

IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs  
Item 3

UNC/2012/3-R.1  
11 October 2012

## **INTERACTION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS, PARLIAMENTS AND THE IPU**

**(Monday 22 October, 5 – 6.30 p.m.)**

### **PARLIAMENTARY FIELD MISSION TO ALBANIA AND MONTENEGRO FOCUSES ON UNITED NATIONS REFORM**

**10-14 September 2012**

#### **Background**

The IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs was established in early 2008 in the context of the growing partnership between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The Committee meets in plenary once a year, with the participation of representatives from all IPU Member Parliaments. The Committee holds hearings with senior UN officials, examines the status of implementation of international commitments, and helps to articulate a parliamentary contribution to major UN processes (climate change, sustainable development, the rights of indigenous peoples, women's empowerment, the rule of law in international affairs, etc.).

The work of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs is guided by an Advisory Group, composed of a select number of prominent legislators. The Advisory Group has a broad mandate, which includes taking stock of progress in implementing One UN reform (*Delivering as One*) at the country level, aimed at achieving greater coherence of UN operations and enhanced aid effectiveness. To this end, field missions have been conducted in recent years to several countries implementing this new approach: Tanzania (2008), Viet Nam (2009), Ghana (2011) and Sierra Leone (2011)<sup>1</sup>.

The findings of these missions have been shared widely among IPU Member Parliaments and the UN community. Several of the recommendations emerging from these missions have been taken up by the United Nations and reflected in policy documents, including the 2012 Report of the UN Secretary-General on *Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union*<sup>2</sup> and the related General Assembly Resolution<sup>3</sup> adopted by consensus in May 2012, with 90 Member States formally signing on as co-sponsors.

On the basis of this positive experience, and given the scope for further progress in this area, the Advisory Group decided to pursue its work by undertaking a field mission to a different geographical area: South-East Europe. With strong support from the Parliaments of the two host countries, a new mission was conducted from 10 to 14 September 2012 to

<sup>1</sup> Reports from these previous field missions are available at <http://www.ipu.org/un-e/un-cmt.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly Resolution 66/770 available at <http://www.ipu.org/Un-e/a-66-770.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> General Assembly Resolution 66/261 available at <http://www.ipu.org/Un-e/a-66-261.pdf>

**Albania** and **Montenegro**<sup>4</sup>. The mission was led by Mr. Mélégué Traoré (Burkina Faso), President of the Advisory Group, and included Ms. Katri Komi (Finland), Mr. Salah Derradji (Algeria) and Mr. José Carlos Mahia (Uruguay) as Advisory Group members, IPU representatives Anda Filip and Miguel Bermeo, and Ms. Carina Galvalisi from the Parliament of Uruguay.

During its mission, the Advisory Group met with a wide spectrum of stakeholders involved in the *Delivering as One* process: parliamentary officials (Speakers of Parliament, chairs and members of select parliamentary committees), government representatives (ministries of finance, economic development, foreign affairs, etc.), UN Country Teams, development partners (bilateral donors and representatives of the European Union - EU - and civil society organizations – CSOs - involved in international development programmes). In both Albania and Montenegro, the Advisory Group also had the opportunity to visit joint UN projects in the field.

Compared to previous missions, the Advisory Group found very different political and economic realities in these countries of South-East Europe, which in turn have shaped the nature of UN interventions in Albania and Montenegro. Both countries have been undergoing an accelerated democratization process since the fall of communism 20 years ago. Both are upper-middle-income countries aspiring to EU membership: Albania submitted its formal application for EU membership in April 2009, whereas Montenegro was granted the status of EU candidate country in December 2010.

Albania, once one of the poorest and most isolated countries of the former socialist bloc, has made huge strides in economic and political reform. These in turn have opened up the country to foreign investment, especially in the development of energy and transportation infrastructure. Important social problems remain however, including growing economic inequality, organized crime and a high level of violence against women.

As noted by the Speaker of Parliament, Montenegro, is a country which, in less than a decade, has gone through major changes in statehood: from an integral part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1992, to the subsequent dissolution of SFRY and the Bosnian and Croatian wars that followed, to the more decentralized state union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2003, to the referendum that granted independence to Montenegro in May 2006. With a population of just over 600,000 inhabitants, Montenegro continues to be a multi-national state, where the political scene is permeated by multiple ethnic political parties.

### **One UN in Albania**

As witnessed during the previous missions undertaken by the Advisory Group, United Nations reform - under the banner of *Delivering as One* or *One UN* - aims to align UN operations at the country level to the development priorities identified and set forth by national authorities. Successful reforms will lead to the UN better pooling its comparative advantages and providing the kind of strategic expertise it is uniquely placed to offer. National ownership would be enhanced, ensuring that international aid is demand- rather than supply-driven, and that programmes and projects support national development priorities.

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<sup>4</sup> Since 2007, the One UN reform is being implemented by eight pilot countries: **Albania**, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Rwanda, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uruguay, and Viet Nam. A number of other countries have voluntarily adopted the approach, as “self-starters”: Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Comoros, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Laos PDR, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, **Montenegro**, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia.

Albania, one of the eight Delivering as One pilot countries, signed the first One UN Programme in October 2007 (for the 2007-2011 period). This first programme was based on the National Strategy for Development and Integration, and was mainly geared towards supporting Albania's efforts to prepare for accession to the European Union. A total of US\$ 98 million was dedicated to the implementation of five key areas of the programme: Governance (31%); Basic Services (27%); Environment (17%); Regional Development (17%); and Participation (8%). The One UN Coherence Fund, set up to facilitate donor support to the programme, financed 25 per cent of the total budget, with contributions from Austria, the European Commission, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. The One UN Programme was supported by 14 UN agencies, funds and programmes. The vision and leadership of the government have been vital for the success of the One UN approach in Albania.

The support provided by the first One UN Programme has helped advance Albania's priorities in each of the pillars of the programme, for example:

- in the area of Governance: approval of the Strategy for Gender Equality and Against Domestic Violence; initiation of the National Action Plan for Youth Employment 2010-2013; and finalization of the National Plan of Action for Children.
- in the area of Participation: adaptation and implementation of the National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion; the introduction of gender quotas in the 2011 local elections, although only 12.4 per cent were elected, whereas the lists included over 30 per cent of women candidates
- in the area of Basic Services: the law on pre-university education was reviewed to reduce disparity barriers; and qualifications and standards for teachers were further regulated.
- in the area of Environment: new laws on environmental protection, environmental impact assessment and waste management were passed. In addition, a package of four new laws on climate change mitigation, in line with EU directives, is now ready for approval: renewable energy, energy efficiency, power generation and concessions. Progress was made on a national monitoring system, and reference laboratories and centres were established for air, soil, solid waste and waste water, biodiversity, bio-monitoring and water.
- in the area of Regional Development, the pace of reform has been somewhat slower. As a proposal for Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance funding (), the government has submitted to the EU an Operational Programme on Regional Development, based on a participatory process involving relevant line ministries and public consultations. Nevertheless, the need for capacity development remains high.

With the end of the pilot phase in 2011, the Government of Albania and the UN system formulated the second One UN Programme building on the experience, lessons learned and achievements of the first cycle. The new programme signed in October 2011 will run from 2012 to 2016 as a common action plan for the government, 19 UN agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The areas of focus are governance and the rule of law, the economy and the environment, regional and local development, and inclusive social policy. The projected financial needs for the period 2012-2016 are in the order of US\$ 126 million, of which 75 million remain unfunded.

At the apex of the One UN management architecture is the Government Modernization Committee (chaired by a Cabinet minister), serving as the highest-level policy, coordination and decision-making authority. Under its guidance, the Department of Strategy and Donor

Coordination (DSDC) is responsible for coordinating and following up on the implementation of joint UN-government activities. The Director of the Department co-chairs, together with the UN Resident Coordinator, the Joint Executive Committee, which makes executive decisions on implementation of the annual workflows of programmes and allocations from the Coherence Fund. The UN Country Team, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, manages the overall implementation from the UN side through Output Working Groups that bring together technical actors from line ministries and other relevant implementing parties. The UN Coherence Fund is a facility for donors to pool their resources in support of the programmes. Donors are encouraged to provide unearmarked, multiyear commitments to increase predictability of funding. The Fund complements the core and non-core resources of participating UN agencies. The Parliament of Albania is not involved in any way in these policy and coordination structures.

In terms of results, the Albanian authorities consider that the experience of the One UN approach is highly relevant, responsive to national needs and priorities, aligned with EU accession requirements and has helped increase government ownership and strategic focus. It has also proven to be a flexible and resourceful programme in bridging small but critical gaps. The One UN Programme has increased coordination, synergies, awareness and transparency for all key actors: UN agencies, government, donors and other partners. It has allowed for a stronger and more unified voice and advocacy on human rights, social inclusion and gender. As to the UN system, it has increased the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and facilitated a change of mind-set towards a more positive UN team spirit. The tools such as One Budget and Common Annual Work Plans have shown their usefulness in terms of planning, predictability, strategic oversight and monitoring for both the United Nations and the government. The Common Services offer less administrative costs and speedier responses to programme support. The One UN has also allowed for cost-effective entry points for the support of non-resident agencies, thus increasing the potential for better results.

As for the challenges ahead, Albanian officials in both the Foreign Ministry and DSDC have underscored that the positive changes in the operation of the UN Country Team have largely depended on the goodwill of members of the UN team themselves. The structures at UN Headquarters, however, are not yet sufficiently aligned in terms of budgeting and reporting procedures, programme cycles, and levels of delegation of authority towards the Resident Coordinator. Further progress of One UN reform will require changes at the Headquarters level, as at the country level it has advanced as far as it can. This is, in fact, one of the key conclusions reached at the Fifth High Level Intergovernmental Conference on Delivering as One held in Tirana from 27 to 29 June 2012.

On the donor side two challenges were mentioned: first, a lingering resistance to accept donor coordination from the government instead of maintaining their own priorities, which has a direct correlation with the preference to maintain earmarking in their contributions; similarly the difficulties encountered in providing multiyear funding. Both these issues affect predictability in the management of the Coherence Fund. Furthermore, in the case of Albania, several donors are beginning to phase out their support in light of progress towards Albania's accession to the EU. The large funding gap remaining in the current One UN Programme (US\$ 75 million out of a total 126 million) will thus require different approaches to its financing if the new programme is to succeed.

Meetings the mission held with representatives of donors and civil society tended to confirm the overall assessment and prospects for the One UN approach in Albania. This was also echoed by members of the UN Country Team.

With regard to the specific involvement of parliament, numerous instances of close interaction between parliamentary committees and the One UN Programme were mentioned by all actors concerned, including members of civil society, who have been actively involved in joint efforts. Examples cited by the Director of the DSDC include: the establishment of a parliamentary Committee on Population and Development; creation of a Child Rights Parliamentary Caucus; work with the Committees on Health and Social Affairs on issues related to HIV and AIDS; work with the Women MPs; capacity-development initiatives with administrative parliamentary structures; preparation for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities; advocacy work with the Speaker of Parliament on women's empowerment and combating gender-based violence; work with several parliamentary structures to consult and advocate for legislative changes.

While these examples show the wealth of interactions between One UN and civil society partners with various structures of parliament - which has helped generate ample trust among the partners - the mission got the distinct impression that there were no clear instances where parliament could obtain an overall view of what is the global contribution of One UN to the development efforts of Albania. This indicates that the Parliament of Albania has no involvement in the overall direction of the One UN programme, or in its oversight.

### **One UN in Montenegro**

Montenegro is one of the "self-starter" countries with respect to the One UN approach. In June 2009 the government and the UN Country Team agreed on the formulation of an Integrated UN Programme, Results and Budgeting Framework for the period 2010-2016. A transition phase (2010-2011) signed in June 2010, initiated joint planning, programming and implementation between the government, the UN Country Team and partners, strengthened donor relations in support of the programme, built strong partnerships with relevant national institutions and development partners and set out to prove the value of the Integrated UN Programme. The three strategic programme pillars are: Social Inclusion, Democratic Governance and Sustainable Economic Development and Environmental Protection (SEDEP). The UN Expanded Funding Window for Delivering as One provided resources for each of these two years for a total of US\$ 1.6 million to help start the programme. It is also part of the Joint Resource Mobilization Strategy.

The Integrated UN Programme is now in its second phase – Consolidation and Evaluation (2012-2016); it reflects greater complementarities and synergy of support among UN organisations to contribute to national development priorities.

The Integrated UN Programme is governed by the Joint Country Steering Committee (JCSC) composed of: up to seven senior representatives of line ministries, all members of the UNCT, and donor representatives by invitation of the JCSC. It is co-chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and the UN Resident Coordinator. The JCSC exercises oversight of the design, implementation and monitoring of the Integrated UN Programme, including through the approval of the UN Annual Work Plan. At the technical level, UN Pillar working groups and the relevant government sector working groups, engage in joint planning exercises, regular coordination activities and the monitoring of results.

The Integrated UN Programme created a harmonized organization with unity of purpose, coherence in management and efficiency in operations – all directed at one common goal: to enhance the development of Montenegro.

The Office of the UN Resident Coordinator identified the following challenges after the initial period of Delivering as One experience in Montenegro:

- An initial unclear perception by technical UN staff of the Delivering as One and the relationship between their own work, agency programme and the Integrated UN Programme.
- Different understanding of Delivering as One between regional and country offices of certain agencies;
- A culture change required on the part of both the United Nations and the government, which led to delays in certain areas of work – the establishment of a functional interministerial coordination mechanism is required;
- Initially, no common vision within the UN Country Team whether the Expanded Funding Window funds should be used to support funding gaps for existing initiatives (within the spirit of the Integrated UN Programme) or for new initiatives, mostly joint, that would still be relevant to the outcomes;
- Different interpretation and application of operational rules and procedures by UN agencies and different financial systems of agencies;
- Increased operational burdens for UN staff; and
- Short-term increase of transaction costs.

Of the numerous benefits the following were highlighted:

- Together with national partners, the UN agencies developed and implemented joint programmes and activities, funded mostly with funds from the Expanded Delivering as One Funding Window, but also with agency-specific and government funds. These joint programmes and initiatives respond directly to some of the most immediate national priorities and most of them are still on-going (e.g. Konik area, personal documents for internally displaced persons-IDPs and domiciled Roma, strengthening good governance in health sector, mental health and green jobs);
- The government holds the ownership of the Delivering as One, in close cooperation with the UN;
- Enhanced cooperation with regionally based UN organizations, as a result, the number of Participating Organizations in the Phase II of the Programme increased from nine in 2010 to 12 as of 2012;
- Initial results seen in coherent joint planning and programming are important for the future of a more cohesive, coherent and results-based UN delivery;
- The UN is collectively supporting individual government agencies in addressing complex issues, such as those of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees;
- Improved interministerial and inter-UN cooperation;
- It is still possible to preserve individual mandates and work very coherently at the national level;
- The UN Country Team, through its inter-agency Operations Management Team, works on increasing efficiency and effectiveness through improved business practices and common services as well as planning the functioning in the future common premises; and
- Long-term decrease of transaction costs.

According to the UN Country Team Results Matrix, the total outlay of funds for the first phase of the Integrated UN Programme amounted to US\$ 24.3 million financed from core and non-core resources. Programming for the second phase (2012-2016) amounts to

US\$ 51.7 million. (It was not clear to the mission how this amount is to be financed as the core and non-core resources of the UN Agencies are likely to be insufficient), spread over nine outcomes, three for each of the Programme Pillars as follows:

- Social Inclusion: with the vision of "a Montenegro society that is progressively free of social exclusion and enjoys a quality of life that allows all individuals and communities to reach their full potential";
- Governance: "a Montenegro that is a democratic society that fully respects and fulfils human rights through the rule of law, government transparency and accountability...that is able to meet the political criteria for EU accession and is ready to assume EU membership obligations";
- Sustainable Economic Development and Environmental Protection: "a Montenegrin society that translates its constitutional commitment to the concept of an 'ecological state' into practice through achieving balanced and equitable regional economic growth based on sustainable planning and use of natural resources that will provide a high quality of life and long-term economic opportunities for its inhabitants."

Notable examples of the UN contributions to the recent reforms have included support in acquiring personal documents for IDPs and domiciled Roma (at risk of statelessness); systematic inclusion of people and children living with disabilities, improving their health care, education and social protection; de-institutionalization of children; enhancing the business environment through creation of green jobs and business clusters; institution-building and reducing vulnerability to cross-border irregular migration as well as assisting the country in creating and harmonizing effective legal aid, mediation and juvenile justice systems.

The mission heard consistent appreciation for the support of the UN through Delivering as One, including from members of parliamentary Committees who interact with UN programmes; Deputy Ministers who are co-chairs of the working groups that deal with the Integrated UN Programme; the Minister of Foreign Affairs (who had been personally involved in aspects of the UN Reform concerning Delivering as One); the Secretary of the Ministry of Finance; the Minister of Economy; representatives of civil society – many of whom had worked hand in hand with UN agencies in supporting legislative changes; as well as donor representatives. Issues that were highlighted included responsiveness as well as flexibility; systematic dialogue to ensure targets are met; a more coherent UN team and a more coherent approach; rigorous planning, follow-up, and review of the joint UN-government activities have helped achieve better internal coordination among government units.

Not unlike the case of Albania, while fruitful interactions with parliament have generated an environment of trust and respect for the United Nations, there is no instance where parliament can have an overview of the overall work carried out by the United Nations in Montenegro. The issue was broached by the mission with both the UN Country Team and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the suggestion was made that consideration be given to establishing such a relationship perhaps in an observer capacity at first. This could take place within the context of the Joint Country Steering Committee. Indications were given to the mission that due consideration would be given to this suggestion.

### **Joint Projects under Delivering as One**

The mission was invited to visit joint UN projects in both Albania and Montenegro. The field visits gave the mission the opportunity to gain a more direct understanding of joint projects and to observe the work of the United Nations on the ground.

In Albania, the mission visited the Community Centre "Today for the Future" in Durres, a coastal city near Tirana. Durres is one of the four municipalities where the government is implementing an integrated, multi-pronged strategy to combat domestic violence. The project, made possible through UNDP funding, brings together the services of different national and local authorities under a single roof to provide integrated support to victims and their children, including shelter, food, education, skills development, counselling, legal services, transportation, outreach and public awareness. A multi-disciplinary team provides the necessary support while overall coordination is ensured by the Director of Social Services of the Municipality of Durres. Training for justice and law enforcement professionals is done through UNDP, health workers by UNFPA, and child protection professionals by UNICEF. UN Women provides support to public and community authorities in gender-budgeting processes.

In Montenegro, the mission visited the project "Social Welfare and Child Care System Reform: Enhancing Social Inclusion" (funded by the EU), which involves the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education and Sport and UNDP and UNICEF. The project consists of three components: inclusive education, social welfare reform and child care system reform; it is aimed at facilitating access to vulnerable, socially excluded groups to comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable family and community-based services. The project is supporting the adoption of related laws and standards as well as a Fostering Strategy; the drafting of local plans in nine municipalities; the development of data collection; the upgrading of capacities of Centres for Social Welfare; the reform of the centres in terms of its structures; and financial and expert support to over 20 social welfare and child protection services.

In both projects, the synergies and complementarities developed among the participating UN agencies, which respond to one project design, one management structure and one budget, were evident. This allows for consolidated and cohesive support to government priorities and cost savings in terms of project infrastructure and administration. By bringing together different government actors the United Nations also contributes to better coordination of internal government mechanisms and brings greater visibility and attention to the priorities they tackle together.

### **Aid Effectiveness and Development Partners**

It was clear to the mission that the implementation of the Delivering as One approach in both Albania and Montenegro has been marked by a strong leadership and ownership of the national governments. This in turn has ensured that the Delivering as One programmes are truly reflective of key national priorities, as a corollary the programmes enjoy credibility and support of all development actors concerned.

While the Delivering as One programmes are primarily meant to guide the work of the United Nations in supporting national development efforts, they could equally guide the support of other development actors. In this respect, the One UN Funds, created to finance the Delivering as One programmes, are built on the notion that they can facilitate the channelling of donor support to those priorities. The reality, however, shows that this is not always the case and donors have continued to channel their financing directly to the UN agencies of their preference or at best through "soft earmarkings" (indicating a preference for a specific component of the programme).

Similarly, given the multiyear nature of the Delivering as One programmes, the expectation is for multiyear financing. Again experience shows that this is not the case as donors tend to pledge on a yearly basis, and the Delivering as One approach, unfortunately, has not brought about any meaningful change in how the bilateral donors conduct business.

Both senior government officials and members of the UN Country Teams expressed concern over these practices as they make planning difficult and diminish the efficiency of the programmes. In this regard, greater adherence by donors to the related principles of the Paris Declaration will go a long way in helping governments and the United Nations derive the full benefits of the Delivering as One approach.

## **Conclusions**

National ownership presupposes the active involvement of parliament at various levels, including in the formulation of national development strategies and the oversight of aid. All too often, however, parliaments are not involved in a meaningful way in One UN consultation mechanisms among the government, development partners and civil society on matters of key importance. These include the elaboration of national development strategies, decisions regarding the content and disbursement of international assistance, and the monitoring of aid effectiveness. Usually, parliaments are not invited to such consultations, and they do not ask to participate.

The limited role of parliaments in aid and international development is a result of various factors. On the one hand, parliament-specific factors, such as limited parliamentary capacities, weak parliamentary independence vis-à-vis the executive, or limited financial autonomy, all create barriers to effective parliamentary participation. On the other, the United Nations itself has often failed to systematically involve parliaments in major processes. All too often, parliaments are viewed as passive recipients of aid and technical assistance, rather than real partners with a clear mandate to exercise oversight and ensure accountability of development cooperation.

In both Albania and Montenegro, however, this situation can change, and a practice of engagement can be developed and potentially serve as a model for many other countries. The parliaments in both these countries are dynamic and professional, and they have been greatly involved in the transformation of their nations, in particular by putting in place a comprehensive legislative framework conducive to EU accession.

The United Nations, in turn, enjoys great respect and is considered to be an honest broker and a highly relevant partner. Its greatest contribution to the development of these countries lies not in the number of projects it implements, but rather in its convening power and its capacity to bring in strategic expertise to meet the needs identified by the respective countries. All major political parties support the objective of EU accession, and there is strong cooperation between the government and the legislature in meeting this national goal. From the perspective of all parties concerned, there is an openness to work together with a view to identifying appropriate modalities to make the link between government- parliament- UN and other development partners when further developing and implementing the One UN approach.

Following its mission, the Advisory Group to the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs made the following recommendations:

- A focal point for UN affairs should be established within the institution of parliament, which can help enhance parliament's overview of and involvement in UN operations at the national level. As the process of EU integration advances, the Committee on Foreign Affairs can also play a more active role in UN-related matters.
- When reviewing the existing mechanisms for engagement with the United Nations, more functional linkages can be established between the select parliamentary committees, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Office of the Speaker.
- Serious consideration should be given to the possibility of bringing in parliament (through a representative) as one of the partners in the Joint Country Steering Committee, or in other mechanisms that have been put in place to ensure coordination, action and monitoring of the Integrated UN Programme at the country level.
- In addition to the specialized work taking place at the level of parliamentary committees to adapt national legislation to international (and especially EU) standards, the relevant committees should take a more proactive role in monitoring the implementation of such international commitments. The parliamentary committees on human rights and gender equality, for example, can request national reports before these are submitted to UN treaty bodies (such as the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women or the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council), discuss them in committee and provide feedback to the relevant ministries, and follow progress in the implementation of new recommendations issued by the respective UN bodies.
- In most cases, programme or project proposals with financial implications for the State budget need to be approved by parliament. The same is not true, however, for national strategies, which most often than not are drafted and approved by the government. In order to enhance national ownership and build broad political support for such strategies, parliament should require that these be circulated well in advance and brought before it for open debate and endorsement.
- The government should develop and expand the good practice of including members of parliament in national delegations to major international events and conferences (such as World Summits or the opening of the annual sessions of the UN General Assembly), particularly as they relate to development cooperation and other major global issues.
- The parliament itself could initiate more contacts and discussions on issues of mutual interest, and to this end invite relevant stakeholders, including UN officials and civil society representatives, to hearings and debates in parliament. Such a practice can potentially help expand the number of legislative initiatives originating from outside the purely governmental sphere, aimed at responding to community needs.
- Regular and robust interaction between parliament and civil society is key to building a legislature that is open, transparent, representative, accountable, effective and well-attuned to the needs and expectations of the citizens it was elected to represent. Where such mechanisms do not exist or are not fully developed, parliament should put in place clear and inclusive rules and procedures aimed at enhancing its cooperation with civil society. Such a practice is particularly relevant in the process of deliberations carried out by select parliamentary committees when finalizing draft bills.
- The UN Country Teams can endeavour to reach out more systematically to parliamentary leaders and various committees and engage them in policy debates on issues of national interest. As mentioned by one member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, instances in which MPs are invited by the United Nations to such exercises are extremely rare. What needs to develop is a two-way relationship with a more regular and coherent pattern of interaction between the United Nations and parliament at the national level.

- It was noted that many UN Country Team members are nationals of the country in which they are serving, which was not the situation observed in other missions to One UN pilot countries and self-starters. This is considered to be a very valuable practice that the UN system should expand and strengthen, as it strengthens the ties between the United Nations and the country where it is operating and brings about a better understanding of the needs and expectations of the country concerned.
- Matters relating to gender equality continue to require special attention, in particular in terms of combating violence against women and promoting the political empowerment of women. While some steps have been taken through the institution of quotas for political party lists, these remain insufficient. Other measures should be considered, including quotas for women's seats in the legislature, and the establishment of cross-party women's caucuses in parliament. Should there be an interest, the IPU would be happy to share its acquired expertise in this area, as well as the good practices developed by other countries.
- The IPU should circulate this report widely, both among its Member Parliaments and within the broader UN community, so as to help garner support and build political momentum in carrying forward the One UN agenda.
- Parliamentarians should enquire out about joint UN projects carried out in their countries. As witnessed during the field visits to the joint projects in Albania and Montenegro, pooling the expertise and comparative advantages of various UN agencies and programmes can go a long way in maximizing the impact and effectiveness of such interventions in the field. Such good practices should be replicated on a wider scale throughout the world, and parliamentarians can play an important role in building bridges between local communities and the decision-making process at the national level.
- Parliaments should encourage their national representatives on the various UN agency governing boards to pursue a more coherent approach along the lines of the Delivering as One principles, and request more focus and support, both at UN Headquarters and in field operations, for serious reform of the United Nations.

In conclusion, the Advisory Group wishes to express its deep gratitude to the Speakers of Parliament of Albania and Montenegro, to the Committee Chairs, MPs and dedicated staff, as well as to the UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams, without whose support this mission would not have been possible.

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## **MEETINGS IN ALBANIA**

H.E. Mrs. Jozefina Topalli Çoba, Speaker of the Parliament of Albania

### Foreign Policy Committee

Mr. Fatos Beja, Committee Chairman

Mr. Namik Dokle, Deputy Speaker of Parliament

Ms. Arta Dade, Member, former Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Lajla Pernaska, Member

Ms. Oita Xhacka, Member

Mr. Kastriot Islami, Member

Mr. Fatbardh Kadilli, Member

Mr. Florion Mima, Member

#### European Integration Committee

Mr. Ditmir Bushati, Committee Chairperson  
Ms. Arenca Trashani, Member  
Ms. Raymonda Bulku, Member  
Mr. Sherefedin Shehu, Member  
Mr. Taulant Balla, Member  
Mr. Marko Bello, Member

#### Other Parliamentary Select Committees

Mr. Viktor Gumi, Committee on Legal Issues, Administration and Human Rights  
Ms. Arenca Trashani, European Integration Committee  
Mr. Et'hem Ruka, Chairperson, Committee on Labour, Social Issues and Health  
Mr. Sybi Hida, Economy and Finance Committee

#### Government Officials

Ms. Valbona Kuko, Director, Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination, Council of Ministers  
Mr. Gazmend Turdiu, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Mr. Alfred Rushaj, Minister of Finance  
Ms. Arjana Dyrimishi, Director General for Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policies, Ministry of Finance

#### UN Country Team

Ms. Semia Tapia, UN Resident Coordinator a.i. and UN Women Representative  
Ms. Yesim Oruc, UNDP Country Director  
Mr. Detlef Palm, UNICEF Representative  
Mr. Freddy Austly, UNDP Deputy Country Director  
Ms. Nora Kushti, UNRC Office, Communications Manager  
Ms. Bujana Hoti, UNRC Office, HIV/AIDS TG Coordinator  
Ms. Nynke Kuperus, UNRC Office, RBM and Knowledge Management Specialist  
Ms. Maylis de Vermeuil, UNV Programme Officer  
Mr. Hortenc Balla, UNHCR Representative  
Ms. Emira Shkurti, UNDP Programme Manager  
Ms. Flora Ismaili, UNFPA  
Ms. Teuta Grazhdani, IOM

#### Development partners

Mr. François Bégeot, Head of Section, Economic Reform and Infrastructure, EU Delegation of Albania  
Ms. Astrid Wein, Head of Coordination Office for Technical Cooperation, Austrian Embassy

#### Civil society

Ms. Zini Kore, President, Better Care for Children (BKTF)  
Ms. Mirela Arqimandriti, Executive Director, Gender Alliance for Development Centre (GADC)  
Ms. Monika Kocaqi, Refleksione Association  
Ms. Aurela Anastasi, Executive Director, Centre for Legal Civic Initiatives  
Mr. Adriatik Hasantari, Roma Active Albania  
Ms. Blerta Cani, Executive Director, Albania Disability Rights Foundation (ARDF)  
Ms. Ermelinda Mahmutaj, EDEN Centre

Mr. Skender Veliu, Amaro Drom  
Ms. Argyrina Jubani, Chair, Albanian Youth Council  
Ms. Mirela Muca, Executive Director, Albanian National Centre for Social Studies  
Ms. Elira Zaka, Executive Director, Centre for Parliamentary Studies  
Ms. Klotilda Ferhati, Association for Integration of Informal Areas  
Ms. Edlira Cepani, Equity in Decision Making

## **MEETINGS IN MONTENEGRO**

H.E. Mr. Ranko Krivokapić, Speaker of the Parliament

### Committee on International Relations and European Integration

Mr. Miodrag Vuković, President  
Mr. Vasilije Lalošević, Vice-President  
Mr. Obrad Mišostanišić, Member  
Ms. Valentina Radulović-Šćepanović, Member  
Mr. Genci Nimanbegu, Member  
Mr. Zeliko Avramović, Member  
Ms. Nada Drobnjak, Member  
Mr. Suljo Mustafić, Member

### Other Select Parliamentary Committees

Mr. Halil Duković, Member of the Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms  
Ms. Nada Drobnjak, President of the Committee on Gender Equality  
Mr. Neven Gošović, Vice-President of the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare  
Mr. Zoran Srzentić, Member of the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare  
Mr. Aleksandar Damjanović, President of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget  
Mr. Zoran Vukčević, Vice-President of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget

### Government officials

Mr. Nebojsa Kaludjerović, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration  
Mr. Vladimir Kavarić, Minister of the Economy  
Mr. Damir Rasketić, Secretary of the Ministry of Finance  
Ms. Ana Krsmanović, Deputy Minister for Central Harmonization of Public Internal Financial Management and Control and Internal Audit (Ministry of Finance)  
Ms. Bojana Bosković, Deputy Minister for Financial Systems and Improvement of the Business Environment (Ministry of Finance)  
Mr. Andro Drecun, Deputy Minister on International Relations and Climate Change, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism,  
Ms. Remzija Ademović, Acting Deputy Minister of Social Welfare and Child Protection, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

### UN Country Team

Mr. Rastislav Vrbensky, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative to Montenegro  
Mr. Benjamin Perks, UNICEF Representative to Montenegro  
Ms. Brita Helleland, UNHCR Representative to Montenegro  
Ms. Mina Brajović, Head of Country Office, WHO Montenegro Country Office

Ms. Elisa Tsakiri, Head of Country Office, IOM Montenegro  
Ms. Lovita Ramguttee, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative  
Ms. Ana Katnić, National Professional Officer, UNESCO Project Office in Podgorica

Development partners

Ms. Catherine Knight Sands, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, UK Embassy  
Mr. Pius Fischer, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of Germany  
Ms. Dawn Adie-Baird, Operations Manager, Delegation of the European Union in Montenegro

Civil society

Ms. Maja Raićević, Women's Rights Centre  
Mr. Marko Sošić, Institute Alternative  
Ms. Marina Bauk, Civic Alliance  
Ms. Sanja Sišović, CAZAS  
Mr. Dordije Brkuljan, Centre for Democratic Transition  
Ms. Rajka Cica Perović, Centre for the Rights of the Child