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Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings

Overview of outcomes and recommendations

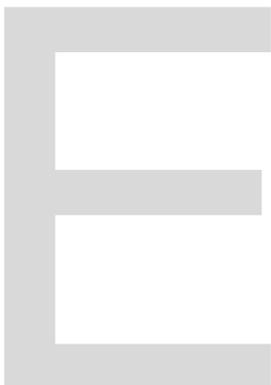
The present report provides an overview of the eleven (11) specialized meetings organized by the IPU between May and September 2019.

Four (4) of these meetings were global and seven (7) were regional in scope. They addressed a wide variety of issues, including health, security, human rights, counter-terrorism, sustainable development, climate change, and youth participation.

The meetings were held in ten (10) different countries.

Full texts of the reports of certain specialized meetings, including relevant outcome documents, have been posted on the IPU website:

<https://www.ipu.org/events/past-events>.



#IPU141

Strategic Objective 3: Protect and promote human rights

Title:	<i>Parliamentary engagement on human rights: Identifying good practices and new opportunities for action</i>
Date:	24–26 June 2019
Venue:	United Nations Office at Geneva (Switzerland)
Organizers:	The IPU and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
Objective:	The seminar took stock of the efforts made by parliamentary human rights committees in acquiring a better understanding of the functioning of the UN human rights mechanisms, and identified additional ways to strengthen the contribution of parliament to the promotion and protection of human rights through interesting examples of parliamentary engagement on human rights. The event also paid particular attention to identifying ways to enhance synergies between parliaments and UN human rights mechanisms.
Participation:	87 participants from 35 countries, including 63 members of parliament (25% of whom were women)
Full report:	https://www.ipu.org/file/7623/download

Main conclusions and recommendations

1. Participate in all the stages of the reporting procedures of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review and the UN human rights treaty bodies.
2. Domesticating international human rights obligations through the enactment of relevant legislation that seeks to promote and protect fundamental rights and freedoms as well as the proactive review of existing legislation to ensure harmonization with international human rights norms and standards.
3. Consider having a member of the opposition chair the parliamentary human rights committee (as is the case for many public accounts committees in Commonwealth countries).
4. Consider the adoption of a parliamentary action plan in support of the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and the organization of regular hearings in parliament around the SDGs.
5. Ensure that parliamentarians are allowed to carry out their work without fear of reprisals and reach out to the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (hrteam@ipu.org) if they know of a member of parliament who is at risk.

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Strategic Objective 4: Contribute to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and security

Title:	<i>Parliamentary engagement in addressing terrorism and conditions conducive to terrorism in the Sahel region</i>
Date:	12–14 June 2019
Venue:	National Assembly of Niger, Niamey (Niger)
Organizers:	The National Assembly of Niger, the IPU, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
Objective:	The regional conference aimed to support national parliaments to enhance their understanding of their role in preventing and countering terrorism and addressing conditions conducive to terrorism, with a focus on priority areas specific to the regional context.
Participation:	50 parliamentarians from 10 countries
Full report:	https://www.ipu.org/event/ipu-un-regional-conference-countries-sahel-region-parliamentary-engagement-in-addressing-terrorism-and-conditions-conducive-terrorism-in-sahel#event-sub-page-documents/

Main conclusions and recommendations

1. The insecurity resulting from armed conflicts, terrorism and transnational organized crime renders the countries of the Sahel region increasingly vulnerable, and therefore impairs opportunities for achieving development. Concerted efforts by the governments and parliaments of the countries of the Sahel region are urgently required in order to tackle those challenges more effectively.
2. Parliamentarians are also called upon to enact adequate laws on support to victims of terrorism, including such reparations as the victims may require. Such laws must also contain provisions on protecting victims and affording them the means to reintegrate into society. In this respect, parliamentarians are also invited to work with communities to eliminate stigma of victims.
3. In addition to their institutional role, parliaments are urged to seek local solutions to the conditions conducive to terrorism in order to have a real impact both on the ground and within their communities. Communities play a key role in preventing radicalization and violent extremism. Accordingly, parliaments are urged to emphasize the role of traditional and religious leaders, as well as that of other key local players. In particular, the participants recognize the importance of building on the role and legitimacy of religious leaders to ensure that they become fully involved in raising awareness and prevention, in order to support the work of States and that of national, regional and international partners. The participants also recognize the importance of encouraging religious leaders to become involved in preventing the production of counter-speech. Local realities have to be taken into consideration when reinforcing respect for local cultures and their values. In this regard, the participants welcomed the handbook on best practices regarding community resilience against radicalization and violent extremism in the G5 Sahel States.
4. Nearly two thirds (65%) of the people in the countries of the Sahel region are under 25 years of age. With that in mind, the participants focused their attention on the radicalization and recruitment of terrorists among youth. It is crucial for parliamentarians to do their utmost to support any and all public policies that are aimed at addressing unemployment among the youth and offering them alternatives through vocational training, as well as sports and cultural programmes. Accordingly, education must be at the heart of the fight against terrorism.
5. Parliaments are urged to promote empowering women and women's active involvement in making decisions, as well as in developing strategies, plans of action and initiatives on countering violent extremism, taking into account, *inter alia*, any acts of sexual and gender-based violence.

Title:	<i>Regional seminar on Engaging Parliaments of the Pacific Region in the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540</i>
Date:	18-20 September 2019
Venue:	Wellington, (New Zealand)
Organizers:	The House of Representatives of New Zealand and the IPU with funding from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the support of the UN Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004)
Objective:	The primary objective of the seminar was to strengthen the awareness of members of parliament from the region of the threat posed by weapons on mass destruction (WMDs) in the Pacific region and to increase their knowledge of the resolution. It was also designed to encourage MPs to put in place trade management strategies aimed at protecting a nation's security, trade relations, and international reputation, and to establish confidence-building measures for facilitating trade, economic growth, and development.
Participation:	Over 50 participants including 30 parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from 10 countries and two territories
Full report:	www.ipu.org/event/regional-seminar-parliaments-and-implementation-un-security-council-resolution-1540#event-sub-page-documents/

Main conclusions and recommendations

1. Parliamentarians have a crucial role to play in supporting implementation of UNSCR 1540 through their legislative, oversight, budgetary and representation functions.
2. Parliamentarians who participated in the event should consider being champions for the resolution in their States.
3. Synergies between UNSCR 1540 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were highlighted.
4. Contextualization of the approach to fulfilling obligations under the resolution in the Pacific due to state specificities was key.
5. Small states all around the globe are facing the same challenges when it comes to implementing UNSCR 1540. Sharing good and innovative practices is a good way to ensure the realization of the various obligations.
6. Implementation of UNSCR 1540 will allow for the achievement of relevant actions under the September 2018 Boe Declaration on regional security and other regional and global priorities for sustainable development, health, safety and security.
7. There are benefits in maximizing efficiencies and strengthening existing governance, enforcement structures and legislative frameworks when implementing UNSCR 1540.
8. Dialogue and parliamentary engagement at the regional level on issues related to UNSCR 1540 are to be advanced and deepened.
9. Further capacity-building for parliamentarians to carry out their functions in the context of the resolution is needed.

Title:	<i>The role of parliamentarians in preventing and countering terrorism and addressing conditions conducive to terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region</i>
Date:	1 to 3 October 2019
Venue:	The Majestic Hotel, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)
Organizers:	The House of Representatives of Malaysia, the IPU, United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
Objective:	The regional conference aimed to support national parliaments to enhance their understanding of their role in preventing and countering terrorism and addressing conditions conducive to terrorism, with a focus on priority areas specific to the regional context.
Participation:	69 participants from 18 different countries
Full report:	https://www.ipu.org/event/capacity-building-workshop-countering-terrorism-and-violent-extremism-asia-pacific-group#event-sub-page-documents/

Main conclusions and recommendations

1. Parliamentarians stressed that the unresolved conflicts in the region were intrinsically linked with terrorism and violent extremism. In this regard, it was crucial to peacefully resolve these conflicts in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions and cooperation with national governments and the international community in order for the fight against terrorism to be efficient.
2. The participants highlighted the importance of effective border security and management in preventing terrorist movements, through the adoption of adequate legislation for the responsible collection, transmission, use, retention, sharing and protection of passenger data (Advance Passenger Information [API] and Personal Name Record [PNR]), with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, for the purpose of preventing, detecting and investigating terrorist offenses and related travel. The need to streamline efforts on border security and management with neighboring countries and to address human rights concerns about the right to privacy and data protection was particularly underscored. In this regard, parliaments are invited to benefit from the legal assistance offered by the United Nations Counter-Terrorist Travel Programme.
3. Parliamentarians, as the representatives of the people and the intermediary between the people and the government, are at the forefront of the prevention of extremism. Preventative strategies to eradicate conditions that drive individuals to join terrorist and extremist groups should be an integral element of the effective counter-terrorism response. With the support of the IPU-UN Joint Programme, parliaments should ensure the whole-of-society approach to terrorism and violent extremism with the full participation of civil society, local communities, religious leaders, private sector and women and youth organizations. Parliaments are further invited to ensure that governments pay due attention to conditions conducive to terrorism and adopt policies to promote good governance and provide socio-economic and education opportunities.
4. Terrorists increasingly target religious sites and places of worship worldwide and in particular in the Asia-Pacific region. Interfaith and intercultural dialogue is crucial to promoting tolerance and understanding between communities. Religious leaders play an important role in building trust and disseminating counter-narratives to hate speech, incitement and intolerance. In this regard, parliamentarians are urged to seek the more active engagement of religious leaders, where appropriate, to voice their rejection of violent ideologies by emphasizing on the peaceful values of their religions and countering misrepresentation and misinterpretation of religions. Furthermore, places of worship and religious sites represent cultural heritage. Actions are required to prevent objects and places of religious interest against terrorist attacks aimed at destroying them.
5. In conclusion, we very much welcome the implementation of the IPU-UN Joint Programme, which aims to reduce the gap between the implementation of the international resolutions and national legislations, and we recognize it as a basis enabling us to actually put the final conclusions into practice. In light of the foregoing, we request the IPU-UN Joint Programme to engage with the participating parliamentarians on a continued basis, including through the web-based platform, as well as to periodically solicit information on the status of implementation of the outcome document and on the actions taken at the national level.

Strategic Objective 5: Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation

Title:	<i>IPU Quintet Meeting on the occasion of IPU's 130th anniversary</i>
Date:	30 June 2019
Venue:	IPU Headquarters, Geneva (Switzerland)
Organizers:	The IPU
Objective:	To take stock of the IPU's results in follow-up to IPU Assemblies and give further direction to the Organization's work
Participation:	34 participants
Full report:	https://www.ipu.org/news/news-in-brief/2019-07/ipu-celebrates-its-130th-anniversary-world-parliament-day

Main conclusions and recommendations

The IPU Quintet met for the first time bringing together the President and Secretary General of the IPU, and the Presidents of the most recent and future IPU Assemblies (the 138th, 140th and 141st IPU Assemblies). Marking the 130th anniversary of the IPU, which coincided with the International Day of Parliamentarism, was an occasion to pay tribute to parliament as an institution and to all generations of parliamentarians who had worked or were working to promote peace and understanding in difficult time. It was noted that with 180 Member Parliaments by the end of 2019, the IPU membership would inch closer to being universal.

The following were the recommendations of the Quintet meeting:

- To establish the Quintet format as a regular meeting.
- To implement a more dynamic format for the Speakers' Dialogue for Belgrade – no papers, more diversified topics.
- Regarding the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament to be held in Vienna in August 2020, to share the discussions of the Quintet with the Preparatory Committee in advance of its next meeting in November.
- To address more issues on the humanitarian agenda; that proposal would be added to the Speakers' Dialogue agenda.
- To strengthen the IPU's capacity for mediation. Attention needed to be paid to avoiding interference.
- To support preparations for the World Conference on Interfaith and Inter-ethnic Dialogue to be convened by the United Nations and the IPU in May 2022.
- To consider the establishment of a working group on political sanctions, and engage with regional parliamentary organizations to adopt a similar approach.
- To have geopolitical groups more involved in the work of the IPU in particular in preparation of and follow-up to IPU Assemblies.
- To strengthen the IPU's solidarity fund.
- To find ways to promptly address major political issues in the world and to have timely and relevant decisions in this context.

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Strategic Objective 6: Promote youth empowerment

Title:	<i>Sixth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians: Achieving the SDGs and empowering youth through well-being</i>
Date:	9 and 10 September 2019
Venue:	Asunción (Paraguay)
Organizers:	The IPU and the Congress of Paraguay
Objective:	To share good practices and coordinate action to accelerate implementation of the SDGs through an approach focused on youth-responsiveness, happiness and well-being. Also, to empower young parliamentarians through training and networking.
Participation:	Approximately 100 young parliamentarians (40% women) from 40 countries. Average age of 38 years.
Full report:	www.ipu.org/file/7696/download?token=Gf27RSMI

Main conclusions and recommendations

“If happiness is our priority in our personal lives, it should also be our priority in public policy.”

In Asuncion, young parliamentarians from around the world called for the alignment of the universal objective of happiness with state public policy. States would then be better aligning their developmental efforts with the SDGs, leading to their increased implementation. To advance this, young MPs called for action to:

1. Move beyond Gross Domestic Product as the measurement of a country’s health to more holistic and forward-thinking measurements that account for well-being in all demographic groups, especially youth.
2. Support the adoption of methodologies to measure well-being in respective countries that are adapted to national and local needs and ensure the inclusion of citizens, civil society, academics, youth groups and other stakeholders in the establishment of these well-being definitions and indicators.
3. Support the application of a well-being lens throughout the public policy cycle, from design and implementation of laws and policies, to monitoring, evaluation and adaptation. Secure entry points for young parliamentarians to take action and involve youth including in the budget process, in the establishment or strengthening of institutional structures on well-being (such as parliamentary committees, state commissioners and state ministries) and in parliamentary oversight actions.
4. Improve human capital and well-being, including by: reducing inequalities; enhancing employment, education and health of youth; redoubling efforts for gender equality; and nurturing social and community relationships.

Participants also recognized that to mobilize these changes, not only were more young parliamentarians needed, but those already in office needed to be further empowered. To this end, a first step towards a new branch of IPU youth activities was taken to help strengthen practical political skills of young parliamentarians. This was done during the Conference through a "mentorship café", and "training hubs" on political leadership and communications.

Strategic Objective 7: Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda

Title:	<i>Second Regional Seminar for the Asia-Pacific Region Parliaments on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals</i>
Date:	27 and 28 May 2019
Venue:	State Great Hural of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia)
Organizers:	The IPU and the State Great Hural of Mongolia
Objective:	Provide an opportunity for parliaments to report on their progress in implementing the SDGs and build on recommendations from the first seminar held in the region, in Viet Nam in 2017.
Participation:	50 parliamentarians from 17 countries, as well as parliamentary staff and embassy representatives
Full report:	www.ipu.org/event/second-regional-seminar-asia-pacific-region-parliaments-achieving-sustainable-development-goals/documents

Main conclusions and recommendations

The participants drew up the following key strategies, actions and recommendations to advance parliamentary engagement with the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region:

1. Knowledge and awareness-raising on the SDGs should be enhanced within parliaments through training and seminars to ensure that parliamentarians and parliamentary staff can strengthen their competences and take informed decisions on the practical steps they should put in place to advance the implementation of the SDGs and monitor progress.
2. Each parliament has to find effective ways to hold government accountable for the implementation of the SDGs. Oversight mechanisms, such as parliamentary questions and committee hearings, inquiries and reports, should be used to assess the concrete impact of government policies and programmes.
3. As elected representatives of the people, members of parliament have an important role in reaching out to and engaging with marginalized populations, especially women and young people. Parliamentarians also have important responsibilities in ensuring that public policies are informed by the citizens whose lives they impact.
4. Ensuring quality education is central in achieving all SDGs and breaking the cycle of poverty. Parliaments need to support mechanisms and financing measures that work towards promoting quality education and enabling equitable access to education for all.
5. Parliaments need to support efforts to build political will and strengthen commitment to universal health coverage and sustainable health systems. They should insist on providing quality data that identify the marginalized and underserved groups and adopt legal frameworks that support access to quality health services and financial protection for all.
6. In order to counter climate change, parliaments need to help build a culture of prevention and promote transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and socially-inclusive economy. Parliamentary cooperation must take place to share knowledge and experiences on measures to reduce the risk of climate-related hazards turning into disasters.

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Title:	<i>Regional Seminar on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group</i>
Date:	5 and 6 June 2019
Venue:	Palácio de São Bento (Assembly of the Republic), Lisbon (Portugal)
Organizers:	The IPU and the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal
Objective:	Following the first meeting held in Israel in 2018, the seminar aimed to further define the opportunities and challenges facing parliaments of the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group in implementing the SDGs. It focused on SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) and SDG 3 (Good health and well-being).
Participation:	23 parliamentarians (of which 52% were women) from 11 countries, as well as parliamentary staff
Full report:	https://www.ipu.org/event/regional-seminar-achieving-sustainable-development-goals-ipus-twelve-plus-geopolitical-group#event-sub-page-documents/

Main conclusions and recommendations

The participants highlighted the following approaches to improving parliamentary engagement with innovation and technology and to strengthen health-related work:

1. Innovation must be at the service of citizens to improve well-being and increase sustainability. Measures are needed to ensure that science and research are translated into concrete solutions that address people's needs.
2. Innovation and technology have an important social impact but can also pose risks to the employment sector. Parliaments should promote forward-looking employment and education policies. They should allocate adequate resources to mitigate these risks and address inequalities that result from new technologies.
3. The promotion of innovation and technology should be included in environmental strategies and policies. For the energy and transport sectors, parliaments also have an important role in developing an enabling legal and policy framework as a critical precondition to improving sustainability and addressing current environmental challenges.
4. Poverty and inequalities, including gender inequality, are major determinants of health and well-being. Health policies must be accompanied by social policies and adequate legal protections of the right to health and other human rights.
5. The sustainability of health systems is a pressing issue, and out-of-pocket expenditure is still a significant financial burden for many people in the region. Parliaments should take a multisectoral approach to health so as to address its underlying determinants – including poverty, inequality, climate change, food, water and sanitation – and to promote preventive measures.
6. Parliaments should review health policies to ensure that emerging issues and needs are adequately included, in particular healthy ageing, mental health and antimicrobial resistance. Territorial coverage of health facilities and personnel also remains a major challenge in Europe. Territorial policies, telemedicine and health workforce strategies can improve access to health outside main urban centres.
7. Leadership is key for progress. Parliaments must engage consistently and for the long term in implementing the SDGs. Exchanging experiences and sharing best practices help raise awareness and build synergies among relevant stakeholders and across the region. Parliaments are encouraged to promote collaboration among public and private stakeholders; to initiate public debates on the SDGs; and to participate in parliamentary platforms such as those provided by the IPU.

Title:	<i>Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity-Building and the Further Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals</i>
Date:	12–14 June 2019
Venue:	Beijing (China)
Organizers:	The IPU and the National People’s Congress of China (NPC)
Objective:	Provide an opportunity for parliaments from developing countries to strengthen interregional cooperation, enhance parliaments’ capabilities with respect to SDG implementation and promote mutual learning.
Participation:	30 parliamentarians from eight countries, as well as parliamentary staff
Full report:	N/A

Main conclusions and recommendations

The interregional seminar highlighted the importance of addressing the following topics in order to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs:

1. Promoting well-being and mutual respect is crucial. To effectively advance the achievement of common sustainable development, there is the need to adopt a human-oriented approach that takes into account the rule of law and equity among people and that promotes stability for peace.
2. Sustainable development should be seen as the optimization of a country’s internal system. In order to achieve progress for all, it is important to address imbalances, strengthen mutually beneficial economic cooperation and multilateralism, and improve the coordination of macro policies.
3. Countries cannot overcome interrelated challenges such as climate change by themselves. It is important to promote multilateralism and pay greater attention to shared interests and common development. Interregional exchanges help countries not only learn different ways to advance the achievement of sustainable development and strengthen cooperation, but also acquire further knowledge of other countries’ specificities and needs.
4. Legislative bodies are crucial for the attainment of the SDGs. Through their key functions, they could put in place effective actions to ensure the eradication of inequalities and the promotion of full development for all. Development is for the people and by the people, and its benefits should be shared by the people, leaving no one behind.
5. Considering that climate change represents a serious threat for all and that agriculture could be one of its causes, countries should reduce gas emissions and adopt innovative solutions most notably in the areas of ecological agriculture, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, digital agriculture and climate-resilient agriculture. International agriculture cooperation is crucial for the attainment of the SDGs.
6. Parliaments should pay special attention to gender equality, and make sure that existing legislation is effectively implemented to protect women’s rights. Women should enjoy the same rights as men. Measures to empower rural and disadvantaged women should be adopted so to ensure their participation in the economy.

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Title:	<i>Fourth South Asian Speakers' Summit on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals</i>
Date:	1 and 2 September 2019
Venue:	People's Majlis, Male' (Maldives)
Organizers:	The IPU and the People's Majlis
Objective:	Provide an opportunity for the Speakers of parliaments in the South Asia region to report on their progress in implementing the SDGs and build on recommendations from the previous three summits.
Participation:	Six Speakers of parliament, three deputy Speakers of parliament, over 15 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and diplomatic corps
Full report:	Fourth South Asian Speakers' Summit on Achieving the SDGs Inter-Parliamentary Union

Main conclusions and recommendations

The Summit resulted in a declaration which included the following key strategies, recommendations and commitments to advance parliamentary engagement with the SDGs in the South Asia region:

1. Parliaments play a crucial role in the implementation of the SDGs and should thus endeavour to apply an SDG lens to their key parliamentary functions. Frameworks to periodically monitor government action should be defined and parliamentary hearings, question times and plenary reports should be used more effectively to oversee action on the SDGs.
2. Parliaments should endeavour to address inequalities and unequal remuneration. Parliaments have a key role in addressing the social and economic norms and factors that keep women out of the workforce. Parliaments should promote action to ensure equality at work and to address the root causes of women's underrepresentation, in particular by strengthening gender equality in laws and programmes, and by taking initiatives to enhance women's participation in politics and in leadership positions.
3. Investment should be made in young people to help them overcome the challenges they face in accessing the labour market and decent work. Parliaments should promulgate laws that place job creation and decent work at the centre of national policy agendas. Parliaments should provide young men and women with the opportunity to access the labour market as well as funds and loans to help them bring their innovative ideas to life.
4. Tackling malnutrition effectively will require appropriate policies and legislation. Parliaments should work to improve access to healthy foods and improve their availability and cost. Parliaments should also highlight, through various means, the need for legislation to restrict marketing of unhealthy foods, to improve nutrition labelling and to tax unhealthy foods and drinks. Parliaments should use their parliamentary functions to scale up nutrition within health systems and improve the flow of information to consumers about nutrition.
5. Parliaments must use their budgetary and legislative powers to create an enabling environment for climate action. This includes exploring mechanisms for disaster risk and climate financing. Parliaments called for greater and urgent cooperation among the South Asian countries to strengthen the regional response to the challenges of climate change and to progress towards a more sustainable and climate-resilient society that leaves no one behind.

Title:	<i>Technical briefing on the occasion of the 72nd World Health Assembly From commitment to action: Parliaments moving the UHC agenda forward</i>
Date:	23 May 2019
Venue:	United Nations Office at Geneva (Switzerland)
Organizers:	The IPU and the WHO
Objective:	The briefing aimed to highlight the significance of parliamentary action on universal health coverage (UHC), to discuss how parliaments can address key UHC challenges, and to provide input to the drafting of the IPU resolution on UHC. The aim was also to discuss how this commitment can be translated into concrete action at national and regional levels.
Participation:	88 participants (38% of whom were women), including 23 members of parliament from 12 countries. The IPU Secretary General and the WHO Director-General provided opening remarks.
Full report:	N/A

Main conclusions and recommendations

The technical briefing emphasized the following aspects of the role of parliaments in achieving UHC:

1. The participants agreed on the important role of parliaments in advancing the global health agenda, in particular UHC. Parliaments are instrumental in the development and implementation of legislation in support of UHC and the allocation of adequate resources to advance national UHC priorities.
2. Given the complexity of UHC, integrated, multisectoral action and a partnership-based approach at the national and regional levels are required.
3. Political commitment to UHC needs to be catalysed, as strong political will is key to progress. The IPU is developing a resolution entitled *Achieving universal health coverage by 2030: The role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health*. The resolution will set out concrete steps for parliaments to achieve UHC and SDG 3 on health.
4. The resolution should promote more effective parliamentary action on UHC and better access to health for vulnerable groups. Vulnerable populations must therefore be taken into account in the implementation of the resolution and in the drafting of new laws on UHC.
5. Parliamentary institutions must be strengthened so that parliaments are better placed to mainstream UHC in their work and deliver on health for all. A new memorandum of understanding signed by the IPU and the WHO in October 2018, which strengthens and broadens the scope of collaboration between the two organizations, will help build bridges between policymakers and the technical and scientific community.

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Strategic Objective 8: Bridge the democracy gap in international relations

Title:	<i>Parliamentary Forum at the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)</i>
Date:	15 July 2019
Venue:	UN Headquarters, New York (United States of America)
Organizers:	IPU
Objective:	To contribute to the substantive debate of the UN HLPF session and to build political will for the SDGs
Participation:	140 MPs from 50 national delegations
Full report:	www.ipu.org/event/parliamentary-side-event-high-level-political-forum-sustainable-development-hlpf-and-related-meetings#event-sub-page-documents/

Main conclusions and recommendations

- Parliaments have a key role to play in meeting the SDGs, which include a strong focus on inequality. However, many participants noted the lack of information and dissemination of the global goals at the local level. Parliamentary committees might not be aware that a particular law actually helps achieve the SDGs. Generally, more meetings such as the present forum are needed to help MPs better understand their role in the SDGs.
- International partnerships are needed to avoid asymmetrical approaches to reducing inequality. These partnerships must include different stakeholders, particularly from parliaments, academia, the private sector and NGOs.
- Affirmative action policies can help narrow the inequality gap, particularly when it comes to discrimination against women and minorities. Parliamentarians must enact legislation that promotes gender equality, keeping in mind the particular areas in which women and vulnerable groups are being left behind.
- Ordinary people are not adequately represented in decision-making. Policy capture by private interests, including multinationals, undermines the democratic process and is a major factor in the generally weak response to the problem of growing inequality.
- International cooperation is vital to support the national institutionalization of the SDGs. Some parliaments lack the capacities to implement and measure the global goals effectively. This is particularly the case in countries facing conflict and instability, where more targeted approaches to incorporate the SDGs are needed. While partnerships with stakeholders can help advance the SDGs, there is a need for appropriate regulation of such partnerships, particularly when they include the private sector.
- The successful institutionalization of the SDGs depends ultimately on national ownership. Political will and leadership within parliaments is needed to prioritize the SDGs and hold governments accountable. Instead of seeing the SDGs as a burden, parliaments should think of the goals as an opportunity to improve the lives of their constituents.
- Parliamentary oversight mechanisms need to be more inclusive of diverse groups and perspectives. Parliaments, being representative of the people, must "walk the talk". Greater representation of all constituencies leads to more targeted policy action to make sure no one is left behind.