



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION  
126<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings  
Kampala (Uganda), 31 March to 5 April 2012



Governing Council  
Item 8

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**COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS**

*This document provides a brief checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system between October 2011 and March 2012.*

**The United Nations**

- The official documents of the 125<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly were circulated at the UN General Assembly. These included the new IPU Strategy entitled *Better parliaments, stronger democracies*, and the report of the October 2011 session of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs.
- The IPU delivered several statements to the UN General Assembly and its subsidiary organs based on recent IPU resolutions and activities relating to democracy, human rights, least developed countries, minorities and indigenous peoples in politics, women and the rights of the child.
- The joint annual IPU-UN Parliamentary Hearing, entitled *Strengthening political accountability for a more peaceful and prosperous world*, was held in New York in late November 2011. The Hearing was attended by over 180 MPs and professional staff, and focused on issues relating to the role of the United Nations in strengthening global accountability, youth participation in the democratic process, enhancing the links between national institutions and civil society, as well as good practices for budget transparency. The summary Report of the Hearing was sent to all IPU Member Parliaments and distributed as an official document in the UN General Assembly.
- The IPU and the Parliament of South Africa held a parliamentary meeting in conjunction with the Conference of the Parties (COP17/CMP7) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban on 5 December. Honorary IPU President Theo-Ben Gurirab presented the outcome of the parliamentary meeting to the Conference Chairperson. He underscored that, pending the establishment of a comprehensive framework, parliamentarians expected all major economies to honour their pledges under the Cancún Agreement, including their obligations under the Kyoto Protocol.
- The IPU held a national seminar in Cambodia on parliament's role in overseeing implementation of the outcome of the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries - the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA). The seminar sought to foster greater involvement of all national stakeholders in the follow-up process, agreement on better implementation strategies in line with national development plans, and the establishment of mechanisms to share information, ensure coordination and track progress.

- The IPU and the Parliament of Burundi held an orientation seminar for Burundian MPs on 12 and 13 December 2011. The event focused on the status of women and gender equality in Burundi and followed up on previous IPU activities in Burundi carried out in cooperation with the UN Democracy Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission. The participants drew up a plan of action, which they intend to implement with IPU support.
- As part of its work in support of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the IPU held two parliamentary retreats in Kenya and Uganda on the role of parliament in promoting MDGs 4 and 5 on maternal, newborn and child health. Members of parliament and parliamentary staff participated in these retreats and discussed legislative reforms, health budgets, fighting corruption and ensuring accountability of results, as well as guaranteeing better health service delivery. Senior WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA staff briefed the participants.

### **UN Women**

- The IPU, together with UN Women, held a one-day meeting for parliamentarians attending the 56<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The participants debated *Empowering rural women: What role for parliaments?* with a focus on strategies to empower rural women and their political participation. The outcome of the parliamentary meeting was presented to the CSW plenary meeting. In the course of the same week, the UN-IPU joint publication *Women in Politics: 2012* was launched at UN Headquarters in New York.

### **UNDP**

- The IPU and UNDP concluded their work on the first-ever *Global Parliamentary Report*, scheduled to be formally launched at the 126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Kampala. The result of two years of extensive research with the involvement of many IPU Member Parliaments, the Global Report focuses on the evolving relationship between citizens and parliaments. It seeks to tap into the experience of institutions and politicians to identify challenges and public pressures, and provide examples of good practices to better meet the expectations of citizens.
- The IPU continued to work closely with UNDP country offices, providing technical assistance and capacity-building programmes to national parliaments. This was the case, over the past six months, in Bangladesh (needs assessment of parliamentary library, research and archives), Central African Republic (induction seminar for newly elected parliamentarians and workshop on the needs of committees), Democratic Republic of the Congo (training in recording proceedings and review of parliamentary legal framework), Guinea-Bissau (seminar on parliament's representation function) and Palestine (ICT needs assessment for the Palestine Legislative Council).

### **Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Council**

- The IPU continued discussions with the President of the UN Human Rights Council and held informal consultations with a group of UN Member States on modalities for the participation of parliaments and the IPU in the Council, in particular in the Universal Periodic Review of the fulfilment by each State of its human rights obligations and commitments. A side event on this topic was held in Geneva on 9 March, on the occasion of the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council. The event was organized by the IPU and the President of the Human Rights Council.

- On 27 February, the IPU President addressed the High-level segment of the Human Rights Council (see full statement at: <http://www.ipu.org/un-e/un-docs.htm#speeches>).
- The IPU submitted reports to the 51<sup>st</sup> session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) on the level of parliamentary involvement in the reporting process and on the situation of women in politics in the countries concerned.

#### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

- The IPU continued to work with WHO to strengthen expertise among parliaments in maternal, newborn and child health (MDGs 5 and 5).
- At the invitation of WHO, the IPU participated in a series of follow-up meetings on the recommendations of WHO's Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health (Ottawa, November 2011 and Dar es Salaam, February 2012).
- WHO and UNICEF continued to participate in the IPU's reference group for the MDGs 4 and 5 project.
- The IPU pursued its collaboration with the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) in developing knowledge resources on women's and children's health.
- PMNCH contributed to IPU activities and plans related to women's and children's health and facilitated the IPU's participation in its planning process. The PMNCH has now formally recognized the IPU as a member of the Partnership.

#### **World Trade Organization (WTO)**

- On 15 December 2011, a parliamentary message was addressed to the eighth WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva, reflecting the outcome views of parliamentarians who had taken part in the annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, held earlier in the year.