



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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

Doha, 6 – 10.04.2019

Forum of Young Parliamentarians

FYP/140/XX  
7 April 2019

## Youth-related activities in 2018–2019

### Report to the Forum of Young Parliamentarians on activities carried out since October 2018 and upcoming activities

The IPU affirmed its commitment to youth participation in politics through the adoption of the resolution *Youth participation in the democratic process* at the 122<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly held in Bangkok in 2010. The IPU subsequently established the Forum of Young Parliamentarians in 2013. The Forum provides a youth perspective to global policymaking and wider international debates. It helps young parliamentarians form networks across the globe. It also encourages young people to participate in parliaments and the IPU, and strengthens the impact of their work in both settings.

In 2014, the IPU established a programme within its Secretariat to promote youth empowerment. Since 2017, the IPU Strategy includes youth empowerment as one of its key objectives. IPU work in this area focuses on researching and monitoring youth participation in parliaments, facilitating IPU youth-led mechanisms to connect and empower young parliamentarians, supporting parliaments to better integrate youth perspectives into parliamentary work, and raising youth participation in IPU Assemblies, deliberations and overall work.

To this end, the Forum proposed a series of amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules to further promote youth participation at IPU Assemblies. These were adopted by the Governing Council in October 2018. The amendments aim to raise the proportion of young MPs taking part in IPU Assemblies to at least 25% and stipulate a series of incentives for parliaments to include at least one young woman or man in their delegations.

Since October 2018, the IPU has organized the following youth participation activities:

- The Forum of Young Parliamentarians at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Geneva (15 October 2018);
- The Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Baku (14–15 December);
- Launch of the IPU report *Youth participation in national parliaments 2018*;
- Facilitating the participation of young MPs at the 2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum in New York (8-9 April 2019).

More information on these activities is provided below. This report also includes a list of future work.

## 1. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES SINCE OCTOBER 2018

### Meeting of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians met on 15 October 2018. A total of 64 young MPs attended, 50 per cent of whom were women. Participants took stock of the recent progress achieved and challenges encountered concerning youth participation in their respective countries. They also reviewed youth participation at the IPU so as to monitor the implementation of the newly introduced measures to enhance youth participation at IPU Assemblies.

As part of its discussions on promoting the number of young people in parliaments, the Forum identified global targets for youth participation. Minimum standards to be achieved by 2035 were set as follows:

- A target of a minimum of 15 per cent of young parliamentarians under 30, corresponding to the proportion of people aged between 20 and 29 in the global population (18%);
- A target of a minimum of 35 per cent of young parliamentarians under 40, corresponding to the proportion of people aged between 20 and 39 in the global population (38%); and
- A target of a minimum of 45 per cent of young parliamentarians under 45, corresponding to the proportion of people aged between 20 and 44 in the global population (48%).

Each target provided for gender parity of 50 per cent young women and 50 per cent young men.

### Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians

The Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians was held on 14 and 15 December in Baku, Azerbaijan. It brought together 130 young MPs, 36 per cent of whom were women, from 43 countries. They were joined by representatives from international and youth organizations, academia, and the private sector.

Addressing the theme *promoting sustainability, protecting the interests of future generations*, the young MPs declared that the time for talk was over when it came to environmental protection, climate change and empowering youth. They discussed innovative solutions to deliver more responsible models of production and consumption, including legislation to mitigate over-exploitation of resources and eliminate the use of single-use plastics.

The young MPs also called for education to be both accessible to all and adapted to jobs of the future. Deliberating on the future of work, the young MPs agreed that the solution to quickly advancing technologies was not fear, but rather greater agility.

They also stressed the need for the rights and interests of future generations to be integrated into decision-making processes. Young MPs commended mechanisms, such as parliamentary committees on the future, and future generation commissioners, and called for their continued establishment and strengthening (see the Outcome Document of the Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, Annex 1).

### Launch of the IPU report *Youth participation in national parliaments 2018*

The Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians also saw the launch of the IPU report *Youth participation in national parliaments 2018*. Based on data from surveys of over 200 parliamentary chambers in 150 countries, the 2018 report revealed that only 2.2 per cent of parliamentarians are younger than 30, a small increase compared to 2016 (1.9%).

The Report also found that over 30 per cent of the world's single or lower chambers of parliament have no MPs under 30, while that figure was 76 per cent for upper chambers. The proportion of MPs under 40 increased from 14.2 per cent in 2016 to 15.5 per cent in 2018. The number of MPs under 45 went up from 26 per cent in 2016 to 28.1 per cent in 2018.

The IPU report also made recommendations to help increase youth participation in parliaments, including electoral quotas for young people, aligning voter age with the age of eligibility for office and creating youth caucuses and committees in parliaments.

### **2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum**

On 8 and 9 April 2019, members of the current and former Board of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians will be attending the ECOSOC Youth Forum, titled “Empowered, included and equal”. It is being held at UN Headquarters in New York. The delegation will take leadership roles in the event and share the Forum of Young Parliamentarians’ perspectives on youth empowerment and inclusion.

## **2. UPCOMING YOUTH-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

- **Celebration of International Youth Day** (12 August 2019);
- **World Future Policy Award on youth policies** (Belgrade, October 2019);
- **Session of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians** (Belgrade, October 2019);
- **Sixth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians** (venue and date to be confirmed).

## Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians

# Promoting sustainability, protecting the interests of future generations

Baku, Azerbaijan, 14 and 15 December 2018

### Outcome Document

*Co-Rapporteurs:* Mr. S. Ismayilov, Member of Parliament (Azerbaijan), and Ms. M. Osooru, Member of Parliament (Uganda), President of the Board of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

*“Ten, fifty, a hundred years from now, and many generations hereafter, let it be said that during our watch, while gifted with intelligence and insight, with privilege and position, with the wealth of wisdom, and with freedom and power of the human will, let it be said that in our time, during our watch, we did our share, and maybe, just maybe, we will make a little difference.”*

We, 130 young parliamentarians, 36 per cent of whom are women, came together in Baku from 43 countries for the Fifth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians. Our average age was 37.7 years. We were joined by representatives of the Government of Azerbaijan, as well as representatives from international organizations, youth organizations and parliaments, academia, and the private sector. Three current and former State future generation officials were also among us.

As young parliamentarians, we face challenges created by the generations before us. The decisions taken and ways of doing things have resulted in environmental degradation and unsustainable production and consumption patterns well before we were born. Yet we are the ones – and future generations – who have to repair the damage.

We have a responsibility to ensure that our children, grandchildren and all those who will follow are better off than we are today. Future generations have rights. However, the way decisions are made is too often near-sighted. This is both unjust and self-defeating. Our planet is on the brink, and we simply cannot wait for another generation to act. The time for talk is over.

In our discussions we praised the seven-generation principle: that deliberations today should consider the impact that they will have seven generations from now. This is especially important when considering actions to save our planet. Efforts made so far to protect the environment and address activities leading to climate change have not been sufficiently effective. Despite the achievement of the Paris Agreement, we are still off-track. Our carbon emissions have increased since last year. Failure to act and reverse these trends will cause irreversible and irreparable damage.

For climate change, we need a climate of change. Carbon reduction and adaptation is needed, and research, technology and innovation are key to this. This is a shared responsibility as climate change knows no borders. We discussed that these innovative solutions need to be shared across borders and accessible to everyone. Technology transfers, sharing of good practices and technical support are therefore indispensable. Wars and conflicts are one the greatest dangers for people and the environment. Too many young people are paying a high price in situations of conflict when they are prevented from accessing education, employment and safety. Such situations must stop as we cannot afford to have lost generations. Youth have a great role to play in peace building and sustainability and should be engaged and empowered to do so.

We were also inspired by examples of local wisdom that calls for dedicating time to let life, nature and the planet take a rest from human activity at least for a few hours once a year.

In Baku, we identified additional actions to better protect the environment for future generations, including:

- Support the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change through legislation, such as putting a price on carbon emissions, and hold our governments to account for national and international commitments made;
- Adopt laws and policies to better promote renewable energies, including through increased budgets; and
- Sensitize policy-makers and the people as action is required at all levels starting from the individual, the family, the community, the nation and the world as a whole. We also call on the IPU to consider establishing a network of young parliamentarians for the environment.

Protecting the environment goes hand-in-hand with delivering more responsible models of production and consumption. We are mere custodians of our resources, borrowing them from our future generations. The Sustainable Development goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 12, give us a framework in which to anchor these efforts. In Baku, we stood in unison and pledged to act for the achievement of the SDGs. Parliamentary mechanisms such as committees on the SDGs and self-assessment toolkits, are useful ways to coordinate and enhance our efforts.

Consumption and production are interwoven and they relate strongly to today's youth: as young people demand more sustainable foods and products, production patterns are bound to follow. We know that mentalities are already undergoing a paradigm shift; however, we young MPs must act to accelerate this transition. To achieve economies that are more responsible, that reduce or eliminate waste, and that are more circular by favouring re-use and recycling, we agreed to:

- Legislate and adopt policies to reduce energy consumption, better protect wildlife and water resources, and strengthen biodiversity on our planet, including by planting trees;
- Ensure lines in State budgets for the SDGs and invest in sustainability projects, including for research and technology;
- Take legislative action to mitigate over-exploitation of resources, and eliminate the use of plastics, especially single-use plastics and plastic bags;
- Promote incentives for more responsible consumption and production practices, including through subsidies and compensation; and
- Support effective waste – and ideally zero-waste – management projects, and their transformation into reusable products and energy.

One of the most effective ways of shifting the paradigms underpinning how we think about our environment and use of resources is through education. Education is not only about grooming smarter people, but also more socially responsible citizens. We called for education that is more focused on sustainable development and global citizenship.

First and foremost, education must be accessible to everyone. It is an antidote for poverty and gender inequality. In addition to free and compulsory education for all, we also supported more robust budgeting for scholarships, grants, and fair student loans, so that all can benefit from the fruits that education can bear. We insisted on the importance of providing life-learning opportunities for all so that education adapts to job market changes but also to individuals' self-development.

Education is also key to prosperity for future generations in a world with rapidly changing technological realities. Technological advancements are moving the tectonic plates of work beneath our feet. However, we cannot – and must not – fear human innovation; we must rather adapt, for advancements in technology have always destabilized the status quo.

From the earliest stages of school, curricula should be forward-looking and prepare young people for the jobs of the future. However, it is not only about *what* we learn but *how* we learn. Our education should focus on key competencies that modern technologies cannot replicate, such as out-of-the-box

thinking, creativity, entrepreneurship, critical thinking and digital media literacy. It should also focus on soft skills like teamwork and communications.

If we update our smartphones every couple of years, we can also update our schools. To do this, we proposed to:

- Prioritize education in our planning and budgets and use parliamentary oversight tools to hold governments to account;
- Decrease military spending in favour of investments in youth empowerment and people's well-being;
- Prepare for the shift towards greater online education, which will one day overtake traditional programmes;
- Promote education that strengthens the skills of the future, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Efforts must also be redoubled for girls and young women to be equally represented in these fields; and
- Better link our schools and universities with industry, including through apprenticeship systems.

For investments in education to be truly useful, they need to be coupled with the availability of decent work. Too often, our political institutions are too slow to adapt to the speed of change in the industrial and economic world. We are in the fourth industrial revolution and our countries and institutions need to be more agile in how they prepare: change is coming, whether we're ready for it or not. Technology is one big pressure for change, but there are other drivers, including demographic and geographic transitions.

Jobs will be displaced, including due to factors like artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and 3D printing. In only five years, tens of millions of data entry clerks, accountants, and factory workers will have their roles replaced with new available jobs for data analysts, AI and machine learning specialists, and people to design and build computers and robots. The jobs that are at risk of being extinct are not just routine jobs, but also white-collar work traditionally believed to be irreplaceable by machines.

The solution is to ensure that our economies are nimble and adaptable. The future is not mass unemployment but mass redeployment. Concrete steps we can take to facilitate this are:

- Better track technological trends in our countries by connecting our parliaments to the private sector through dedicated mechanisms;
- Promote life-long learning, including more targeted and faster vocational training programmes to facilitate the transition to new jobs;
- Ensure flexibility in social security systems and labour market regulations for those in transition, as well as flexibility in working arrangements, for example through remote working, freelancing, and the gig economy;
- Promote digital economies, innovation and entrepreneurship, through grants, loans, and programmes, including for start-ups.

To achieve these objectives, the needs and interests of future generations need to be integrated into our decision-making processes. We therefore commend mechanisms created in a number of countries that serve as guardians for future generations and hope to create and strengthen similar ones in our own countries. These include parliamentary committees or independent agents of parliament that link people to their governments and hold government to account for their performance in implementing commitments. These also extend to audit offices, ombudspersons and commissioners. These mechanisms should have a broad mandate that ensures accessibility and transparency, and can include: conducting investigations, facilitating petitions and complaints, engaging in parliamentary and legislative advocacy, and linking the future with parliaments by serving as think-tanks. We also

highlighted forums of young parliamentarians and youth parliamentary committees as mechanisms that can incorporate future generations into their mandate.

The global problems we all face are grave, and solving them requires courage, cooperation, and innovative solutions. We, young MPs, boldly asserted in Baku that we are up to this task. However, to make a difference we need to have a seat at the decision-making table. Having 2.2 per cent of the world's MPs under 30 years of age is not nearly sufficient. Justice and the need for creative solutions demand that we be fully included. We, therefore, endorse the targets for youth representation proposed by the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU so that by 2035, 15 per cent of MPs are under 30 years of age, 35 per cent under 40, and 45 per cent under 45.

In the final analysis, all hands on deck are needed and coordination between all stakeholders must be facilitated. Parliaments are a platform that brings people and institutions together. We will work with civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, local governments and all other stakeholders who want to be part of the solution. However, to not leave anyone behind, we can also create the space needed in our communities for all to participate.

Although our work is to link constituents to the machinery of State institutions, protecting and promoting the rights and interests of future generations is also a personal mission. When we say it is time to act, this also pertains to our day-to-day practices. Change starts with each and every one of us. As community leaders and role models, our example can have a ripple effect. We only need to look at the seven-generation principle to understand that even small steps in our daily lives can make a meaningful difference. The future of not just humankind, but our planet, is in our hands. As a concrete and simple gesture, we call on the IPU to continue its shift towards becoming paper smart, and to use only recycled paper in its documentation.

We express our thanks to the National Assembly of Azerbaijan for hosting this Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians and for serving as a platform towards a more prosperous life for future generations. The time to talk is over, the time to act is now.