



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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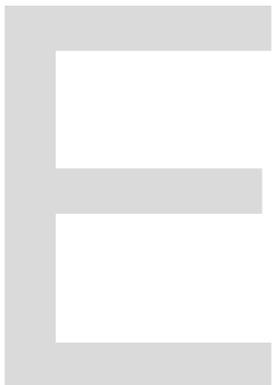
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## Cooperation with the United Nations system

*This document provides a brief overview of the activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system from 15 October 2014 to 15 March 2015*

### United Nations

1. Pursuant to the May 2014 General Assembly Resolution on *Interaction between the United Nations, parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union*, consultations were held on a new **Cooperation Agreement** between the two organizations that would place their institutional relationship on a stronger footing. A joint meeting of the IPU Sub-Committee on the future Cooperation Agreement and the Bureau of the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs was held at UN Headquarters in New York on 18 November 2014, under the chairmanship of the IPU President, and discussions were held on the main elements that should be included in the future Agreement.
2. Also in follow-up to the General Assembly Resolution, the IPU sought to introduce new language in a **decision of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** giving formal recognition to the outcome of the parliamentary meeting that accompanies each session of the Commission. Several amendments to the decision on CSW working methods were introduced.
3. A new **UN focal point** for relations with parliaments and the IPU was appointed within the Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). Mr. Juwang Zhu, Director of the Division for Public Administration, will help mainstream UN work with parliaments, facilitate communication between all departments and the IPU, and generally help oversee the implementation of the above-mentioned General Assembly Resolution. The IPU Secretary General met with the Division Director and the new Assistant Secretary-General of DESA on 10 March.
4. Close consultations have taken place between the Office of the IPU Permanent Observer to the UN in New York and various UN departments in preparation for the **Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament**. Aspects that were discussed include protocol and security arrangements, conference facilities and related services. The IPU Secretary General met with the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG) and other senior officials to discuss the Speakers' Conference, the new cooperation agreement, and other issues relating to the UN-IPU partnership.
5. With respect to the **Post-2015 Declaration** that will be adopted at the UN in September 2015, the Office of the IPU Permanent Observer to the UN reached out to Permanent Missions in New York to promote the inclusion of clear language on the role of parliaments. Letters were sent to all Permanent Representatives and the IPU President met with the two co-Facilitators of the UN process, the Ambassadors of Ireland and Kenya. The missions of Bangladesh, the European Union, the United States and Viet Nam were particularly supportive of this effort. In a related development, a major synthesis **report of the UN Secretary-General** ahead of the SDG negotiations referred several times to the role of parliaments in this process.



6. On 9 and 10 February, the IPU President participated in a **thematic debate of the President of the General Assembly on the means of implementation for the SDGs**, chairing a session on the role of parliaments and local authorities in implementation. Several interventions from the floor underscored the role and responsibility of parliaments in this process. Ms. N. Assegaf, a member of Parliament from Indonesia, presented the work of her parliament's Task Force on the SDGs as a panellist.

7. Eleven members of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU participated in the annual session of ECOSOC's **Youth Forum** on 2 and 3 February. The session was devoted to garnering a youth perspective on the emerging SDGs. The large delegation was headed by the President of the IPU Forum, Mr. F. Al Tenaiji of the United Arab Emirates. Two young parliamentarians participated as panellists. In the margins of the ECOSOC Youth Forum, the President and members of the IPU's Forum of Young Parliamentarians met with Mr. A. Alhendawi, the **UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth**, to further strengthen links between his Office and young members of parliament and to discuss possible cooperation.

8. The **2014 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, Ensuring a people-centred approach to the new SDGs: A shared responsibility**, brought together over 200 parliamentarians and was co-organized with the President of the General Assembly. A number of high-level UN personalities participated as panellists, along with members of parliament and Ambassadors. The UN Secretary-General opened the Hearing and the Assistant Secretary-General responsible for the post-2015 agenda was a keynote speaker. The outcome of the Hearing will be circulated to all UN Member States as an official UN document.

9. On 6 January, the IPU participated in a **workshop organized by the group of friends of governance for sustainable development**. The group is led by the missions of Mexico, Republic of Korea and Romania. The IPU paper on *The role of parliaments in the implementation of the SDGs* was warmly received by participants. On 4 and 5 December, IPU representatives participated in the **Expert Group Meeting and Workshop** meant to help define the programme of work of ECOSOC for 2015 and 2016. The IPU participated in a panel that discussed the challenges of including the corporate sector as a development partner.

10. Following the debate on drugs within the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs at the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly, the Office of the IPU Permanent Observer in New York lobbied for the inclusion of language on parliaments in a **UN resolution on International cooperation against the world drug problem**. As a result, the General Assembly formally "*Recognizes the constructive role that parliamentarians can play in addressing the world drug problem, and encourages their participation, as appropriate, in the preparatory process for the special session.*"

11. In keeping with its engagement with the **UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF)**, the IPU worked closely with the DCF in preparation for the first symposium of the 2014- 2016 biennium that will be held in Republic of Korea from 8 to 10 April 2015. Some eight parliamentarians will participate in this multi-stakeholder event that will help redefine development cooperation in the light of the SDGs.

12. As a contribution to the **Second FAO-WHO International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)** held from 19 to 21 November in Rome, Italy, a Parliamentary Meeting was organized with the Chamber of Deputies of Italy on the theme *Parliamentarians for better nutrition*. IPU Honorary President Mr. Pier Ferdinando Casini presented the outcomes of the parliamentary meeting to the ICN2 plenary.

13. The IPU mobilized a large parliamentary participation in the **United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP20/CMP10)** held in Lima, Peru, in December 2014 under the auspices of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Together with the Peruvian Congress, on 8 December the IPU organized a Parliamentary Meeting, which offered legislators an opportunity to obtain first-hand information on the main issues and orientations of the UN Conference, interact with government negotiators directly involved in the UNFCCC decision-making process and exchange views on parliamentary follow-up to the session in Lima. The declaration of the Parliamentary Meeting, the text of which was transmitted to COP20/CMP10 President, called on national parliaments to set up standing committees on climate change and on the IPU to adopt a parliamentary action plan on climate change. Immediately after the session in Lima, the IPU started consultations with a broad circle of partners, including the UNFCCC, with a view to providing effective parliamentary backing to the process of negotiations that should culminate with the adoption of a new, universal and binding

global change agreement at the COP21/CMP11 session, to be held in Paris at the end of 2015. Preparations are underway to hold a major parliamentary event on the premises of the French Parliament in conjunction with the UNFCCC session in Paris.

14. The **Third International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons** was held at the Hofburg Palace in Vienna on 8 and 9 December 2014. Although not formally a UN process, the International Conference followed previous ones held in Oslo, Norway, in March 2013 and Nayarit, Mexico, in February 2014 aimed at mobilizing action on renewed global talks on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. A Parliamentary Meeting was held at the Austrian Parliament on this occasion in cooperation with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), and the IPU Secretary General addressed the International Conference with a strong message on behalf of the international parliamentary community, highlighting the salient points of the recent IPU resolution on *Towards a nuclear weapon-free world: The contribution of parliaments*.

15. The UN Secretary-General is due to launch his progress report on the **Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health** (2010-2015) on the occasion of a special high-level event organized during the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2015. The IPU Secretary General has been invited to take part in the discussions as a panellist, sharing good practices as well as challenges faced by parliaments in promoting women and children's health.

### UN Women

16. The **2015 Map of Women in Politics** will be released as a joint product of the IPU and UN Women. The official launch is scheduled to take place at a news conference at UN Headquarters on 10 March. The Map will be distributed to all UN Member States, IPU partners and participants of the Parliamentary Meeting organized in the sidelines of the CSW session.

17. The IPU and UN Women will organize on 11 March the annual **Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women** (9-20 March). The theme of the meeting, *Beijing+20*, replicates that of the main session, making an assessment of progress in the implementation of the landmark Beijing Declaration on its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The IPU statement before the Commission will highlight the main conclusions of the Parliamentary Meeting.

18. The IPU took part in an international conference on *Women in power and decision-making: Building a different world*, organized by the Government of Chile with the support of UN Women on 27 and 28 February 2015. The IPU Secretary General delivered an address on *Creating Opportunities: Good practices to ensure women's full and equal participation in decision-making*.

### UNDP

19. The IPU joined an inter-agency group led by UNDP (Millennium Campaign) working on the next version of **My World**, a global survey facility garnering citizens' perspectives on development. Building on the success of the existing online survey, *My World 2* will provide parliamentarians and other decision-makers with up-to-date feedback from citizens on the implementation of the SDGs.

20. The IPU continued to support a **Post-2015 Dialogue on Capacities and Institutions** led by UNDP and the International Labour Organization (ILO) as part of the lead-up to the adoption of the SDGs. The IPU joined a **virtual network of experts on the indicators of governance** that will need to be developed to monitor the governance goal of the SDGs (goal 16). The IPU provided important input to the first round of consultations in early February 2015.

21. 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 Afghanistan, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Myanmar, Trinidad & Tobago and the United Arab Emirates.

### OHCHR

22. A **seminar on Translating international human rights commitments into national realities: The contribution of parliaments to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council**, was held for Asia-Pacific parliaments in Manila, Philippines, on 26 and 27 February. The seminar was organized jointly by the Senate of the Philippines and the IPU in collaboration with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It was part of a series of regional events aimed at strengthening the contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council, including through its Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

23. As is customary at each session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discriminations against Women, the IPU presented its report on women in politics and the involvement of parliament in the reporting process in the countries under review by the Committee at its 60<sup>th</sup> session held in February 2015.

#### **UNAIDS**

24. In cooperation with UNAIDS and the National Assembly of Viet Nam, the IPU organized a mission to Viet Nam for its Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health in late November 2014 to look at how the country's response to AIDS could be strengthened. The mission included a workshop for members of parliament that reviewed effective approaches to access to HIV treatment. The workshop was followed by a field visit that included meetings with the parliamentary bodies dealing with HIV, government health officials and civil society, as well as visits to treatment and research facilities. The mission recommended improvements to the Vietnamese National Assembly and documented good practices which the IPU will share with the global parliamentary community.

25. In December, the IPU and UNAIDS organized at IPU Headquarters a dialogue with a working group of six members of parliament from Kyrgyzstan, established to revise the draft bill on amending certain legislative acts of the Kyrgyz Republic (Penal Code, Administrative Responsibility Code and Laws on peaceful gatherings and mass media). The meeting was organized to enhance the understanding of members of the Kyrgyz Parliament of key challenges that are hindering effective responses to HIV, including the legal and policy environment. It focused on the role of parliament in advancing protective and effective responses to HIV for all and resulted in the Kyrgyz members of parliament expressing their commitment to engage their peers on best parliamentary practices in the context of HIV.

#### **UNICEF**

26. Hosted by the National Assembly of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, a regional parliamentary seminar was organized with UNICEF in Vientiane from 4 to 6 November. The seminar aimed to enhance the understanding of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff of issues related to malnutrition and stunting, including the damaging effects inaction to address inadequate nutrition can have on countries' economic development. The conclusions of the seminar were fed into the parliamentary meeting held at the FAO-WHO sessions later that month (see paragraph 12 above).

27. The IPU worked with UNICEF to prepare an interactive debate on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as part of the work of IPU's Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly.

#### **UNISDR**

28. In cooperation with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the IPU held a Parliamentary Meeting on 13 March at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, aimed at reviewing progress on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and adopt a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. Members of parliament were encouraged to participate in the main conference as part of national delegations. Key references to parliaments and the IPU were included in the negotiated text.

#### **WHO**

29. On 6 and 7 November 2014, the IPU attended the Stakeholder Consultation jointly organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Governments of Canada and Norway on the theme *Accountability for Women's and Children's Health: Setting the foundations for post-2015*. The meeting gathered representatives from government, parliament, civil society and international organizations, who reaffirmed their commitment to accelerating progress on women's and children's health. Stakeholders at the meeting agreed to update the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, launched in September 2010 by the UN Secretary-General. The first consultation on the updated Strategy took place in New Delhi on 26 and 27 February, where three IPU representatives presented a parliamentary contribution to the issue.

30. From 19 to 23 January 2015, the IPU participated in the Accountability Loop Budget Advocacy training workshop held in Harare, Zimbabwe. Organized by the Harmonization for Health in Africa under the auspices of the WHO, the IPU and other partners, the workshop provided parliamentarians from five Southern African countries with an opportunity to gain exposure to and acquire skills and knowledge on effective budget advocacy.

#### **WMO**

31. Prior to the COP20/CMP10 session in Lima, where the IPU organized a parallel parliamentary meeting (see paragraph 11 above), the IPU started active cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) with a view to bringing to the attention of legislators the vast amount of climate-related scientific knowledge generated by the WMO and bodies related to it, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Together with WMO experts, the IPU plans to publish a handbook for parliamentarians on the subject of climate-related legislation.

#### **WTO**

32. The IPU is the driving force behind a decade-long process known as the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, which acts as the de facto parliamentary dimension of this intergovernmental organization. With its sessions held annually and on the occasion of WTO Ministerial Conferences, the Conference aims to enhance the external transparency of the WTO and serves to hold it accountable to legislators as representatives of the people. The annual 2015 session of the Conference took place on WTO premises on 16 and 17 February and was attended by over 350 parliamentary delegates from some 65 countries. One of the distinct features of the session was its focus on dialogue between parliamentarians and senior WTO negotiators and officials. It provided delegates with a wealth of information indispensable for speedy ratification by parliaments of various trade accords negotiated at the WTO, such as the recently concluded Trade Facilitation Agreement requiring ratification by two-thirds of WTO Members in order to enter into force. The Outcome Document of the Parliamentary Conference was officially transmitted to the WTO Director-General, who participated in the session and fielded a number of questions from parliamentary delegates.