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COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

This document provides a brief list of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system from 15 October 2013 to 15 March 2014.

The United Nations

- The IPU continued its efforts to provide a parliamentary perspective on the post-2015 development agenda. This included two contributions to the sessions of the UN General Assembly Open Working Group on macroeconomic issues and governance, respectively (November 2013 and February 2014). The contribution to the November session stemmed directly from the outcome of the Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations just days before, which again stressed the need for an economic model more directly geared toward human well-being instead of material growth per se. The contribution to the February session made the case for a stand-alone goal on democratic governance in the new sustainable development goals. To further reinforce this message, a side event organized with other partners on 6 February focused on questions of measurability of democratic governance (i.e. targets and indicators).
- The annual IPU-UN Parliamentary Hearing was held on 14 and 15 November in New York. Entitled *Re-thinking sustainable development: The quest for a transformational global agenda in 2015*, the event was co-organized for the first time, not only by the President of the General Assembly, but also by the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It provided a substantive parliamentary contribution to the post-2015 global consultation that helped underscore key messages on the economic model of development, democratic governance and gender, among other things.
- As a first step toward preparations for the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2015, preliminary consultations were held with top UN officials to ensure that the event would be well coordinated with the overall post-2015 process and in particular the United Nations summit scheduled to take place that year. Discussions were held with the UN Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and the UN Legal Counsel, among others. A representative of the UN Secretary-General was also invited to participate in the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee, which was held in Geneva on 27 and 28 January 2014.
- Work got under way to help prepare the debate in the UN General Assembly on "interaction between the UN, parliaments and the IPU", scheduled for April/May 2014. The IPU worked closely with the UN Secretariat on the main elements of the Report of the UN Secretary-General (to be issued later this year), on which the debate will essentially be based. The IPU used those elements to draft a first version of the related General Assembly resolution, to be discussed during the 130th Assembly before being circulated among UN Member States. Consultations with Permanent Missions in New York are expected to be held in early April.

- The IPU partnered with the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs and the World Future Council to raise awareness of and designate some of the world's best disarmament policies. A press conference and award ceremony were held on 23 October at UN Headquarters in New York, the latter in the presence of a large audience of senior UN officials and diplomats, including the ambassadors of most of the Latin American countries (the Gold Award went to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean).
- In the light of the far-reaching reform of ECOSOC and of the possible implications in terms of further cooperation with the IPU and parliaments, the IPU Secretary General was invited to attend a retreat with ECOSOC ambassadors on 16 and 17 November 2013 and to deliver a keynote speech on the role of parliaments in holding governments to account for implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.
- The second symposium for the 2014 session of the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) took place in Montreux, Switzerland, in mid-October. The IPU was represented by a delegation of parliamentarians who contributed to a discussion of how development cooperation (aid, but also other flows of development finance) should be reconfigured in the post-2015 era. A first draft guidance note on national aid policies was presented to the DCF Advisory Group, which is headed by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

UN Women

- The IPU Secretary General met for the first time with the new Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, for an exchange of views on prospects for cooperation between the two organizations. Among other things, the two discussed the possibility of a memorandum of understanding between the IPU and UN Women to better outline further cooperation.
- UN Women senior officials participated in the debate held by Women Speakers at their 8th annual meeting, in November 2013 in New York, right before the annual Parliamentary Hearing. The meeting looked at the gender aspects of the issues on the agenda of the Hearing, and focused on whether the new sustainable development goals should contain a stand-alone gender goal and how this should be formulated.
- In cooperation with UN Women, the IPU held its annual parliamentary meeting in tandem with the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in mid-March 2014. The day-long meeting echoed the session's priority theme, the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls.
- The IPU and UN Women again produced the Map of Women in Politics 2014, a joint initiative. The Map was launched at the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in New York.
- A dialogue session was organized in October 2013 between the plenary UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and a high level delegation of parliamentarians from the IPU to discuss cooperation between parliaments, the IPU and the Committee. The session identified the difficulties parliaments encountered in providing input for the Committee's reporting process and discussed strategies to enhance cooperation and achieve progress.

UNDP

- Several consultations took place with UNDP (Democratic Governance Group) to help prepare for the side event on democratic governance that was held during the session of the General Assembly Open Working Group in February. Similarly, UNDP, both at headquarters and in the field, was tapped as a resource to help organize a regional consultation to be held by the Senate of Mexico in May 2014 on the post-2015 agenda for the Latin American and Caribbean region.

- UNDP, the IPU and other organizations formed a working group to draft a set of common principles for parliamentary development practitioners. Once finalized, the principles should serve as a reference point for parliamentary development, helping to ensure that support for parliaments is sustainable and driven by each parliament's own definition of its development needs.
- The IPU continued to work closely with UNDP country offices, providing technical assistance and capacity-building programmes to national parliaments. In the past six months it worked with the parliaments of Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan and Palestine, and with those of Palau and Samoa (through an agreement signed in August 2013 with the UNDP-Pacific Centre).
- The IPU and UNDP jointly produced a publication titled *Effective laws to end HIV and AIDS: Next steps for parliaments*. The publication contains examples of legislation from around the world that has been effective in limiting the spread of HIV, and draws lessons from the experiences of the parliamentarians involved. The objective is to present the positive impact that parliaments can have on the response to HIV and to prompt greater parliamentary scrutiny of laws that hamper effective action on HIV, particularly laws that criminalize key populations.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

- The IPU and UNHCR jointly produced and launched a Handbook for Parliamentarians entitled *Internal displacement: Responsibility and action*. The Handbook aims to help parliaments enact the right legislation and ensure its implementation in order to more effectively address national displacement crises and help IDPs. The Handbook supports the efforts of parliamentarians to deliver on their mandate to represent all citizens, including IDPs, and provides guidance for parliaments on their role in preventing displacement and protecting and assisting IDPs.

UNAIDS

- UNAIDS and the IPU continued to work closely together on HIV and AIDS. IPU field and advocacy activities benefited from strong UNAIDS input and support. A joint roadmap on future collaboration was agreed that defines the IPU as a key UNAIDS partner for leveraging parliamentary leadership to support increased access to HIV treatment. UNAIDS will provide the IPU with funding for these efforts.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- The IPU and WHO continued their close collaboration, particularly in the area of maternal, newborn and child health. IPU field activities benefited from WHO technical and financial support. WHO also helped develop IPU knowledge products, particularly the Handbook for Parliamentarians entitled *Sustaining parliamentary action to improve maternal, newborn and child health* and a study of the scale and impact of child marriage on the African continent. The IPU, for its part, provided input for the global accountability frameworks being developed for maternal, newborn and child health.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

- Working in close cooperation with the European Parliament, the IPU organized the Bali session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, which was held in conjunction with the Ninth WTO Ministerial Conference (December 2013, Indonesia). Attended by close to 300 delegates from over 50 countries, the parliamentary session injected much-needed political momentum into the intergovernmental negotiations and contributed to the adoption of the "Bali Package" – the first WTO deal after a 12-year stalemate in the Doha Round.