



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly

## Doha (Qatar), 6 – 10 April 2019



### Panel discussion

#### ***Ending energy poverty through access to renewable energies and inclusive public policies: How can parliaments help?***

*Sunday, 7 April 2019, 11.30 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
Salwa 1, Sheraton Convention Center*

#### **Concept note**

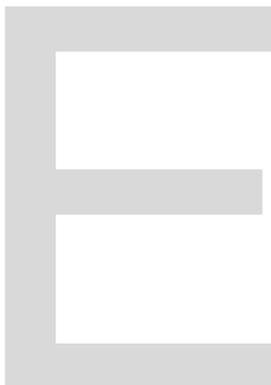
Energy is at the heart of development. It is needed to run all sectors of the economy - manufacturing, agriculture, health and services - that are the engines of jobs and growth. Energy provides heating, cooling, lighting and power to run - all essential services needed to guarantee a decent standard of living and people's health. Energy is also needed for the transport of people and goods.

Affordable access to energy services enables people to fulfil their potential while enhancing social inclusion. It promotes employment opportunities, supports the provision of social services, and helps realize the transition to the green economy. Corresponding to one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Goal 7, energy promotes sustainable and inclusive human development.

However, our current energy system, heavily reliant on fossil fuels, is both unsustainable and highly inequitable. Today, over one billion people still live without electricity, while hundreds of millions more live with insufficient or unreliable access to it. Nearly three billion people, disproportionately women, cook or heat their homes with polluting fuels like wood or other biomass, resulting in indoor and outdoor air pollution that causes widespread health impacts and, according to the World Health Organization, four million premature deaths each year. Energy poverty is usually due to a combination of high energy costs, low incomes, waste due to inefficient buildings, vehicles and appliances, and lack of access to alternative sources of energy.

Most of the people who experience energy poverty live in Africa and South Asia. Yet, there are also a number of households in the European Union that are experiencing energy poverty. Energy poverty is a distinct form of poverty associated with a range of adverse consequences. It has an indirect effect on many policy areas, including people's health and wellbeing, environment and productivity. Addressing energy poverty provides multiple benefits, including savings on public health budgets, reduced air pollution, enhanced wellbeing, improved household finances, and increased economic activity.

The good news is that solutions to end energy poverty exist. Renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and biomass are becoming more affordable relative to fossil fuels. Off-grid, portable energy solutions that can be scaled up, and new technologies to improve the energy efficiency in manufacturing, agriculture and service industries, as well as in transport and construction, are generally more accessible. The problem, particularly in developing countries, most often comes down to one of financing and technology transfers.



#IPU140

This event will help to shed some light on the issue, provide guidance to parliamentarians and engage them in an interactive debate on the main building blocks towards ending energy poverty. It will include a presentation of the recent IPU – UN Environment issues brief *Shades of green: An introduction to the green economy for parliamentarians*, and feed into IPU preparations for the SDG Summit and other high level meetings on climate change and financing for development that the United Nations will hold in September 2019.

**Leading questions:**

- How can parliaments help end energy poverty? What lessons can be drawn from parliamentary experiences to date?
- What national laws, regulations and policies are needed to address energy poverty, mobilize investments in renewable energies and facilitate technology development and transfer?
- How do renewable energies help advance the green economy as a pathway toward sustainable development?
- How can we ensure that all members of society, including women and other marginalized groups, will benefit from measures to end energy poverty?