



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

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## Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings

### (j) Seminar for African parliaments on *Translating international human rights commitments into national realities: The contribution of parliaments to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council*

Rabat, 29-30 September 2014

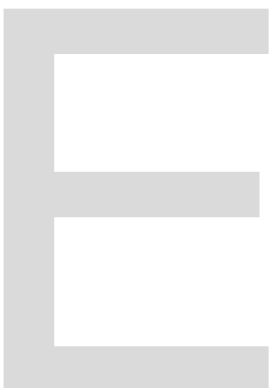
One of a series of regional activities undertaken to inform parliamentarians and heighten their awareness of the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review, a regional seminar was held in Rabat, Morocco, on 29 and 30 September 2014, on the theme *Translating international human rights commitments into national realities: The contribution of parliaments to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council*. The seminar also followed on a recent Human Rights Council resolution.

The seminar was organized by the IPU together with the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco and held under the patronage of King Mohamed VI, in partnership with the Interministerial delegation for human rights and the National Council of Human Rights of Morocco and with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It was attended by 140 participants (parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, representatives of national human rights institutions and of civil society) from 24 African countries.

The deliberations were led by parliamentarians, human rights experts and representatives of national human rights institutions, and covered the entire range of issues relating to the promotion of human rights and requiring vigorous action on the part of parliaments.

The Rabat seminar produced two documents: the Rabat Declaration and a note summing up all the recommendations made during the discussions, namely to:

- Include human rights as a priority on the parliamentary agenda and take appropriate measures for their effective implementation; establish appropriate parliamentary mechanisms to take proper account of human rights and heighten parliamentary awareness in that regard;
- Adopt measures – the establishment of a mechanism and a body bringing together all stakeholders, widespread dissemination of universal periodic review recommendations and preparation of an implementation plan, the establishment in each parliament of a structure to follow up questions relating to the review – with a view to enabling parliaments to contribute to the deliberations of the Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review;
- Strengthen parliamentary oversight of government action;
- Provide African parliaments with technical assistance, in cooperation with OHCHR;



- Promote cooperation between national parliaments and national human rights institutions, in keeping with the Belgrade Principles on the relationship between national human rights institutions and parliaments;
- Follow up implementation of the seminar's recommendations;
- Take appropriate measures in the face of the continent's human rights problems, in particular with regard to:
  - § Anti-terrorism activities;
  - § Respect for freedom of association and assembly;
  - § Promotion of the rights of migrant workers;
  - § The struggle to prevent trafficking in humans, in particular of women and children;
  - § Energetic action to contain the Ebola epidemic;
  - § The organization throughout the continent of transparent and democratic elections;
  - § The involvement of parliaments in national reconciliation processes;
- Establish and strengthen partnerships between parliaments and other stakeholders involved in the promotion of human rights, in particular national human rights institutions and civil society;
- Ensure parliamentary participation in the establishment of independent national human rights committees, in accordance with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles);
- Involve parliaments in the promotion of women's rights and adopt robust measures to fight all the forms of discrimination and violence to which they are subjected;
- Place human rights at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda and involve parliaments in the agenda's effective implementation.