



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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# 139<sup>th</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 14-18.10.2018

Governing Council  
Item 10

CL/203/10(f)-R.1  
4 October 2018

## Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings

**(f) Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity-Building and the Further Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: *Implementing the SDGs through South-South Parliamentary Cooperation***

**Beijing, China, 10-12 September 2018**

*The Third Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity Building and the Further Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was held in Beijing (China) from 10 to 12 September 2018. The event was organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the National People's Congress of China, and it was the third in a series of IPU regional seminars in the country. The event was attended by parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from African and Asian countries, most notably from Ethiopia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania and China.*

The primary aim of the seminar was to advance the work and contribution of parliaments to the SDGs, foster interregional exchanges on SDGs implementation between Asian and African parliaments and explore possibilities for developing parliamentary strategies. The debates focused on three main themes: (1) the function of the legislature in the process of the SDGs; (2) cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative and Common Development; and (3) innovative development and people's livelihood benefit. Special emphasis was also placed on the issues related to clean water, sanitation and clean energy.

In his inaugural address on behalf of Mr. Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), Mr. Wang Chen, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC, warmly welcomed participants and highlighted the importance of promoting inclusiveness and connectivity in order to effectively advance the realization of the SDGs at the global level. He urged parliamentarians to strengthen people-to-people exchanges and adopt a human-centred approach that ensured that no-one was left behind.

The seminar benefited from the participation of eminent experts from the NPC, the One Belt and One Road Institute, the Beijing Normal University, the Water Resources Ministry and the National Energy Administration. They provided participants with in-depth information about the number of projects China had been implementing to advance the realization of the SDGs, placing special emphasis on the economic, social and environmental dimensions. The sustainable development agenda was in fact one of the major plans of the country, which had devised a robust legal framework for environmental protection that aimed to preserve resources, prevent their overuse or exploitation, protect wildlife and promote a circular economy, as well as cleaner production.

Over the past decades, China had worked extensively to increase productivity and boost economic growth and modernization, but as the needs of people evolved over time, it was important to ensure sustainability and address development imbalances.

Experts showcased how China had centred development on people, and gave participants the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which had been launched by the President of China in 2013 to improve regional cooperation by strengthening infrastructures, trade and investment links connecting China with Asia, Africa and Europe.

Members of parliament and parliamentary staff were briefed on the major projects China had developed since the 1980s to improve livelihoods and clean water in the countryside, which were intended to facilitate achievement of the related target of the Millennium Development Goals. Much of the discussion also focused on renewable energies and green development.

Participants shared their respective experiences and highlighted the importance of promoting cooperation among equals in order to ensure a common sustainable development. The crucial role of parliaments was highlighted in improving people's lives and encouraging international cooperation on green and environmentally-friendly development, most notably through policy research on renewable energies and resource distribution, research in areas with severe energy issues, capacity building and exchanges between policymakers, researchers and other relevant stakeholders.

The seminar was followed by a field trip to the provinces of Shaanxi and Jiangsu, where participants had the opportunity to meet with the respective Provincial People's Congresses and visit agricultural hi-tech industries, waterworks and hydro pump storage power plants.