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Interim report of the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU since the 204th session of the Governing Council

(a) Update on the implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017–2021

This report is an overview of activities undertaken since March 2019 to implement the IPU Strategy. It focuses in particular on initiatives that provide support to parliaments in building their capacity, strengthening their work at the national level and delivering on national objectives. It also provides a list of activities planned for the next six months and a checklist of actions that IPU Members are invited to consider taking.

Objective 1: Build strong, democratic parliaments

Standards setting and knowledge generation

1. Overview of activities

The Centre for Innovation in Parliament, which was launched in December 2018, has continued its development. The Centre for Innovation in Parliament is a partnership between the IPU and parliaments to support parliamentary innovation through improved use of digital tools.

In addition to the four parliamentary hubs that had previously been established (Southern Africa, Latin America, Open Data, ICT Governance), new hubs have been set in motion with the parliaments of Kenya (East Africa regional hub), Trinidad and Tobago (Caribbean regional hub), New Zealand (Pacific regional hub) and Israel (Transparency thematic hub). Hub meetings have been hosted by the parliaments of Brazil, Kenya and Zambia.

At the 140th Assembly in Doha in April 2019, Secretaries General of Parliament discussed the Centre's workplan in a joint meeting of the parliaments that are hosting hubs, as well as in individual hub meetings of participating parliaments. This format was judged to have been successful and will become a regular event at future Assemblies.

Two editions of a new quarterly bulletin, the Innovation Tracker, have been published online to highlight examples of innovation in national parliaments. The Innovation Tracker also provides updates on the Centre's work, including main messages from a very interesting debate on disinformation and "fake news" held at the Doha Assembly. Further examples of parliamentary innovation are shared regularly using the [#innovation](#) and [#parliament](#) hashtags on Twitter.

#IPU141

Updating and development of IPU's online database on parliaments (Parline) was pursued. An initial invitation to parliaments has resulted in the nomination of Parline Correspondents for 71 parliamentary chambers. Parline Correspondents will help to ensure that the data for their parliament is kept accurate and up-to-date. They will also be able to channel suggestions for new features in the database back to the IPU Secretariat.

A self-assessment toolkit on parliamentary oversight as a follow-up to the 2017 Global Parliamentary Report (GPR) has been drafted and is being reviewed prior to publication. The findings and recommendations of the 2017 report were presented at a regional conference on parliamentary oversight organized by the OSCE and hosted by the Parliament of Georgia.

The IPU participated actively in the July 2019 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) at the United Nations, which reviewed progress on a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 16. The IPU presented preliminary data for SDG indicator 16.7.1(a) on the number of women and young people in decision-making positions in parliaments at an HLPF side-event. While recognizing the importance of quantitative data, participants underlined the need to accompany such data with a contextual analysis to draw out the main challenges and trends in the representation of women and young people.

Participants also considered that parliamentary indicators should go beyond the issue of representation, to take a more holistic approach to the assessment of parliamentary capacity and performance. An expert consultation on parliamentary indicators for SDG targets 16.6 (develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions) and 16.7 (ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making) took place at the IPU headquarters in September 2019. The meeting launched a process towards the development of a framework aimed at helping parliaments assess their capacity and performance.

The IPU furthermore launched the process for the preparation of the third Global Parliamentary Report with an [online consultation](#) of members on possible themes for the report.

2. Future activities

- Further development of the network of Parline Correspondents; implementation of technical developments to the New Parline database on national parliaments.
- Publication of an initial dataset for SDG indicator 16.7.1(a) on women and young people in decision-making positions in parliaments, and collection of additional data.
- Publication of a self-assessment toolkit on parliamentary oversight.
- Pursuit of preparatory work for the 2021 Global Parliamentary Report.
- Quarterly publication of the Innovation Tracker; publication of a social media guide for parliaments and parliamentarians.
- Preparatory work for the 2020 World e-Parliament Report and Conference.

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Nominate Parline Correspondents and review data on their parliament in the New Parline database (see: data.ipu.org).
- Consider participating in the Centre for Innovation in Parliament and providing voluntary financial and other contributions to its operations.
- Contribute to research for the next Global Parliamentary Report.
- Consider carrying out self-assessments, including of their oversight performance.

Build institutional capacity

1. Overview of activities

The IPU Technical Cooperation Programme continues to provide capacity building support to parliaments and, in the process, to implement the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments. Application of the Principles across the IPU's work has steadily increased. A drive to promote further endorsement at the 140th IPU Assembly in Doha saw 22 additional endorsements that now stand at 148: 122 national parliaments and 26 partners. Related to the Principles, a user-friendly Guide to enhance parliamentary self-development is near completion for publication before the end of 2019.

Since April 2019, the IPU Technical Cooperation Programme has supported the national Parliaments of Djibouti, Myanmar, Pakistan, Tunisia, Vanuatu and Zambia.

- In Djibouti, support to the Parliament in enhancing its capacity to promote and protect human rights continued. In June, two MPs from Djibouti participated in a global seminar on parliamentary human rights committees with IPU support to help provide greater insights of international practice with a view to the Parliament setting up its own human rights-mandated Committee. In July 2019, support in view of this planned human rights committee continued, with a workshop held in Djibouti to build awareness on human rights, discuss the mandate of such a committee, and define a strategy towards its creation through an action plan. Preparations were ongoing for additional human rights related activities to continue in September 2019 when the Parliament returned from recess. In the autumn of 2019, this will focus on the revision of the Parliament's internal rules as well as work with the parliamentary administration to better streamline human rights in their day-to-day tasks.
- In Myanmar, support over the past six months involved strengthening the processes and procedures of the plenary and committees as well as helping the Parliament further develop its ICT and information management capacity.
- In Pakistan, the IPU and the Senate continued collaboration under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in June 2018. Staff of the Japanese National Diet provided on-the-job training to a selection of Pakistan Senate staff in Tokyo in July 2019. This training focused on legislative drafting.
- In Tunisia, during a seminar on strategic planning which took place in April 2019, an IPU-sponsored international expert presented good practices in the elaboration and implementation of strategic plans for the development of parliaments, based on comparative experiences and international standards. The IPU and UNDP Tunisia formalized their cooperation through an exchange of letters in June 2019.
- In Vanuatu assistance to the IT/Library services continued with the development of a digital repository, provision and installation of ICT equipment and training of ICT library staff and archivist in May 2019.
- In Zambia, the IPU facilitated the participation of the National Assembly's Chief Librarian in the annual International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Conference in August 2019 as part of an ongoing project to help set-up and enhance the Parliament's digital library.

2. Future activities

- Current projects listed above will continue, and the IPU will respond to new requests received from national parliaments. For example, in the Maldives, preparations have begun to support the building capacities of a wide range of institutional functions.
- Common Principles: a third Expert Roundtable on the Common Principles will be organized to take place around the 142nd IPU Assembly in April 2020.

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Parliaments that have not yet done so, to endorse the Common Principles and integrate them in their work. (See [Annex II](#) for a map of parliaments that have endorsed the principles.)

Objective 2: Advance gender equality and respect for women's rights

1. Overview of activities

Addressing violence against women in parliament

The IPU has pursued its work to address sexism, harassment and violence occurring in parliaments against women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. Several recent events and meetings have allowed for the wide dissemination of the IPU research findings in this area:

- On the occasion of the UN Human Rights Council, the IPU and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), UN Women and several Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva, held a joint side-event *#NotInMyParliament – Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women Parliamentarians*. Another side event, *The Impact of Sexual and Gender-based Violence on Women's Political Participation*, was informed by the IPU research.
- At the US Congress in Washington, the IPU and the League of Women Voters (LWV) organized an event on violence against women politicians and its impact on democracy.

- At the Fourteenth Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians that took place at Wroxton College (United Kingdom), co-sponsored by the IPU and the Centre for Legislative Studies at the University of Hull, a presentation was made on the IPU research and findings on violence against women in parliament.
- In Iceland, upon the invitation of the Prime Minister, the IPU Secretary General joined political leaders from the Nordic countries and many international experts to discuss the impact of the #MeToo campaign and devise common solutions.

The IPU continued work on the *Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament*. This tool provides a practical methodology and is illustrated with examples of initiatives taken by several parliaments around the world to combat sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliamentary settings. Consultations with Secretaries General of parliaments and experts from all parts of the world were carried out to enrich the text and collect good practices. The consolidated document will be presented and discussed at the 141st IPU Assembly in Belgrade during a parity debate on national and regional strategies to end sexism, harassment and violence in parliament.

The IPU contributed to debates leading to the development and adoption in June 2019 of a new International Labour Organization Convention concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work. This new international Convention provides a strong ground for more robust action by national parliaments.

Supporting women's political empowerment

The IPU continued to make available data and knowledge on women's political participation, including through Parline. The IPU data on women in parliament was used by the United Nations and other international organizations as an indicator for women's political participation. Moreover, the IPU data informs the monitoring of SDG targets 5.5 and 16.7.

At the national level, the IPU supported the Tanzania Women's Parliamentary Group in implementing a mentoring programme for women MPs. Support and guidance were provided to mentors and mentees. As women MPs' capacities are built, they will be able to exercise their mandate fully. They are expected also to improve upon their showing at the next elections.

Promoting gender-sensitive parliaments

Activities have been carried out towards building more gender-sensitive parliaments and strengthening women's participation and influence within the institution:

- In June 2019, the IPU facilitated a self-assessment exercise in the Colombian Congress in partnership with UN Women as part of a new initiative called *Congreso en Igualdad*. The initiative is grounded on the IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive parliaments. The self-assessment exercise used the IPU toolkit *Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments*, with tailored questions for review and debate. Priorities were identified for future reform, including measures to increase the overall percentage of women in parliament, as well as their presence in leadership positions and across sectors, and to build a safe, harassment-free working environment. The conclusions will inform the design of the Parliament's strategy and plan of action for the coming years.
- In Serbia, the IPU contributed to a working session by the Women Parliamentarians' Network, organized by UNDP Serbia in order to promote parliament's gender sensitivity and ability to prevent and address sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament.

Addressing discrimination against women and girls

The IPU organized two events to mark the 40th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and highlight the role of parliaments towards its implementation:

- A side event on *Legislating for gender equality* was organized in collaboration with UN Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the International Gender Champions and several Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva. Parliamentarians, diplomats, UN experts and civil society looked into best practices in building a favourable environment and showing leadership in order to eliminate discrimination in laws worldwide by 2030, including the joint strategy "Equality in law for women and girls by 2030: A multi-stakeholder strategy for accelerated action" launched by UN Women in partnership with the IPU and other stakeholders.

- During the 74th session of the UN CEDAW Committee, a panel discussion was co-organized by the IPU, the CEDAW Committee and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), focusing on the legacy of the Committee, persisting obstacles and strategies to promote full compliance with the Convention, including as regards women's political empowerment.

The IPU has also continued to promote the role of parliaments in implementation of the UN CEDAW. The IPU Member Parliaments have been regularly informed and invited to contribute to their country review by the UN CEDAW Committee. A growing number of parliaments have indicated their commitment towards following up on the Committee's recommendations to enhance CEDAW compliance nationally. The forthcoming 25-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2020 provides new impetus to achieve gender equality.

2. Future activities

- Publication of the *Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament* (25 November 2019).
- National capacity building and technical support activities to parliaments to advance gender equality and women's political empowerment in several countries (Colombia, Djibouti, Kenya, Turkey and the United Republic of Tanzania) (2019 –2020).
- Launch of the IPU *Report on Women in Parliament* (March 2020).
- Launch of the IPU-UN Women Map *Women in Politics 2020* (March 2020).
- Parliamentary Meeting and side events on the occasion of the UN Commission on the Status of Women to focus on the 25-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (March 2020).

3. Next Steps for IPU members

- Consider carrying out gender-sensitive parliament self-assessments (see www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/gender-toolkit-e.pdf).
- Consider marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and contributing to the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25 November 2019).
- Consider sharing data and information on women in parliament after elections and whenever a change occurs in their membership.
- Consider sharing with the IPU Secretariat good practices developed in parliament to address sexism, harassment and gender-based violence.
- Promote parliamentary involvement in the CEDAW reporting and Beijing review processes. Reports from more than 20 countries will be reviewed by CEDAW during the October 2019 and January 2020 sessions (see [Annex II](#)).

Objective 3: Protect and promote human rights

1. Overview of activities

In cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the IPU organized a global seminar on *Parliamentary engagement on human rights: Identifying good practices and new opportunities for action*, which took place at the UN Palais des Nations in Geneva from 24 to 26 June. The meeting was exclusively organized for members of specialized parliamentary human rights committees. Sixty-three MPs from 35 countries, along with human rights experts, took stock of the efforts made by these committees to promote and protect human rights. The event identified, showcased and built on interesting examples of parliamentary engagement on human rights and parliamentary involvement in the work of UN human rights mechanisms. The seminar identified additional ways for parliaments to promote and protect human rights and to cooperate more systematically with these mechanisms. The seminar took place while the UN Human Rights Council was in session at the Palais des Nations: as a result, parliamentarians were directly exposed to its work. Moreover, one morning session of the seminar was open to the public, hence facilitating direct interaction between the international human rights community based in Geneva and parliamentarians.

The IPU, the OHCHR and the International Organisation of La Francophonie organized a meeting in Geneva on 13 and 14 June for a group of parliamentarians from Francophone countries that the UN Human Rights Council had recently examined under its Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The meeting focused on helping the parliamentarians implement the Council's UPR recommendations for their respective countries.

During the period under review, the IPU systematically informed the parliaments of countries that were due to be or had just been examined under the Human Rights Council's UPR of the steps they could take to contribute to the Council's assessment of their respective country's situation and to implement its recommendations. The IPU also continued to encourage parliaments to engage similarly with the UN Human Rights Committee, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The IPU and ILO finalized their joint publication entitled *Handbook for Parliamentarians on Forced Labour*, which will be officially launched at the 141st IPU Assembly in Belgrade. The handbook on *Freedom of expression for parliaments and their members: Importance and scope of protection*, which was already available in English and French, was translated into Spanish and disseminated to Spanish-speaking parliaments.

Work continued to overhaul the Parline module on parliamentary human rights committees and to seek updated information from parliaments on the existence and functioning of these committees (see also Objective 1).

The IPU Secretariat followed up on recent decisions of the IPU Governing Council on individual human rights cases, monitored and responded to ongoing developments in existing cases and took action in response to new complaints submitted to the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CHRP). These new complaints concerned current and former members of parliament from the following countries: Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Mongolia, Sierra Leone, Venezuela, and Yemen.

The planned political and human rights mission to Turkey, comprising members of the IPU Executive Committee and the CHRP, took place from 10 to 13 June. It consisted of meetings in Ankara, Istanbul and Diyarbakir with the Turkish parliamentary, executive and judicial authorities, the parliamentarians whose cases are before the CHRP, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. At the invitation of the Mongolian authorities, the CHRP sent a delegation to Mongolia between 5 and 7 June to discuss ongoing efforts and challenges regarding the promotion of truth and justice in the case of the assassination of Mr. Zorig Sanjasuuren. The mission report was shared with all those met by the delegation in Turkey and is being presented in Belgrade to the CHRP along with any comments received.

Significant developments and/or new allegations were submitted in cases in countries including Turkey and Venezuela. The IPU spoke out about worrying developments in cases in Venezuela. The long-requested mission to Venezuela is still awaiting official approval from the Venezuelan Government. The Cambodian parliamentary authorities informed the IPU Secretary General that it was, after all, not possible for the CHRP delegation to come to Cambodia to meet with the detained Acting President of the dissolved, opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP), Mr. Kem Sokha. The Cambodian delegation at the Doha Assembly had undertaken to facilitate such a visit.

On 19 September, the IPU organized a hearing in Washington with the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the United States Congress. The hearing focused on the work of the CHRP and explored ways for the Commission and individual members to act in support of the cases before the CHRP and, more generally, to raise awareness about the situation of parliamentarians at risk across the globe.

The IPU and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) organized a panel event on statelessness on the side-lines of the High-level Political Forum on the SDGs, which, as indicated earlier in this report, focused this year, among others, on reviewing progress on SDG 16, including the target related to the right to identity. The President of the IPU's Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, Dr. A Vadai, represented the IPU and led debates together with MPs, civil society representatives working on discrimination against women, and a statelessness activist (and former stateless person). Participants discussed the need to revise laws, and in particular nationality laws, to prevent and address statelessness.

In May 2019, the IPU Secretary General presented IPU's work on refugees and addressed the Pan-African Parliament's special session on "2019 the Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa".

2. Future activities

- Follow up on the 160th session (October 2019) of the CHRP, including on the organization of missions and trial observations, and prepare for the 161st session (January 2020), which will entail a review of all cases on file.
- Pursue the collection, analysis and launch of statistics on the work of the CHRP on International Human Rights Day, 10 December.
- Design a human rights self-assessment toolkit for parliaments.
- Promote and disseminate the new handbook on forced labour.
- Contribute to the Regional Conference in Africa on refugee protection organized with the Pan-African Parliament and UNHCR (November 2019).

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Consider following up on cases of alleged violations of the human rights of parliamentarians currently under consideration by the CHRP and inform the IPU Secretariat of any such follow-up action. (A list of countries with cases under examination is contained in Annex II.) (See [www.ipu.org/decisions-committee-human-rights-parliamentarians.](http://www.ipu.org/decisions-committee-human-rights-parliamentarians))
- Give visibility to International Human Rights Day (10 December) by speaking out in support of parliamentarians at risk and by making full use of the global map and the analysis with the CHRP's statistics released on that day as well as other, already existing, visual and information tools to raise awareness in parliament about the work of the CHRP and the ideals it seeks to defend (see www.youtube.com/user/iparliamentaryunion).
- Support parliamentary involvement in and follow-up of the next sessions of the UN Human Rights Council, UN Human Rights Committee, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- Disseminate and make use of the handbook for members of parliament on forced labour and on freedom of expression.
- Help implement the recommendations arising from the IPU/OHCHR seminar for members of parliamentary human rights committees, held in June.
- Provide and/or update, if need be, information about the existence of dedicated parliamentary human rights committees.
- Take part in the UNHCR #IBelong Campaign which aims to end statelessness by 2024 and encourage their respective governments to report and commit with new pledges to end statelessness (see <https://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/high-level-segment-statelessness>).

Objective 4: Contribute to peace building, conflict prevention and security

1. Overview of activities

On 19 and 20 September 2019, the IPU, with support from the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the 1540 Committee Group of Experts, organized a parliamentary seminar in Wellington, New Zealand, to promote the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to non-State actors. The seminar, co-hosted by the Parliament of New Zealand, gathered parliamentarians from the Pacific region with a view to strengthening their capacity to assess risks related to WMDs and to take necessary measures to reduce those risks.

The IPU pursued cooperation with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), working on a promotion campaign to encourage parliaments to have the treaty signed and ratified so that it can finally be enforced. During the 140th Assembly in Doha, Qatar, the IPU cooperated with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) by facilitating the organization of a Panel discussion on the national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention as a means to address threats arising from non-State actors. Another side event of this kind should also take place during the 141st Assembly in Belgrade, Serbia.

At the 140th IPU Assembly, the Governing Council approved the text of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the IPU, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). This MoU responds to the Member Parliaments' demands reflected in the IPU resolutions to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations and aims

to contribute to the global efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism. The IPU Secretary General, the UN Under-Secretary-General of the OCT and the Executive Director of UNODC signed the MoU in May 2019.

This trilateral agreement represents an acknowledgment of the important role of parliaments and parliamentarians in ensuring the success of UN activities and resolutions on counter terrorism.

It was in this context that the IPU was admitted as an Observer Member of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. This Global Compact is an agreement between 36 United Nations entities and is intended to improve coordination in the global efforts to counter terrorism.

As a result of the work carried out within the framework of the IPU-UN Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism led by three organizations (UNODC, UNOCT and the IPU), a Joint Secretariat between the two UN agencies and the IPU, with its own budget and team, has established for the first time. This constitutes a new model of cooperation between international organizations for the implementation of a series of national, regional and global activities that benefit parliamentarians.

As part of the capacity-building activities of the Joint Programme, in June 2019, the three partners held a regional conference for the Sahel countries on counter terrorism and violent extremism in Niamey, Niger. A similar conference was scheduled to take place from 30 September to 3 October in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for the Asia-Pacific region. The primary objective of these regional conferences is to build an in-depth understanding of the root causes, concerns, and challenges of terrorism and counter terrorism at the national and regional level.

The IPU, UNODC and UNOCT further developed the SHERLOC Legal Databases on comprehensive counter-terrorism legislation, case law, bibliography, strategies, and treaties (see: <https://sherloc.unodc.org>).

2. Future activities

- Special session on the review of the 2014 IPU Resolution *Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The role of parliaments* to be convened with institutional partners on the occasion of the 141st Assembly.
- Participation in the 2019 Geneva Peace Week (November 2019) – dedicated session on the impact of climate change on peace and security (theme currently under examination by the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security).
- Identify opportunities for a parliamentary perspective to inclusive national reconciliation processes, including in terms of developing a consolidated parliamentary action plan for reforms as required.
- The IPU-UN Regional Conference on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism for the Eurasia Group in 2019.
- The IPU-UN Regional Conferences on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism for GRULAC in 2020.
- The IPU-UN Regional Conferences on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism for the African Group in 2020.
- First IPU-UN Global Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in 2020.

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Consider signing and ratifying the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.
- Consider signing and ratifying the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
- Consider addressing the implementation gaps of the UN resolutions regarding counter-terrorism and violent extremism on the national and regional level.
- Support the endorsed activities of the IPU-UN Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism including the establishment of the global parliamentary network and the web platform with a legislative database.

Objective 5: Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation

1. Overview of activities

The 140th IPU Assembly was attended by 1,521 participants from 147 Member Parliaments, 8 Associate Members and 39 partner organizations. The 757 members of parliament attending the Assembly included 74 Presiding Officers, 38 Deputy Presiding Officers, 227 women MPs (30%) and 132 young MPs (17.4%).

The Parliament of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines officially joined the Organization to become the 179th IPU Member, while six non-Member parliaments participated as observers with a view to future affiliation/re-affiliation. The Assembly adopted the Doha Declaration on *Parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law*, and three resolutions: (1) *Non-admissibility of using mercenaries and foreign fighters as a means of undermining peace, international security and the territorial integrity of States, and violating human rights*, (2) *The role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation*, and (3) *Call for urgent international action to support Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe hit by Cyclone Idai*. The Governing Council also adopted 12 decisions on the human rights situation of 145 parliamentarians from 8 countries.

The Assembly featured other events, such as:

- Speakers' Dialogue, which focused on *Low trust in democracy: An urgent call to rethink our governance models*.
- Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Geopolitical Groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees.
- Panel discussion: *Ending energy poverty through access to renewable energies and inclusive public policies: How can parliaments help?*
- Panel discussion on counter-terrorism and violent extremism: *From international resolutions to national legislations: Bridging the implementation gap*.
- Joint Meeting of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians: *Sexism, harassment and violence against women MPs*.
- Workshop on child, newborn and maternal health: *Act now for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health: Lessons on health financing, legislation, and partnerships*.
- Interactive session jointly organized by the IPU and the ASGP: *Innovation in parliament: Getting ready for the future*.
- Knowledge Fair.
- Side event: *National implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention as a means to address threats arising from non-State actors*.

In addition to the formal programme of the Assembly, many delegations held bilateral meetings and engaged in other forms of parliamentary diplomacy. Over 130 bilateral meeting room requests from 54 Member Parliaments were registered by the IPU Secretariat.

The IPU President and Secretary General also held over 50 bilateral meetings with participating delegations, including non-Member Parliaments and partner organizations. Efforts were made to promote political dialogue and find peaceful solutions to complex situations in different countries such as Cambodia, Turkey and Venezuela.

The Speakers' Dialogue, the first of this kind to be held at an IPU Assembly, considered the question of low trust in democracy. Some 35 Speakers of Parliament participated in the discussion. The Speakers reflected upon possible ways to redesign current governance models in a way that ensures that democratic institutions, and in particular parliaments, are more relevant and open to the people they represent.

Also in the context of the Assembly, representatives of more than a dozen parliamentary organizations with Associate Member or Permanent Observer status at the IPU, exchanged views on the main challenges facing governance and democracy and acknowledged the importance of reducing work duplication and enhancing the effectiveness of regional and global parliamentary cooperation to address these challenges.

The Secretariat continued to engage with non-Member Parliaments in view of possible future affiliation to the IPU. Proactive action was also taken to avoid suspension of rights of Members in arrears, including several meetings with the respective diplomatic representations in Geneva and New York.

2. Future activities

- Organization of 141st IPU Assembly, with a General Debate focusing on *Strengthening international law: Parliamentary roles and mechanisms, and the contribution of regional cooperation*. The Assembly will include a number of special events, including workshops and panel discussions on: (1) The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, achievements and challenges: Parliamentary perspectives on the way forward, (2) Workshop on SDG 8: Achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all: The economic challenge of our time, (3) *Placing humanity first: The Geneva Conventions – Protecting people in armed conflict for 70 years* (Open session of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law), and (4) Preliminary consultation on the 2021 Global Parliamentary Report: *Parliament in a changing world*.
- The 141st Assembly will also provide the opportunity to mark the 130th anniversary of the IPU through a special segment in plenary. In partnership with the World Future Council another special segment will take place in plenary to deliver the Future Policy Award 2019 on Youth Empowerment.
- The second substantive meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (Vienna, August 2020) will take place in Geneva in mid-November. The Preparatory Committee will examine and take decisions regarding the format, agenda and expected outcomes of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.
- Preparations for the Regional Information Seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for Spanish-speaking participants (hosted by the Parliament of Costa Rica on 27 and 28 November) which, among other things, aims to enhance dialogue and cooperation with inactive Members from the Latin American region.

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Include violations of the human rights of parliamentarians in talking points during inter-parliamentary meetings and official visits to the countries concerned.
- Prepare country reports on follow-up to IPU resolutions and decisions in due time for the annual reporting exercise. The countries concerned for the 2020 edition are the following:

African Group: Madagascar, Mali, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe.

Arab Group: Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan.

Asia-Pacific Group: Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines.

Eurasia Group: Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation.

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean: Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia.

Twelve Plus Group: Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia.

Objective 6: Promote youth empowerment

1. Overview of activities

The IPU celebrated International Youth Day, marking the day to shed light on the importance of youth political participation, mobilize parliaments and raise the voices of young MPs through the following key activities:

- A communications toolkit was sent to all IPU Members encouraging them to mark the day.
- An extensive social media campaign was launched with latest IPU data points on youth participation in parliament, rankings, infographics and political messages on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- Interviews with seven young MPs were posted on the IPU website in a new web series called *Voices*.
- A statement from the President of the IPU's Forum of Young Parliamentarians was posted on the IPU website and on social media.

The IPU reinforced its research and collection of good practices on youth policies. It partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ILO and the United Nations Secretary General's Envoy on Youth in co-organizing the *2019 Future Policy Award* with the World Future Council. The

IPU contributed to the research and assessment process of good policies for youth political participation and civic engagement throughout the Award process. A jury involving representatives of partner organizations, including the IPU President and the President of the IPU's Forum of Young Parliamentarians as well as other experts, was held to nominate the best policies to be awarded. A report presenting and analyzing good policies will be published to spread knowledge and inspire policy-making in the area of youth empowerment. The Award Ceremony will take place at the 141st IPU Assembly in Belgrade.

On 9 and 10 September 2019, the IPU and the Parliament of Paraguay organized the Sixth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Asuncion on the theme *Achieving the SDGs and empowering youth through well-being*. The Conference focused on well-being as an accelerator for the achievement of the SDGs. Young MPs shared their country experience in legislating, designing and implementing policies for well-being and happiness. They also joined a mentorship session and training hub on leadership and communication during the Conference.

An IPU delegation of young parliamentarians took part in the 2019 UN ECOSOC Youth Forum in April 2019. Entitled *Youth: Empowered, Included and Equal*, the Conference discussed inclusion as a vehicle of youth empowerment. A member of the Board of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians was a panelist in an interactive session on the role of youth and young MPs in advancing youth empowerment and implementation of the SDGs.

2. Future activities

- Training for young MPs will take place at the national level.
- The IPU's Seventh Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians will take place in Tbilisi, Georgia, in 2020.
- The IPU biennial report on Youth participation in national parliaments will be published in 2020.
- The annual International Youth Day will be celebrated by the IPU in August 2020.

3. Next Steps for IPU Members

- Consider sharing data and information on youth participation in parliament after elections and whenever a change occurs in their membership.
- Consider marking International Youth Day (August 2020).

Objective 7: Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda

1. Overview of activities

- Two regional seminars on the SDGs were organized in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in May 2019, and in Lisbon, Portugal, in June 2019. In September, the IPU and the Maldivian Parliament co-organized the Fourth South Asia Speakers Summit on the SDGs in Male'. The events formulated recommendations to advance the implementation of the SDGs at national, regional and global levels. The Fourth Interregional Seminar on the SDGs was hosted by the National People's Congress of China in June 2019, bringing together the parliaments of Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Zimbabwe, and China, to discuss the implementation of the SDGs through South-South parliamentary cooperation.
- Upon the request of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, an SDGs self-assessment exercise was scheduled to take place in Sierra Leone in the second half of September 2019.
- As mentioned earlier in this report, the IPU organized and/or supported a number of events during the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), most notably: a Parliamentary Forum, a Senior Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (co-sponsored by the IPU); a workshop for MPs to assess the readiness of parliaments to engage in SDGs implementation (a mock SDG self-assessment exercise); a side event on inclusive decision making and effective institutions; a side event on the right to nationality and on statelessness. In the lead-up to the HLPF, the IPU carried out a survey on parliamentary contribution to the preparation of Voluntary National Reports (VNRs). Out of 47 countries participating in the HLPF voluntary review, a total of 23 responses - equivalent to a 48.94 per cent survey participation rate - to the IPU questionnaire were received and tallied. The IPU data shows that, according to the responses, 38 per cent of parliaments have been involved in VNR process.

- The findings of a survey on "Institutionalization of the SDGs in the work of parliaments" were published in July 2019. The IPU was thus able to document and publicize the ways in which parliaments organize their work around the goals, understand the patterns and share good practices. A total of 89 parliaments responded to the survey – almost half the total number of parliaments in the world – thus providing a representative snapshot of parliamentary engagement in the SDGs.
- In the area of health, work continued with the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) to publish a handbook on women's, children's and adolescents' health, and with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the SUN Movement, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO) on a handbook on nutrition and food systems. During the World Health Assembly (WHA) in May 2019, a technical briefing and a parliamentary seminar took place, recognizing the important role and contribution of parliaments in advancing the global health agenda.
- The IPU Secretary General spoke at the Multi-stakeholder Hearing in preparation for the UN High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) on 29 April. He highlighted the important role of parliaments in achieving UHC and making access to health a reality for all. The HLM was scheduled for September 2019.
- In the area of climate change, the IPU and UN Environment organized in July a national workshop on the promotion of parliamentary engagement on climate change in Zambia. The IPU also supported an interactive session with parliamentarians in the context of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May 2019.
- The IPU continued to focus on development cooperation as a key enabler of sustainable development. As the representative of parliaments on the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), the IPU participated in the "Country Level Pilot Conclusion Workshop" in May 2019. The meeting discussed the activities and results in GPEDC pilot countries to collect best practices to enhance effectiveness at country level.

2. Future activities

- SDG self-assessment in Botswana (after the elections in October 2019), Zambia and Namibia (November 2019), Tunisia (2020), Uganda (2020).
- Three regional seminars and one interregional seminar on SDGs:
 - Regional seminar on *Achieving the SDGs for the Parliaments of the Caribbean*, Trinidad and Tobago, 5 and 6 December 2019.
 - Regional Seminar on *Achieving the SDGs for Asia Pacific*, Pakistan, 2 and 3 March 2020.
 - Regional seminar on *Achieving the SDGs for Parliaments of Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2020.
 - Interregional seminar on *Parliamentary capacity building and the further implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*, China.
- Parliamentary Meeting at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 25), 2 December 2019, Chile.
- Publication of a handbook on women's, children's and adolescents' health (with PMNCH).
- Publication of a handbook on nutrition and food security (with FAO, NEPAD, SUN, WHO,).
- Publication of an IPU-UNDP Guidance Note on Effective Development Cooperation.
- Signing and implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding between the UNFCCC and the IPU.

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Consider undertaking SDGs self-assessment using the IPU-UNDP toolkit.
- Mainstream the SDGs into the work of parliament with regular inclusive debates on national implementation.
- Ensure parliamentary involvement (including of the opposition) in the elaboration of a strategic action plan for achieving the SDGs.
- Provide information on the actions and/or strategies undertaken to ensure that the SDGs are adequately integrated in parliament's work
- Participate in the IPU's seminars and workshops on the SDGs, climate change and health.
- Ascertain if their government has pledged to present a VNR to the 2020 HLPF and insist on contributing to the preparation and examination of such a report.

Objective 8: Bridge the democracy gap in international relations

The checklist on cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations (joint activities over the past six months, until 15 September 2019) can be found in [Annex I](#).

Future activities:

- Observance of the International Day of Democracy (15 September) at the United Nations.
- Regional seminar for Pacific island parliaments on implementation of Security Council resolution 1540, 19-20 September, Wellington (New Zealand).
- Participation in SDG Summit (24-25 September), High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage (23 September) and other high-level meetings, at the opening of the 74th General Assembly session in New York.
- 44th Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO (Geneva, 7 October 2019), and Parliamentary Session within the framework of the annual WTO Public Forum (9 October).
- Session of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs and release of IPU survey on parliamentary engagement with the UN (16 October).
- G20 Speakers' Summit, organized in cooperation with the Japanese Diet, 4 November, Tokyo.
- Parliamentary Meeting at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 25), 2 December 2019, Chile.
- Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations (New York, February 2020).
- Parliamentary Meeting and side events on the Annual session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (New York, March 2020).
- Contribution to the Steering Committee meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (November, Seoul) and to the symposium of the UN Development Cooperation Forum (February 2020).
- Continued discussions with UN Development Operations Coordination Office (UNDOCO) on linking UN Country Offices (Resident Coordinators) to national parliaments.
- Participation in special events of the President of the General Assembly or other GA meetings (to be announced) that may reflect IPU's priorities.
- Coordination with the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) on the drafting of the UN Secretary-General report on interaction between the UN, parliaments and the IPU, ensuring quality content and viable recommendations (November 2019-January/February 2020).
- Independent evaluation of IPU's cooperation with the UN (to be decided by the Executive Committee at the 141st Assembly in Belgrade).

Cooperation with the United Nations system

This document provides a brief checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system from 15 March to 15 September 2019.

Democracy and human rights

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the IPU continued their project of assistance to the Parliament of Myanmar. The two organizations also continued their collaboration in support of the Parliament of Tunisia.

From 24 to 26 June in Geneva, the IPU and the Office of the UN High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized a seminar for members of parliamentary human rights committees entitled *Parliamentary engagement on human rights: Identifying good practices and new opportunities for action*. The event discussed parliamentary engagement on human rights and parliamentary involvement in the work of UN human rights mechanisms. In line with the interest shown in this event and the need for sustained support to members of parliamentary human rights committees, a similar meeting will be organized at global or regional level in the first half of 2020.

The IPU and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have finalized the draft of the Handbook for Parliamentarians no. 30, entitled *Eliminating Forced Labour*, which will be launched soon.

Initial planning for a third issue of the IPU-UNDP Global Parliamentary Report (GPR) began in the course of the summer. The new GPR should be published toward the end of 2020.

Gender equality

Together with the OHCHR, UN Women, International Gender Champions and a number of Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), the IPU organized a special event entitled *Legislating for gender equality: Eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence by 2030* on 26 June in Geneva. The event was a side event of the session of the Human Rights Council and was attended by many MPs participating in the work of the Council as part of their national delegations.

Jointly with UN Women, the IPU and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) organized a side event on the occasion of the UN Human Rights Council on addressing violence against women in parliament, entitled *#NotInMyParliament—Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women Parliamentarians*.

In honour of the 40th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), on 8 July the IPU and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) organized a public event in Geneva entitled *The CEDAW Convention: 40 Years of Promoting and Empowering Women*. The event served to raise awareness on the work of the CEDAW Committee in its efforts to ensure the eradication of inequality and bias towards women.

In late July, the IPU and UN Women Colombia provided support to the Parliament of Colombia in assessing its level of gender-sensitivity using the IPU self-assessment toolkit for parliaments, entitled *Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments*. The assessment took place in a workshop on gender-sensitive parliaments entitled *Congreso en Igualdad*, with the aim of building a gender-responsive parliamentary action plan in Colombia.

A General Assembly resolution was adopted in August which explicitly invites the IPU to contribute to a special meeting of the UN in September 2020 marking the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration on women.

The IPU President joined the President of the UN General Assembly's Group of Gender Equality Leaders at a panel discussion held on 15 July. This participation resulted in a substantive contribution to key recommendations of the panel discussion, in particular to step up efforts to enhance women's political participation and end violence against women in politics.

The IPU has also continued to promote the role of parliaments in implementing CEDAW. IPU Member Parliaments have been kept regularly informed and invited to contribute to their country review by the CEDAW Committee. A growing number of parliaments have indicated their commitment to following up on the Committee's recommendations to enhance CEDAW compliance nationally.

Youth empowerment

The IPU partnered with the UNDP, the ILO and the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth in co-organizing the 2019 Future Policy Award with the World Future Council. The IPU contributed throughout the Award process – to the nomination, research, media and assessment stages. A Jury Call involving these UN bodies as well as other experts included the IPU President and the President of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

On 9 and 10 September, the IPU and the Parliament of Paraguay organized the Sixth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Asunción on the theme *Achieving the SDGs and empowering youth through well-being*. Representatives from the UNDP, UN Women, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank served as panellists and contributed to the debates.

An IPU delegation of young parliamentarians took part in the 2019 UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum in April. Entitled *Youth: Empowered, Included and Equal*, the Forum brought together participants to discuss inclusion as a vehicle of youth empowerment and progress in achieving the SDGs. A member of the Board of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians served as a panellist in an interactive session to discuss the role of youth and young MPs in advancing implementation of the SDGs.

International peace and security

On 8 May in Geneva, the executive heads of the IPU, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to cement their cooperation in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. The signing ceremony was attended by the UNOG Director-General, Mr. Michael Møller, and the Speaker of the United Arab Emirates Parliament and Chair of the IPU High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, Dr Amal Al Qubaisi.

This trilateral agreement represents an acknowledgment of the important role of parliaments and parliamentarians in ensuring the success of UN activities and resolutions on counter-terrorism. For the first time, a Joint Secretariat was established between the two UN agencies and the IPU, with its own budget and team, which constitutes a new model of cooperation between international organizations. The agreement also allowed the IPU to become an observer member of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact – an agreement between 36 UN entities that aims to improve coordination in the global efforts to counter terrorism

As part of the capacity-building activities of the IPU-UN Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, in June 2019 the three partners held the second regional conference for the Sahel countries on counter-terrorism and violent extremism in Niamey, Niger, which focused on parliamentary engagement in addressing terrorism and conditions conducive to terrorism in the Sahel region. A third regional conference is scheduled to take place from 20 September to 3 October in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for the Asia-Pacific region. The primary objective of these regional conferences is to build a real in-depth understanding of the root causes, concerns and challenges of terrorism and counter-terrorism at the national and regional levels.

In the framework of the Joint Programme, the IPU, UNODC and UNOCT developed the SHERLOC Legal Databases, which gather comprehensive counter-terrorism legislation, case law, bibliography, strategies and treaties.

On 23 July, ECOSOC adopted a resolution, *Technical assistance provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime related to counter-terrorism*, explicitly acknowledging "the important role that parliaments can play in preventing and countering terrorism and addressing conditions conducive to terrorism, and recognizing also the relevance of the partnership established between the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Office of Counter-Terrorism in that regard".

On 19 and 20 September, the IPU, with support from the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (ODA) and the 1540 Committee Group of experts, organized a parliamentary seminar in Wellington, New Zealand, to promote the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to non-State actors. The seminar, co-hosted by the Parliament of New Zealand, gathered parliamentarians from the Pacific region with a view to strengthening their capacity to assess risks related to WMDs and to take measures required to reduce those risks.

The IPU and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) began working on a promotion campaign to encourage parliaments to have the treaty signed and ratified so that it can finally be enforced. Follow-up to the campaign will take place during a panel discussion that will be organized by the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security during the 141st IPU Assembly in Belgrade, Serbia.

The IPU cooperated with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in facilitating a panel discussion during the 140th Assembly in Doha, Qatar, on national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention as a means to address threats arising from non-State actors. Another side event of this kind should also take place during the 141st Assembly in Belgrade.

Sustainable development

Much of the work during this period focused on preparations for the 8–18 July session of the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF). The IPU surveyed the parliaments of the countries participating in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) whose final reports were presented at the main HLPF session. During the session, a half-day Parliamentary Forum was held as a special event to draw more attention to the role of parliaments in the 2030 Agenda. The forum, chaired by the IPU President, replaced a smaller side event held in previous years and will continue to be a fixture of future sessions. Over 140 MPs from 50 countries were in attendance.

During the HLPF the IPU organized a number of other events: a workshop with UNDP on assessing parliaments' capacities to institutionalize the SDGs; an event on parliamentary indicators for SDG 16 (the governance goal); and another event, with UNHCR, on statelessness. The IPU President spoke at a number of other HLPF events, such as an official panel discussion on SDG 16, a special event of the President of the General Assembly on women's empowerment, and an event of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on sexual abuse of children. The IPU Secretary General spoke at a side event of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (on parliamentary indicators for SDG 16), was a presenter at a special ECOSOC event (*What is democracy? Stepping up engagement around goal 16*), and participated in a meeting on the role of parliaments in the 2030 Agenda hosted by the Mission of Germany. The IPU President delivered an official statement to the main session of the HLPF.

In view of the heads of State session of the HLPF on 24 and 25 September, known as the SDG Summit, the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York followed closely the negotiation of the Summit's Declaration with a view to having parliaments reflected in the document (unsuccessfully). The office worked closely with the Ambassador of El Salvador as the lead facilitator for the Summit, together with the President of the General Assembly, to focus one of the special dialogue sessions of the Summit on the role of parliament. As a result, the President of the IPU has been invited to speak at the Leadership Dialogue on localizing the SDGs, alongside a number of heads of State and government.

The modalities resolution for the High-level Meeting on universal health coverage (HLM) scheduled for 26 September explicitly invites the IPU to contribute to this event. In the lead-up to the HLM, the IPU participated in a preparatory multi-stakeholder hearing in May. The IPU Secretary General sat on one of the panels of the hearing and several MPs participated in the floor debate. The IPU also coordinated with the organizers of the meeting to provide a parliamentary presence on one of its panels.

The Chair of the IPU Advisory Group on Health and co-rapporteur of the IPU resolution *Achieving universal health coverage by 2030: The role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health* addressed the WHO Executive Board, which was held in Geneva from 24 January to 1 February. On 23 and 24 May, in conjunction with the World Health Assembly, the IPU and the WHO organized a technical briefing for parliamentarians entitled *From commitment to action: Parliaments moving the universal health coverage agenda forward* and a parliamentary seminar on universal health coverage. The IPU

Secretary General also delivered an official statement to the World Health Assembly. On 10 and 11 July, the IPU participated as an alternate member of the new intergovernmental constituency in a meeting of the Board of the Partnership for Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (PMNCH), which is managed by the WHO.

On 10 and 11 September, the IPU collaborated with the WHO, UNICEF, PMNCH, Countdown to 2030, and the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC) to organize a regional workshop, *Reducing inequalities in reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health in sub-Saharan Africa: From evidence to policy and accountability*, held in Nairobi, Kenya.

As a member of the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), the IPU participated in the Senior-Level Meeting of the GPEDC that was held on 13 and 14 July in connection with the HLPF session, and in particular to contribute to the review of SDG 17. About 40 MPs participated in this meeting, in which the results of a monitoring exercise on development cooperation were presented. Work on a new guidance note for parliamentarians on development cooperation continued during this period. The note will be published as a joint IPU-UNDP publication in the last quarter of 2019.

As a member of the Advisory Group of the UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), the IPU provided input on the DCF's new strategy for the 2020–21 cycle. This also included early planning for a new policy brief and a DCF symposium in the first quarter of 2020.

As part of a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the IPU and UNEP jointly organized three national workshops on promoting parliamentary engagement on climate change in Zimbabwe (8 March), Burundi (22 March) and Zambia (22 July).

The IPU also supported an interactive session with parliamentarians in the context of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May, *Opportunities for Engagement of Parliamentarians in a New Landscape of Risk-informed Sustainable Development*.

In order to promote greater awareness about the SDGs and foster parliamentary cooperation, between March and September 2019 the IPU organized four regional and interregional events, namely: the Second Regional Seminar for the Asia-Pacific Region Parliaments on Achieving the SDGs (Mongolia, 27 and 28 May), the Regional Seminar on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group (Portugal, 5 and 6 June), the Fourth Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity-Building and the Further Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (China, 12–14 June) and the Fourth South Asian Speakers' Summit on Achieving the SDGs (Maldives, 1 and 2 September). Various UN representatives have been invited to participate as speakers in sessions mainly focusing on: governance, education, health, sustainable agriculture, equality at work, nutrition and climate change. They were affiliated to the following agencies: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP); UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji; UNESCO Beijing Cluster Office; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Mongolia; UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) for Northeast Asia; WHO Regional Office for Europe; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNDP Maldives and UNDP HQ.

An initial discussion took place between IPU and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) with regard to the joint organization of a parliamentary forum ahead of the Fifth Conference on the Least Developed Countries to take place in Doha, Qatar, in March 2021.

International trade and the global economy

The IPU and the European Parliament prepared for a parliamentary session on 9 October in the context of the 2019 Public Forum at the WTO (Geneva, 8–11 October), which this year focused on the overall theme of *Trading forward: Adapting to a changing world*. The autumn session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO was also to be held at IPU Headquarters on 7 October, allowing for an interactive debate with WTO officials, as well as for an in-depth examination of preparations for the WTO Parliamentary Conference next year, which is expected to take place in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, in the context of the WTO Ministerial Meeting in June 2020.

After a very successful G20 Parliamentary Forum and Speakers' Summit in Buenos Aires in late 2018, the IPU lent its support to the Japanese Diet in the organization of the G20 Speakers' Summit for 2019, which will take place in Tokyo on 4 November. Discussions are also under way with the

President of the Shura Council of Saudi Arabia, the country chairing the G20 in 2020, in view of further enhancing the parliamentary dimension of the G20. Although not related to the United Nations *per se*, IPU engagement with the G20 process is part of its overall objective of strengthening the role of parliaments in global governance and hence bridging the democracy gap in international relations.

Senior-level interaction

On 12 July, the IPU Secretary General met with the High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations (AOC), Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, to discuss cooperation for a high-level conference on inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogue that the IPU will organize in cooperation with the UN in the Russian Federation in May 2022 (pursuant to the May 2018 General Assembly resolution on interaction between the United Nations, parliaments and the IPU). The IPU Secretary General took the opportunity to renew his commitment to the Group of Friends of the AOC.

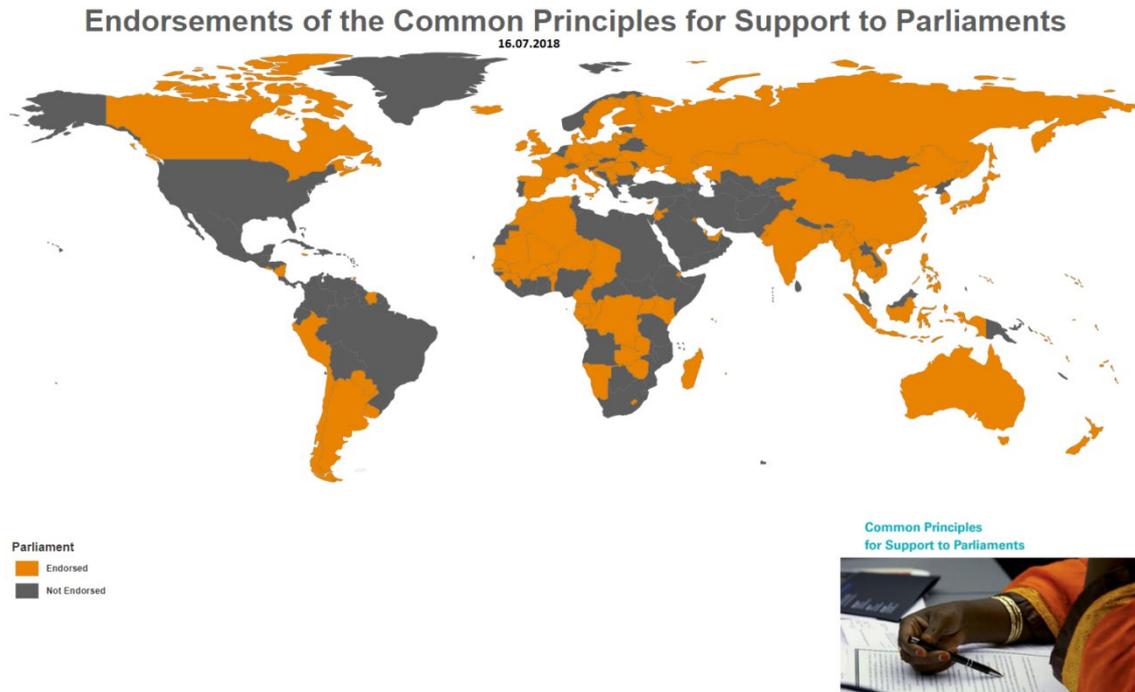
On 17 July, the IPU President met with the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, Ms. Amina Mohammed, to update her on preparations for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and other major processes under way at the IPU. On the same day, the IPU Secretary General met with the UNDP Administrator Mr. Achim Steiner, to discuss joint cooperation in the area of governance and parliamentary strengthening, particularly in the light of internal changes at the UNDP that call for a new IPU focal point to be established.

On 18 July, the IPU President and the IPU Secretary General had a first meeting with the incoming President of the General Assembly at its 74th session, Ambassador Tijjani Muhammad Bande (Nigeria). The meeting paved the way for preparations for the joint Parliamentary Hearing at the UN in February 2020 and a new General Assembly resolution on interaction between the United Nations, parliaments and the IPU in the spring of 2020. The IPU President also briefed Ambassador Bande on preparations for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in August 2020 and expressed the wish that he might be able to attend.

The President of the 73rd General Assembly, Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa, was the guest of honour at a reception offered by the IPU President on 17 July in conjunction with an exhibit at UN Headquarters (New York) marking the 130th anniversary of the IPU.

The Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations met with Mr. Robert Piper, the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the newly reconstituted UN Development Coordination Office, to further review how Resident Coordinators and UN Country Offices may interact with parliaments in the field.

I. Parliaments that have endorsed the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments (as of 16 July 2019)



II. Countries that currently have cases before the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians that have been examined at least once:

- **Africa:** Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda;
- **Americas:** Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of);
- **Asia:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand;
- **Europe:** Belarus, Russian Federation, Turkey;
- **Middle East and North Africa:** Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Palestine, Yemen.

III. Countries whose national reports will be reviewed at the next sessions of the CEDAW Committee (October 2019 and January 2020):

October 2019 session: Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lithuania and Seychelles.

January 2020 session: countries to be identified.

IV. Countries that were reviewed by the UN Human Rights Council under its Universal Periodic Review (November 2018 and January/February 2019)

Week 5-9 November 2018: Central African Republic, China, Jordan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Senegal.

Week 12-16 November 2018: Belize, Chad, Congo, Malta, and Monaco.

Week 21-25 January 2019: Afghanistan, Chile, Comoros, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Yemen.

Week 28 January - 1 February 2019: Cambodia, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Eritrea and Slovakia.

V. Countries due to report to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (July 2020)

A total of 52 countries have announced that they will present a Voluntary National Review to the HLPF in 2020. Twenty-six countries will present the VNR for the first time, twenty-four for the second, and two for the third time.

The countries presenting for the first time are: Austria, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mozambique, North Macedonia, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Zambia.

For the second time: Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belize, Chad, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Finland, Georgia, Honduras, India, Jordan, Lesotho, Monaco, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Panama, Peru, Samoa, Slovenia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

For the third time: Colombia and Qatar.