countries had come in response to the oppressive nature of former or current regimes. Others argued that, for economic or geostrategic reasons,

various foreign powers had supported the former regimes, thus delaying the development of democracy in countries such as Tunisia and Egypt.

Delegates from other Arab countries drew attention to the political reforms taking place in their countries, which, in some cases, had been underway for a number of years. While applauding the co-Rapporteurs' efforts to capture the complex political situation in the Middle East and North Africa, some delegates invited them to deepen their analysis. Participants suggested that it might be useful to distinguish between the importance of good governance for the promotion of peace and security, and the evaluation of recent events in the Middle East and North Africa, which were the result of a complex set of historical and political circumstances.

(d) Panel discussion (Second Standing Committee subject item at 126th Assembly):

Redistribution of power, not just wealth: Ownership of the international agendas

The panel discussion took place with Mr. S. Alhousseini (Saudi Arabia), President of the Second Standing Committee, in the Chair. He was replaced in the Chair subsequently by the First Vice-President, Ms. B. Contini (Italy).

The two co-Rapporteurs who had been appointed at the 124th Assembly, Lord Judd (United Kingdom) and Mr. O. Benabdallah (Morocco), presented their respective draft reports. They were joined by a non-parliamentary expert, Ms. Y. Li, Head of the Debt and Development Finance Branch, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Following the three introductory statements, an exchange of views took place, with a total of 31 delegates taking the floor.

The discussion focused on the need for a fundamental re-assessment of power relations between States and citizens and the need to identify ways and means of improving the system of international governance.

Given the ever increasing number of global challenges and cross-border issues, the existing mechanisms for problem-solving tended to reflect the priorities of those in positions of power rather than those most affected by problems. The

recent wave of uprisings referred to as the "Arab Spring" showed that the masses were disillusioned with governments that failed to provide a fair voice and an equitable share of the economic pie.

At the global level, trust in multilateral institutions had been eroded and many of those institutions were perceived as reflecting the needs of the post-World War II powers and large economies, at the expense of the developing nations. Multilateral institutions and forums for global problem-solving were in dire need of reform if they intended to remain relevant in an increasingly multipolar world and able to tackle the problems of climate change, resource constraints, hunger, poverty and insecurity. Echoing the sentiments reflected by the co-Rapporteurs in their reports, most delegates were critical of power equations that underlay decision-making in international bodies such as the UN Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the G20.

Hon. Chachu Ganya M.P, Hon. Shakilla Abdalla MP and Hon. Alfred Odhiambo Bwire MP, actively contributed in the debate

Delegates pointed to the pervasive influence of media moguls and the non-transparent nature of corporate power, in particular the preponderant influence of lobbyists representing private-corporate interests. They endorsed the co-Rapporteurs' conclusion that it was necessary to ensure greater transparency in decision-making through freedom of information and a register of lobbyists, both at the national and international levels.

The draft reports and the panel discussion served as reminders that effective international accountability depended on strong, vibrant local, regional and national systems of democracy.

(e) Panel discussion (Third Standing Committee subject item at 126th Assembly):

Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children (Item 3(c))

The panel discussion took place in the morning of 18 October with Mr. O. Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu (Ghana), President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, in the Chair. The President asked Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada), Mr.

F. Sardinha (India) and Ms. P. Turyahikayo (Uganda), who had been appointed co-Rapporteurs at the 124th Assembly in Panama, to present the draft report they had jointly prepared. Following their presentation, they invited participants to make contributions with a view to enriching the report and laying the foundations for the future draft resolution.

The participants heard presentations by Dr. F. Bustreo, Assistant Director-General, Family, Women's and Children's Health, World Health Organization, and Dr. C. Presern, Director of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

More than 180 delegates attended the panel, of whom 55 took the floor during the debate. The health of women and children as a human rights issue was of deep concern to parliaments. Inadequate, weak and failing health systems, insufficient financial and human resources, particularly in the context of entrenched poverty, the marginalization of women and girls as well as the social and economic inequalities that hindered certain groups from accessing health services, were underlying causes of poor health among women and children.

Hon. Shakila Abdalla, MP contributed to the debate by informing members how the Kenyan Parliament through budgetary allocation and scrutiny of expenditure by Committees has improved the status of the Health Sector in Country .The Member encouraged the parliamentarians to work with their governments to establish robust national accountability frameworks for resources earmarked for maternal and child health services.

Some progress had been made in reducing child and maternal deaths as a result of the concerted efforts by the international community over the past few years. However, while some countries were on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) relating to the health of women and children (MDGs 4 and 5), many others were unlikely to meet their targets. The high number of preventable maternal and child deaths remained unacceptable. Participants called on the international community to sustain and scale up its support as a matter of urgency. They highlighted parliaments' pivotal contribution to legislative, oversight, budgetary and sensitization efforts required for the health-related MDGs to be achieved by 2015.

The key challenges faced by parliaments in addressing women's and children's health included insufficient political space to inform the budget allocations for maternal and child health, and a lack of resources and access to information for their work. As a result, an accountability gap persisted with respect to the provision of resources and implementation of programmes to ensure improved health outcomes for women and children. Participants provided examples of mechanisms and initiatives employed by their parliaments to promote the health of women and children in their countries. Increasingly, countries recognized health as a basic right in their constitutions. Albeit to varying extents and not without challenges, parliamentarians - both men and women - were increasingly working towards ensuring that improvements in women's and children's health were achieved through their legislative, oversight, representation and advocacy functions. Parliamentary mechanisms such as committees and caucuses were used as avenues for advancing MDGs 4 and 5. Those mechanisms were used to inform public opinion on maternal and child health issues, mobilize stakeholders and link parliamentary action to initiatives by other stakeholders. Legislative reforms in support of improved health outcomes included passing laws to remove financial impediments to access to health care for all, laws to promote gender equality and access to sexual and reproductive health care, and marriage licence laws to prevent abuse against women and girls. At all levels, prevention was considered to be better than cure.

The following means of enhancing the contribution of parliaments were identified: tackling underlying issues including poverty; enhancing legal frameworks to address gender inequality and promote sexual health and reproductive rights; expanding maternity protection for working women; improving access to quality health care and medicines among poor and marginalized populations; increasing the legal age for marriage; ensuring improved access to sexual and reproductive health education for adolescents; and instituting mechanisms and structures to improve accountability. Parliamentarians were urged to participate in national and regional initiatives relating to maternal and child health.

Parliaments should pay more attention to issues such as legislation on mental, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, and the needs of vulnerable groups. They should also address the issue of the high number of deaths due to unsafe abortions. Participants underscored the importance of strengthening solidarity

and partnership with other stakeholders working for the health of women and children, including the United Nations, civil society and the private sector.

The IPU was called upon to provide a space to facilitate exchange and cooperation among its Members on health-related issues, particularly with regard to developing appropriate legislative frameworks.

The resolution to be adopted at the 126th Assembly in Kampala should reflect those concerns and identify a framework for parliaments' contribution to improved action and accountability on women's and children's health. The resolution and framework should take into account the prevailing realities in the different countries rather than seek to impose a specific approach. It should also include measures to promote follow-up by IPU Members.

5. 189TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

5.1 Election of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

The Governing Council elected Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, Speaker of the Moroccan House of Representatives, as President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for a three-year term ending in October 2014. He replaces outgoing President Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia.

Ms. N. Ali Assegaf (Indonesia), President of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians had also declared her candidacy for the Presidency of the Union.

Mr. Radi obtained 137 votes, while Ms. N. Ali Assegaf had 130 votes. One ballot was declared invalid. The outgoing President, Dr. T.-B. Gurirab, was made an honorary President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Council expressed its deep gratitude to the outgoing President, Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for his unwavering devotion to the cause of the IPU. Dr. Gurirab was made an honorary President of the IPU.

5.2 Membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

The Governing Council readmitted the parliaments of Equatorial Guinea and Niger. It admitted the Parliament of Chad as a new Member and readmitted the Parliament of Honduras.

The Council suspended the membership of the parliaments of Comoros and Liberia, which had accumulated more than three years' arrears in the payment of their contributions.

The Governing Council approved requests for observer status from Penal Reform International (PRI), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (APCPLP) and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH).

5.3 Reports on the activities of IPU Members

The Governing Council took note of the reports submitted by 80 Members on their participation in the IPU and on follow-up of three resolutions adopted at the 122nd IPU Assembly on the global fight against organized crime, developing South-South and Triangular cooperation and youth participation in the democratic process.

The Council welcomed the fact that an increasing number of Members were fulfilling their obligations to submit an annual report, as required by the Statutes.

5.4 Financial situation of the IPU

The Governing Council was presented with a comprehensive report on the financial situation of the IPU and an updated list of unpaid contributions as at 30 September 2011. On that date, three Members had significant arrears and were subject to sanctions (suspension or loss of voting rights).

The Council took note of the Secretary General's projected operating surplus of CHF 400,000 due largely to the relative strength of the Swiss franc in 2011, as well as to staff turnover resulting in savings in salaries.

For the 2011 budget, the Secretary General had identified voluntary funding needs totaling CHF 4.5 million. The total voluntary funding received by the end of 2011 was projected to reach CHF 2.5 million. During the discussion, the Governing Council requested information on the possibility of increasing the level of voluntary contributions to fund IPU activities in the future.

The Secretary General noted that the Council had set criteria limiting voluntary funding to Council approved activities under one consolidated budget for the IPU. Funding agreements with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and Irish Aid that had recently expired were currently being renewed. Discussions were underway on further potential funding arrangements with the Canadian International Development Agency.

5.5. Programme and budget for 2012

The Governing Council was presented with the budget proposal for 2012 and a summary of planned activities and requirements for 2012-2014.

The Executive Committee had acknowledged a budget reduction of 7 per cent in the IPU's regular budget from CHF 13,537,700 for 2011 to CHF 12,593,700 for 2012. Taking into consideration the difficult financial situation of many IPU Members, the Executive Committee had further requested the Secretary General to present options for reducing the IPU's regular budget by a further 3 per cent, in order to achieve a total cut of 10 per cent from the 2011 approved level.

The Executive Committee recognized that reducing the budget even further - to achieve an overall reduction of 10 per cent - would involve governance debate and agreement on which areas of core IPU activities should be taken out of the work programme in a way that was both acceptable to the membership and sustainable over a longer period. That exercise would require extensive discussion involving the full membership. Every effort would be made to realize savings for 2012 and beyond.

The Executive Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Working Group on the scale of contributions that the assessed contributions from Members for

the 2012 budget and beyond be based on the latest updated UN scale of contributions. In the future, the IPU scale of contributions would be automatically aligned with the UN scale, which was periodically updated to reflect the economic reality of UN Member States and their capacity to pay.

During the debate, several Members stressed the need to take cost-cutting measures not because they wished to limit the IPU's activities, but because in the current economic climate, they simply could not afford to pay more. The IPU was setting a good example by reducing its budget. The 10 per-cent cut should be seen as a new base line for regular expenditure.

Following the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Governing Council approved the new scale of contributions and adopted the 2012 budget. (Appendix V)

5.6 Cooperation with the United Nations system

The Governing Council took stock of recent developments in IPU-United Nations cooperation and was informed of a variety of activities carried out in collaboration with or in support of the United Nations. The Council received the latest information on the 2011 Joint Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, to be held on 28 and 29 November at UN Headquarters in New York, under the chairmanship of the President of the IPU and the President of the UN General Assembly. The Hearing would examine the topic *strengthening political accountability for a more peaceful and prosperous world*. All Member Parliaments were encouraged to participate in the event.

5.7 IPU Strategy for 2012-2017

The Governing Council adopted by consensus the first ever Strategy for the IPU. Introducing the document on behalf of the Executive Committee, Mr. M.C. Nago, Speaker of the National Assembly of Benin, said that the Strategy was the fruit of two years of debate and consultations with the entire membership. It was a visionary strategy that placed inter-parliamentary cooperation and the IPU at the service of parliaments, democracy and international cooperation.

The Strategy charted three strategic directions for the IPU's development over the next five years. It aimed to build stronger parliaments by focusing on research, standard-setting, technical assistance, gender equality and human rights. It sought to help bridge the democracy deficit in international relations by developing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations system, build parliamentary support for international development goals and contribute to peace-building. The Strategy was set to make the IPU a more effective instrument of parliamentary cooperation. (Appendix IV)

5.8 Reports of plenary bodies and specialized committees

The Governing Council took note of the reports on the activities of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the Committee on Middle East Questions, the Gender Partnership Group, the Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS and the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

5.9. Future inter-parliamentary meetings

The Governing Council took note of the dates for the next two Assemblies, which would be held in Kampala and Quebec City respectively. It noted the invitation from the Parliament of Ecuador to host the 128th Assembly. The Council approved the list of future meetings and other activities to be funded by the IPU's regular budget as well as by external sources.

5.10 Amendments to the Statutes and Rules

The Governing Council approved amendments to Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes. The amendments foresaw statutory sanctions for Associate Members in arrears of the payment of their contributions. The 125th Assembly, after hearing the opinion of the Governing Council, adopted those amendments. (Appendix II)

6. Closing session of the Assembly

At its last sitting, the Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution on the emergency item entitled *The plight of the people of famine-stricken Somalia and relief efforts by IPU Member Parliaments*.

Before the closing of the Assembly, the outgoing President of the IPU paid tribute to two retiring IPU staff members, Mr. Marcelo Bustos Letelier, Director of Assembly Affairs and Relations with Member Parliaments, and Ms. Ingeborg Schwartz, Secretary of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, for their devoted service to the Organization. Both the new President of the IPU and the President of the Assembly joined in that tribute.

The Hon. Farah Maalim, MP, Deputy Speaker of the Kenya National Assembly on behalf of the African group, thanked the Swiss Parliament for successfully hosting the 125th Assembly. The Deputy Speaker then took the opportunity to congratulate the incoming President of the IPU and the outgoing President for steering the Union for the past three years. In conclusion and in line with the principle of good neighbourliness, the Deputy Speaker welcomed all Members of the Union to the 126th Assembly to be held in Kampala, Uganda.

The President of the Assembly then declared the Assembly closed.

APPENDIX I

THE PLIGHT OF THE PEOPLE OF FAMINE-STRICKEN SOMALIA AND RELIEF EFFORTS BY IPU MEMBER PARLIAMENTS

Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the 125th IPU Assembly (Bern, 19 October 2011)

The 125th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,
Noting with deep concern the worsening famine in Somalia caused by internal strife and drought in the Horn of Africa, which has resulted in a humanitarian disaster affecting over 12 million people, including 1.5 million internally displaced persons requiring food, water, medical supplies, clothing, shelter and provisions,

Alarmed at the loss of life of tens of thousands of people, in particular children, due to malnutrition,

Commending and welcoming the relief efforts carried out by governments, the United Nations, other international organizations and the international community at large in Somalia and the rest of the Horn of Africa,

Applauding Somalia's neighbouring countries for receiving hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees,

Recalling UN Security Council Resolution 2010 (2011) adopted on 30 September 2011 on the situation in Somalia, expressing serious concern that the United Nations consolidated appeal for Somalia is not fully funded, stressing the need for urgent mobilization of resources to those in need and calling on all Member States to contribute to current and future consolidated humanitarian appeals,

Expressing full solidarity, sympathy and compassion with the Somali people, who have been affected by the widespread famine,

1. *Urges* all IPU Members, other international organizations and the international community at large to scale up their efforts to provide full support and humanitarian assistance to the people of Somalia;

2. *Requests* IPU Members that have not already done so to pledge and make voluntary contributions towards the relief efforts in Somalia;
3. *Urges* the international community to work in unison in order for the humanitarian aid to reach the affected areas as soon as possible;
4. *Encourages* the African Union (AU), governments, relevant international organizations and the IPU Secretariat to assist Somalia in strengthening its democratic institutions, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia, through inter alia the development of programmes to assist in establishing the rule of law;
5. *Also encourages* the AU's Women, Gender and Development Directorate, the Pan-African Women's Organisation (PAWO), UN Women, the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians and other relevant international organizations to assist Somali women in rebuilding their livelihoods and building their capacity to take care of their families in order to restore their health;
6. *Appeals in particular* to the authorities in Somalia and neighbouring countries to ensure the personal safety and work of the humanitarian organizations working in the area, and *calls* for the immediate release of the two Spanish aid workers who were recently kidnapped;
7. *Requests* the IPU Secretary General to report on the implementation of this resolution at the 126th IPU Assembly.

APPENDIX II

*Approved by the 125th IPU Assembly
(Bern, 19 October 2011)*

STATUTES OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

ARTICLE 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.

An Associate member which is in arrears of the payment of its financial contributions in an amount that equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from It for the preceding two full years, shall not be represented by more than one delegate at meetings convened by the Union.

3. When a Member **or Associate member** of the Union 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 **or Associate member** to the Union.

APPENDIX III
RULES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*Adopted in 1972, entirely revised in October 1983 and amended
in October 1987, April 1990, April 1995, April 1996, September 1998, October
1999,
April 2001, entirely revised in April 2003 and amended in October 2011.*

COMPOSITION

RULE 1

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, fifteen elected members and the President of the Coordinating Committee of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians in conformity with Article 23 of the Statutes.

RULE 2

1. A member of the Executive Committee who is unable to participate in a session may be replaced by another representative of the Union Member concerned, duly mandated for that purpose; if the President of the Coordinating Committee of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians who is an ex officio member of the Executive Committee is unable to attend, she may be replaced by the First Vice-President or the Second Vice-President of the Coordinating Committee, as the case may be.

APPENDIX IV

BETTER PARLIAMENTS, STRONGER DEMOCRACIES IPU STRATEGY 2012-2017

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 189th session
(Bern, 19 October 2011)*

Introduction

The present document contains a strategy for the IPU for the next five years. It charts a course for the organization's development in three strategic directions, spells out the corresponding objectives and identifies what it hopes to have achieved by the end of the five years.

The document starts by presenting a new mission statement. The statement encapsulates the mission of the IPU in a few words. It is accompanied by an explanation and a slogan. The mission statement is followed by a vision. The vision expresses where the IPU wants to be in the long term. It reflects an overall ambitious view of the IPU's future. It aims to rally all stakeholders around a common general aspiration.

Then there are three strategic directions that chart a path for the IPU over the next five years towards the fulfilment of its vision. The strategic directions are inferred from the mission statement. They give priority to three areas of work: democracy and parliaments, international involvement of parliaments and the IPU as an instrument of parliamentary cooperation.

The three strategic directions are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Parliamentary cooperation is at the centre. It underpins all of the IPU's work. Each strategic direction is composed of three objectives and several sub-objectives. The strategy will guide the IPU over the coming five years. A mid-term review of the strategy will take place after two years.

The strategy will be implemented on the basis of priorities. All actions reflected in the plan cannot be done immediately, at the same time, and during the full five-year period. Some are time bound, others will depend on demand and others still will need to wait pending the identification of resources.

The strategy is not a business plan nor is it a budget document. Nonetheless, it has been drawn up with current economic realities in mind. It will need to be translated into a separate annual or biannual work plan and budget. The budget will correlate to a level of income that corresponds to what Members are able to contribute and other revenues the IPU can realistically hope to obtain.

The strategy is based on a careful analysis of the IPU today, the environment in which it operates, the challenges it faces and, most importantly, its considerable comparative advantages. It has been enriched by observations and suggestions from many Member Parliaments, geo-political groups and IPU Committees and has been meticulously worked on by the Executive Committee.

The strategy will provide clarity, focus and understanding within and outside the IPU regarding its future direction and make it possible to plan resources and action.

APPENDIX V

BUDGET OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION FOR 2012
Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 189th session
(Bern, 19 October 2011)
Approved 2012 operating budget

REVENUES

Assessed contributions **11,946,900**

Working Capital Fund * **133,800**

Staff assessment **1,372,000**

Interest **75,000**

Other revenue **10,000**

Voluntary contributions **4,548,840**

TOTAL REVENUES 18,086,540

EXPENDITURES

Stronger democracies 7,246,740

International involvement 3,196,310

Parliamentary cooperation 4,634,080

Support services 2,805,910

Other charges 303,500

Eliminations (100,000)

TOTAL EXPENDITURES 18,086,540

* The Working Capital Fund including budget surpluses is utilized to balance the revenue and expenditure budgets.

APPENDIX VI
AGENDA OF THE 126th ASSEMBLY
(Kampala, 31 March - 5 April 2012)
Approved by the 125th IPU Assembly
(Bern, 19 October 2011)

1. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 126th Assembly
2. Consideration of possible requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General debate on the political, economic and social situation in the world
4. Promoting and practising good governance as a means of advancing peace and security:
Drawing lessons from recent events in the Middle East and North Africa
(Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
5. Redistribution of power, not just wealth: Ownership of the international agendas
(Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade)
6. Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children
(Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)
7. Approval of the subject items for the 128th Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs