

UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

ASSOCIATION DES SECRÉTAIRES GÉNÉRAUX DES PARLEMENTS  
ASSOCIATION OF SECRETARIES GENERAL OF PARLIAMENTS

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*CONSTITUTIONAL  
AND PARLIAMENTARY  
INFORMATION*

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**The parliamentary system  
of the Republic of Korea**

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**The management by Parliaments  
of their historic buildings**

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**The system for the preparation  
of the Official Report  
in the Swiss Parliament**

# **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 organization 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 co-operation, 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 (November 1997)**

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Korea (Dem. P. R. of), Korea (Rep of), Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Associated members: Andean Parliament, Latin American Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

## **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 from each affiliated Group. *President*: Mr. M. A. Martinez (Spain).
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 Organization, the headquarters being located at: Place du Petit-Saconnex, CP 438, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland.

*Secretary general*: Mr. Pierre Cornillon.

## **Official publication**

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

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# Constitutional and Parliamentary Information

Association of Secretaries General  
of Parliaments

*No. 1741 2nd Half-year -1997*

*Forty-seventh year*

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# I. The parliamentary system of the Republic of Korea

## Presentation by Mr YUN Young Tak, Secretary General of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea. Seoul Session (April 1997)

Mr YUN Young Tak was accompanied by four of his colleagues - Mr YOO Soo Jeong (Deputy Secretary General for the Legislative Affairs of the National Assembly), Mr LEE Jae Do (Deputy Secretary General for the Administrative Affairs of the National Assembly), Mr YOUN Soo Nam (Dean of the National Assembly Research and Training Institute) and Mr LEE Hyun Koo (Chief Librarian of the National Assembly). Mr YUN Young Tak spoke as follows:

### 1. History

The Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Korea was launched on May 31, 1948 with 198 democratically elected Members. It adopted a Constitution stipulating a unicameral legislature and a presidential system of government and promulgated it on July 17, 1948. The Constituent Assembly elected the first President of the Republic and proclaimed throughout the world the foundation of the Republic of Korea on August 15 of the same year.

Since then, the National Assembly, as a representative organ of the Korean people, has devoted itself to the development of parliamentary democracy overcoming enormous internal and external difficulties including the Korean War and the 'April 19 Revolution'.

In the course of amending the Constitution nine times, the Republic of Korea has experienced various types of government; the cabinet system and bicameral parliament were adopted by the 3rd amendment, and the presidential system and unicameral legislature were restored by the 5th amendment. The 7th Constitutional amendment introduced the indirect elections system in which the President and one-third of the National Assembly Members were elected by the 'National Conference for Unification', and the 8th amendment adopted the proportional representation system and the indirect presidential election by electoral college for a single seven-year term of office.

The present Constitution as amended for the 9th time has adopted a presidential system in which the President is directly elected by the people for a single term of five years, and the legislature is unicameral with its members elected directly from single-member constituencies or by a proportional representation system.

The current 15th National Assembly is composed of 299 Members, who were elected in a general election held on April 11, 1996.

## 2. Organisation

### 1. *Speaker, Vice Speakers and Members of the National Assembly*

The National Assembly is composed of 299 members, of whom 253 are elected from single-member electoral districts and the remaining 46 Members by a proportional representation system. Their term of office is 4 years, and any citizen aged 25 or above is eligible to run for office, while every citizen aged 20 or above is entitled to vote in the elections.

In order to help the National Assembly members fulfil their responsibilities without interference, the Constitution entitles them to parliamentary immunity by which they are protected from criminal or civil responsibilities for any statement made or votes cast within the chamber, and except in the case of *flagrante delicto*, they cannot be arrested or imprisoned without the consent of the National Assembly. At the same time, however, they have the duty to maintain high standards of integrity, to give priority to national interests, not to abuse their positions, and not to hold concurrently other offices prescribed by law.

The National Assembly elects one Speaker and two Vice Speakers, of which one is from the ruling party and the other from an opposition party. Their term of office is two years. The Speaker represents the National Assembly, presides over the parliamentary proceedings, maintains order in the chamber, and supervises administrative affairs pertaining to the National Assembly. In the absence of the Speaker one of the two Vice Speakers designated by the Speaker acts on his behalf.

### 2. *Meetings*

The National Assembly can hold either plenary sessions or committee meetings. The plenary session is composed of all the Members of the National

Assembly, and they deliberate and make final decisions on matters submitted to the National Assembly.

The committees are divided into standing committees and special committees. Standing committees make professional and in-depth deliberations on bills and other matters that fall under their jurisdictions, while special committees are set up for the deliberation of special bills or matters. Every member of the National Assembly except the Speaker becomes a member of one standing committee. However, the memberships of the Steering Committee, the Intelligence Committee and Special Committees may be held concurrently. Each committee has one Chairman, one Vice Chairman from each Parliamentary Group, and necessary staff. During the parliamentary recess, all the committees must hold regular meetings twice a month with the exception of the Steering Committee and the Intelligence Committee.

### 3. *Parliamentary Group*

To facilitate the decision-making process in order to integrate and unify the diverse views of the National Assembly Members, the National Assembly Act provides that any political party which holds more than 20 seats in the National Assembly can form one parliamentary group, and at least 20 Members who do not belong to any parliamentary group may also form a parliamentary group. The National Assembly is seeking to promote smooth parliamentary proceedings by giving preference to the parliamentary groups in speaking rights as well as in making decisions on parliamentary proceedings. Currently there are three political parties: the New Korea Party, the National Congress for New Politics, and the United Liberal Democrats. The decisions for the Members who do not belong to any parliamentary group are made by the Speaker in consultation with the leaders of the groups.

## 3. Sessions

### 1. *Convocation and Duration of Sessions*

The National Assembly meets either in regular or special sessions. The regular session opens once a year on the tenth of September for a period of up to 100 days. A special session may be convened either upon the request of the President of the Republic or by at least one quarter of the entire membership of the National Assembly. The period of a special session and the reason for the request must be clearly stated in writing.

The National Assembly sessions are convened based on the annual framework plan set up at the beginning of each year by the Speaker in consultation with the leaders of the Parliamentary Groups. The period of each session is decided by a resolution of the National Assembly immediately after the convocation of the session.

### 2. *Opening and adjournment of meetings*

In order for the plenary and committee meetings to be opened, at least one-fifth of their entire Membership must be present, and they are adjourned when the deliberations of all the bills and other matters on the agenda are completed.

### 3. *Legislative Procedures*

Legislative bills introduced or submitted to the National Assembly are first reported to the plenary session, referred to pertinent committees, deliberated by the committees; reported to the Speaker, submitted to the plenary session, deliberated and decided on by the plenary session, and finally transmitted to the Government for promulgation.

In the committees, bills are first put on the agenda, introduced by their sponsors, reported on by the committee staff director, generally discussed, examined article by article, debated on, and finally put to a vote. The article-by-article examination can be skipped depending on the decision of the committee. The bills submitted to the plenary session go through the procedure of the report by the committee chairman or member on the result of the committee deliberation, questions and debate, and vote.

### 4. *Principles*

The National Assembly has adopted the principle of opening its meetings to the public. It also applies the 'principle of continued deliberation of bills' by which bills and other matters that have not been decided on by the end of a session are deliberated again in the next session except when the term of the Members has expired or when the 'principle of not deliberating on a matter twice' is not pertinent. This principle is when a bill is rejected during a session it cannot be submitted again during the same session.

### 5. *Quorum*

The quorum for voting is the minimum number of members required to be present to put a matter to a vote. There are two kinds of quorum for voting; the



general and special quorum in the Korean National Assembly. The general quorum, the minimum number of members required to be present for voting on general issues, is half of the total membership. In general, decisions of the National Assembly are made by the affirmative vote of the majority of the members present. In the case of a tie, the matter is considered rejected.

However, constitutional amendment, expulsion or disqualification of a Member, and the impeachment of the President of the Republic, require the concurrence of at least two-thirds of the entire membership, and the request for lifting of martial law, recommendations for dismissal of the Prime Minister, Members of the National Council and their impeachment require the affirmative vote of more than half of the total membership.

#### *6. Voting Methods*

Several methods are used for voting in the Korean National Assembly. First, the Speaker or the Chairman of a committee may request Members to stand up to show whether they are for or against a matter. Second, Members can be requested to cast a ballot with or without their names in the ballot booth. Third, the Speaker may ask the Members if there are any objections. If no objection is raised, the Speaker declares the matter passed. Fourth, there is the 'roll call voting' by which each Member is directly called on to say whether they are for or against the matter. And lastly, the National Assembly may use the 'electronic voting method' in which Members vote by electronic system in their own seats, through which the result is shown immediately on the front voting display board. The voting methods used most often in the Korean National Assembly are to ask if there are any objections, a vote by standing up, and casting a ballot without their names on it.

### **4. Power**

#### *1. Legislative Power*

The most important power of the National Assembly as the representative body of the people is the legislative power. As laws are the manifestation of the public will and serve as the basis for all the state functions in a democratic nation, enactments and revisions of laws are the primary tasks of the National Assembly.

The National Assembly has the power to propose a constitutional amendment and enact laws. Legislative bills may be introduced either by a Member of the National Assembly or by the Government. In the case where a Member

introduces a bill, he or she must obtain cosignatories of at least 20 Members. The legislative bills submitted to the National Assembly are referred to pertinent standing committees before being placed on the agenda of the plenary session, where they are put to a vote after a questioning period and debate.

A legislative bill passed by the National Assembly is transmitted to the Government, and the President of the Republic promulgates it as law within 15 days, and it comes into effect 20 days after the date of the promulgations unless otherwise specified in the law.

However, if the President has an objection to the bill, he may return it to the National Assembly for reconsideration within 25 days from the date of its arrival. In this case, the National Assembly can override the veto by a vote of more than two-thirds of the Members present with at least one half of the entire membership attending.

### 2. *Control over Finance*

The National Assembly is involved, on behalf of the citizens, in the state finance which is set up and run with the taxes paid by the public. Among the major parliamentary powers concerning the national finance are the power to examine and adopt the national budget and to approve the issuance of government bonds and conclusion of contracts which may incur financial burden to the state. In addition, the National Assembly has the power to approve the setting up and disbursement of the reserve fund.

The budget bill should be prepared and submitted by the Government to the National Assembly no later than 90 days prior to the beginning of the next fiscal year, and the National Assembly should adopt the national budget at least 30 days before the beginning of the next fiscal year. The National Assembly has the power to examine the statement of accounts to check whether the national budget plan has been properly implemented.

### 3. *Oversight of State Affairs*

The National Assembly has the power to approve the organization of constitutional institutions and appointment of their members, and it has various other means to check and control state affairs.

Most of the government officials are appointed by the President of the Republic as specified by law, but the National Assembly has the right to approve his appointments of the Prime Minister, Chairman of the Audit & Inspection Board, the Chief Justice, and Justices of the Supreme Court, and the Chief Adjudicator of the Constitutional Court. Furthermore, the National As-

sembly elects three of the nine members of the Central Election Management Committee.

The National Assembly has the additional power to summon the Prime Minister, Cabinet Members and other Government representatives to hear their reports and ask questions about the state of administration. It can also recommend to the President of the Republic the dismissal of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Members by a motion introduced by at least one third of the entire membership of the National Assembly and agreed upon by a majority vote of the total membership.

If the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, Cabinet Members, Adjudicators of the Constitutional Court, Judges, Members of the Central Election Management Committee, the Chairman and Members of the Audit and Inspection Board, and other public officials specified by law have violated the Constitution in the performance of their duties, the National Assembly is empowered to impeach them.

The other rights of the National Assembly include the right to consent to the declaration of war, to dispatch the armed forces to foreign states, the stationing of foreign forces on the Korean territory, general amnesty, and the emergent financial measures taken or issued by the President. Another important right of the National Assembly is to order the lifting of martial law. In addition, the National Assembly committees are entitled to inspect state affairs in general under their jurisdictions during the regular session every year and investigate specific matters of state affairs.

#### *4. House Autonomy*

The National Assembly has the autonomy to establish its own rules of procedure and internal regulations as far as they are not in conflict with the Constitution and its laws. Thus, the National Assembly is not interfered with by other branches of the Government regarding decision on the convocation, duration and adjournment of the session; internal organisational matters such as elections of its leadership; enactment of rules on proceedings and internal disciplines; parliamentary security; maintenance of order; and so on.

### **5. Parliamentarians' International Activities**

In addition to legislating and overseeing state affairs, the National Assembly may conduct parliamentary diplomacy through exchanges and cooperation with parliaments of other countries or international parliamentary organisa-

tions. Korean parliamentarians are actively carrying out such activities by exchanging visits and participation in international conferences. Currently, bilateral parliamentary friendship associations with 64 nations of the world are formed in the National Assembly, and the Korean National Assembly has been an active member of such inter-parliamentary organizations as the IPU, Asian and Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF), and Asia and Pacific Parliamentary Union (APPU).

### 6. Supportive Institutes

To provide support and assistance for the National Assembly Members in their various activities, the National Assembly has as its supportive institutes the Secretariat, the Library, and the Research and Training Institute. Currently, out of a total of 1,516 public officials, 1,202 are working in the Secretariat, 276 in the Library and 38 in the Training and Research Institute.

In addition, there are 36 policy researchers in the National Assembly working to support Parliamentary Groups as members of political parties. There also are five secretaries for each National Assembly Member, which totals 1,495 assistants and secretaries assisting the National Assembly membership. In total, about 3,000 public officials are working to assist the National Assembly Members in various ways.

#### 1. *Secretariat*

The National Assembly Secretariat is an organization established to support National Assembly Members in their legislative activities and to manage administrative affairs of the National Assembly. It is headed by the Secretary General who is appointed and dismissed by the Speaker with the consent of the plenary session. Serving under the Secretary General are the Deputy Secretary General for Legislative Affairs who specializes in legislative and committee affairs and the Deputy Secretary General for Administrative Affairs charged with the administration and maintenance of the National Assembly.

Reporting to the Deputy Secretary General for Legislative Affairs are the Legislation and Budget Office which provide research services for legislation and deliberations of national budget and accounts; the Proceedings Bureau which provides assistance for the plenary and committee meetings; and the Records and Publication Bureau which is responsible for printing the minutes, and collecting and publishing various National Assembly-related information. Under the Deputy Secretary General for Administrative Affairs are the Plan-

ning and Coordination Office which sets up and coordinates basic plans and guidelines for National Assembly activities; the Inter-Parliamentary Affairs Bureau which provides assistance for Members' international activities; the Public Relations Bureau which is responsible for the broadcasting of the National Assembly meetings and providing information to the public, and the Maintenance Bureau which is in charge of the maintenance of the National Assembly buildings and its other assets.

## 2. *Library*

The National Assembly Library was established to provide publications, information, and other materials necessary for legislative activities of the National Assembly Membership. The National Assembly Library is now promoting cross-cultural exchanges through exchange programs with foreign libraries and provides library services to the general public as well. Currently, the National Assembly Library has a collection of about 1.2 million volumes of books and periodicals. The Chief Librarian has under his supervision the Legislative Research and Analysis Office, the Acquisition and Processing Bureau, the Reference Service Bureau, Information Processing Bureau, the Planning and Audit Office, and the General Service Division.

## 3. *Research and Training Institute*

The National Assembly Research and Training Institute provides assistance to the National Assembly Members including their Study Groups in their various legislative activities, conducts training and research on parliamentary operations and systems, provides on-the-job and professional training for National Assembly officials, carries out study programs for the members and staff of local councils, and educates the public in order to increase their awareness of the democratic principles contributing to the development of sound political culture.

Under the Dean of the Research and Training Institute are the Training Department which is in charge of establishing and implementing plans for various training; the Research Department which is responsible for providing assistance for legislative researches; and the General Service Division which assists administrative affairs.

This concludes my brief presentation on the Korean National Assembly. It is my hope that it has helped you better to understand the Korean parliamentary system.

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Now, we will show you a film on the Korean National Assembly, and I will answer any of your questions after the film.

Thank you for your attention.

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The President thanked Mr YUN Young Tak for his detailed and clear contribution and for the quality of the video presentation which had followed his talk. He then gave the floor to members of the Association who wished to ask questions.

Mr KHATRI CHHETRI (Nepal) first asked about the composition of the National Assembly since, according to the presentation of Mr YUN Young Tak, among the 299 members of the Assembly, 46 were elected according to a system different to that of the others. He asked if these members had an identical status to that of directly elected members of parliament. He also asked why the Republic of Korea had opted for a unicameral system, saying that in his country the bicameral system had been adopted and currently appeared preferable to the unicameral system.

Mr YOO Soo Jeong answered that the 46 members were chosen according to a proportional system whereas the 253 other deputies were directly elected in their constituency. The 46 remaining seats were distributed to the parties represented in the National Assembly according to a proportional system after the holding of the legislative election. With regard to the unicameral system, he explained that the Republic of Korea had already had the experience of a bicameral system and that those responsible in his country had come to the conclusion that, in the particular situation of the Republic of Korea, the unicameral system had more advantages than disadvantages.

Mr NYS (Belgium) asked whether there was any possibility of the National Assembly tabling a motion of censure against the composition of Government or of toppling the Government.

Mr YOO Soo Jeong said that the National Assembly did not have the power to topple the Government but did have the right to approve the choice of the key members of the Government, and even of the Prime Minister. The Assembly could propose in exceptional cases, in the case of a serious violation of the law, that one or more members of the Government be dismissed. But the President of the Republic was not bound to follow its advice.

Mr GALAL (Sudan) first thanked the Korean Secretary General for the quality of his presentation and video. He then asked two questions, one on the

drafting of the Assembly's budget, the other on the appointment of the staff of the National Assembly.

Mr LEE Jae Do explained that the budget of the National Assembly was formulated quite simply: each department of the Assembly made its proposals and asked for a certain budget to conduct its activities. A department created for this purpose then collected all the data from all the departments. It was this department which had the task of drawing up a draft budget which brought together the various proposals received. As for the staff of the National Assembly, he said that they were recruited through exams across the country. Once having passed the exam, staff were appointed by a Vice-President of the National Assembly. Retirement age for parliamentary staff was sixty years. He added that parliamentary staff kept their position to that age unless some valid reason caused the management to dismiss them beforehand.

Mr AL-MASALHA (Jordan) asked if ethnic and religious criteria were taken into account in the distribution of parliamentary constituencies.

Mr YOO Soo Jeong said that the boundaries of constituencies was established in an administrative fashion and followed a simple rule: every constituency corresponded to a population of between 70,000 and 200,000 inhabitants. He added that the Korean nation was very homogeneous and that the constituencies did not reflect the existence of minorities or any ethnic groups.

The Secretary General, Mr YUN Young Tak, added that the constituencies in the urban areas for the most part represented a greater population than those in the rural areas. He also said that only the Korean race inhabited Korea.

Mrs VASSILOUNI (Greece) spoke on behalf of Mr ANGELOPOULOS, Director General of the Chamber of Deputies, to ask if the Research and Training Institute was part of the services of the National Assembly. She asked about the aims and work of the Institute.

Mr YOUN Soo Nam said that he was the Director of the Institute the aim of which was to assist parliamentarians to fulfil their legislative duties. This Institute had the task of organising the creation of study groups. It had an annual budget of 10 million won which was used to organise seminars and to invite specialists and experts in numerous fields to provide training and information for Members of the Assembly. The Institute also provided education for local assemblies. It was thus responsible for the transfer of technology and knowledge from the National Assembly to the local assemblies. Finally, the Institute could, at the request of the President of the National Assembly, put in place training courses for parliamentarians or their staff.

Mr HONTEBEYRIE (France) also thanked the Secretary General for the excellence of his presentation. He then asked two separate questions. The first

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concerned the duration of the parliamentary session which consisted of 100 days. He asked if these days were calendar days or sitting days and what authority decided how the sitting days would be distributed throughout the year. He also wished to know the frequency of extraordinary sessions as compared to ordinary sessions. Secondly, Mr HONTEBEYRIE asked for further explanation of the Korean Constitutional Court, on its composition, role and the possibility of its declaring that a law was contrary to the Constitution, and, if the Constitutional Court had this power, the consequences of its judgement on the law declared to be unconstitutional.

Mr YOO Soo Jeong said that the one hundred days were calendar days. The session began each year on 10 September and included, according to the Rules of Procedure, Saturdays and Sundays. With regard to extraordinary sessions, they could be held frequently, although it was set down that an extraordinary session could not last longer than thirty days. With regard to the Constitutional Court, Mr YOO Soo Jeong explained that it was composed of nine judges, of whom three were elected by the National Assembly. These judges had the task of checking whether a law or regulation was contrary to the Constitution. If it turned out that a law was contrary to the Constitution, it had to be amended or repealed.

Mr DAVIES (United Kingdom) asked two questions. He first asked what was the situation if the President of the Republic did not belong to the same political party as the parliamentary majority. He then asked about the proportion of women in the National Assembly, pointing out that he had not noticed a single woman in the video presented by the Secretary General.

Mr YOO Soo Jeong said that nine women sat in the National Assembly. Only two had been elected for constituencies. The others were the result of the distribution of seats on a proportional basis.

Concerning the first point raised by Mr DAVIES, Mr YUN Young Tak explained that it was quite possible for the President of the Republic not to be of the same political complexion as the majority in Parliament. The Republic of Korea could thus have a situation identical to that in the United States where the Parliament had a Republican majority whilst the President was a Democrat. He emphasised that despite the possible difficulties which could arise in such a situation, the Koreans knew how to overcome these problems since the particular geopolitical situation of the country, due to the existence of the two Koreas, required in any case a certain unity in power. He added that the Republic of Korea was actually in a very difficult political situation, which explained why the Koreans permanently plead for stability.



Mr SANTARA (Mali) said that he had noticed, like Mr DAVIES, the low visibility of women in the video presented. He asked about the management of staff in the Korean National Assembly and wondered how the presence of assistants (five per deputy) was organised. He noted that in his country there were parliamentary assistants specialised according to committee and recruited on the basis of their technical competence.

Mr YUN Young Tak said that parliamentary staff in the Secretariat, numbering 1400 persons, had to be neutral. They enjoyed the same status as that of civil servants. There were also 1500 staff working for Members. When a Member left Parliament and was not reelected his parliamentary assistant also lost his job. In addition, there were 36 researchers selected according to the recommendations of each negotiation group. They were formally appointed by the Secretary General but in reality answered to the groups.

Mr MYTTENAERE (Belgium) asked how private members bills became laws noting that if a private members bill had the support of a political group, it had no doubt more of a chance of succeeding. He also asked what happened when a Member resigned: did each Member have a substitute or was it necessary to organise a by-election?

Mr YOO Soo Jeong said that 20 members of the National Assembly could agree together to submit a private members bill. With regard to the second point mentioned, Mr YOO Soo Jeong said that in the case of departure during the mandate of a member of parliament, whether this departure was due to disqualification, an indictment or a death, a by-election had to be organised.

The Secretary General, Mr YUN Young Tak, added that when a vacancy of post occurred - for example as the result of a traffic accident - the law provided that by-elections had to be organised within three months. In relation to private members bills he said that they were examined in the same way as Government bills. Generally speaking, the National Assembly was very active.

Mr NAZARENO (Philippines) noted that in the Korean system one of the Vice-Presidents/Deputy Speakers was from the majority, the other representing the opposition. Moreover, the Vice-Presidents/Deputy Speakers could be called upon to replace the President/Speaker of the Assembly in cases of incapacity. Mr NAZARENO asked if the fact of representing the President/Speaker posed problems when it was the Vice-President/Deputy Speaker from the opposition who had replaced him.

Mr YOO Soo Jeong replied that if the President/Speaker of the Assembly was unable to fulfil his obligations, it was one of the two Vice-Presidents/Deputy Speakers who had to substitute for him. The two Vice-Presidents/

Deputy Speakers shared these responsibilities, which demonstrated that no difference was made between the two of them.

Mr HAHN (Israel) recalled that three out of the nine judges in the Constitutional Court were chosen by the National Assembly. He asked how the other six judges were appointed.

Mr YOO Soo Jeong answered that three judges were appointed by the President of the Republic, and three on the recommendation of the Supreme Court. Thus the Constitutional Court consisted of three groups of three judges nominated by each of the three branches of power.

Mr FALL (Senegal) asked for details of the right to speak for Members of parliament who were not members of a political group.

Mr YUN Young Tak explained that it was the President/Speaker of the Assembly who gave to deputies the right to speak. He pointed out that all the 299 Members of the National Assembly wished to take the floor. The question was therefore how to manage such a situation. There was no limitation on the right to speak in the standing committees.

Mr BENVENUTO (Italy) asked about the possibility in the Korean parliamentary system of establishing committees of inquiry. In Italy these committees of inquiry had the same powers as judges.

Mr YOO Soo Jeong said that no committee of inquiry was able to take decisions of binding force in the Korean parliamentary system.

Mr Yin ZHONGQING (China) asked about the preparation of the budget and the examination of the statement of accounts. He wondered whether the budget was prepared by the Government or the National Assembly. He also asked what the relationship was between the 38 staff in the Research and Training Institute and the staff in the Library.

Mr LEE Jae Do explained that the budget was initially prepared by the Government and then submitted to the National Assembly. There were three stages to its consideration. First, there was examination in standing committee. A preliminary review of the budget took place by ministry. The next stage was a special budget committee which looked at the budget bill and took the results of the standing committee's review into account. The bill then went to the plenary.

Mr LEE Hyun Koo said that the 38 staff of the Research and Training Institute did not give any specific training to Government officials. Sometimes particular professionals and experts were invited to join the Institute as members of staff. The Library was a different organisation, charged with the provision of up to date information on the issues of the day.

Mr DUMITRESCU (Romania) spoke about the activities of standing committees which were a laboratory in which laws could be finalised and perfected. He explained that in his country the Senate was in the process of reforming its Rules and was attempting to come up with an appropriate regulation for staff. He asked about the number of auxiliary staff which the Korean parliamentarians had at their disposal.

Mr MIHAI (Romania) asked if the Korean Parliament ever used external personnel, for instance to maintain order and security in the Assembly.

Mr YUN Young Tak explained that the administration of the Assembly had little recourse to external staff. On the other hand, with regard to the maintenance of security, the police force provided guards for the area external to the Parliament but the Assembly had its own guards for security within its premises.