



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (2020)

First meeting of the Preparatory Committee (Geneva, 8-9 February 2019)

PrepCom1
Item 5

CONF-2020/PrepCom1/5(a)-R.1
24 January 2019

Advancing the agenda of previous World Speakers' Conferences

(a) Inter-parliamentary cooperation

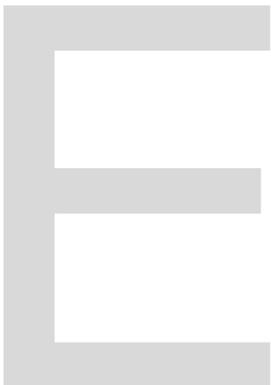
1. Inter-parliamentary cooperation takes on myriad forms and modalities. From early on, many parliaments have established direct relations with other legislatures, through friendship groups, regular bilateral meetings or exchange visits. Many parliaments, keen to share their experience in institution-building and parliamentary functioning, have developed technical assistance and parliamentary capacity-building programmes in support of parliaments in other countries.

2. In response to the growing need for inter-parliamentary cooperation, a multitude of international parliamentary structures has emerged. When the IPU was first established almost 130 years ago, it was the only international parliamentary organization in existence. In 1939, in addition to the IPU, there were two more: the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Nordic IPU (precursor of the Nordic Council). Today, there are well over 130 parliamentary organizations, assemblies and networks in operation.

3. Some of these parliamentary institutions are based on historical or linguistic ties between countries. Others are regional in scope. A growing number of them are part of regional integration processes and are already, or in the process of, becoming regional parliaments. They are what the IPU refers to as official parliamentary assemblies or organizations; they have a formal status, they are endorsed by parliaments, they have rules that govern all aspects of their work, and they are financed by public funds.

4. There is also an ever growing number of parliamentary networks. Some have been established by individual members of parliament, while others have been created by or in cooperation with governments or programmes and agencies within the United Nations system. All of them bring together members of parliament who are committed to promoting a specific cause or issue. They resemble non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and like them, operate under less formal rules and obtain their funding from a host of different sources.

5. These parliamentary institutions respond to a need and fulfil important functions. However, it is also true that the number of meetings organized by all of these entities has reached astronomical proportions. Undeniably, there is considerable competition, duplication and overlap (including in terms of membership and mandate). According to a 2017 study by Andrea Cofelice, for example, there are over 25 international parliamentary institutions dealing with the Mediterranean alone. A country like Albania is a member of no less than eight regional parliamentary organizations. Many parliaments find it difficult to cope with a growing demand to host meetings, authorize members to travel and cover corresponding expenses.



6. It was hardly surprising then that the Speakers who took part in the previous World Conferences of Speakers of Parliament voiced their concern. In 2000, they encouraged parliaments to examine closely the work of these organizations with a view to increasing efficiency and avoiding duplication. In 2005, 2010 and again in 2015, they asked the IPU to help enhance coherence and efficiency in global and interregional parliamentary cooperation.

7. Most of the official parliamentary organizations have a cooperative relationship with the IPU, either as Associate Members or as permanent Observers to the IPU (see [Annex](#)). As such, they attend statutory IPU Assemblies and have an opportunity to interact with each other. Many of the IPU resolutions and tools (such as guides and handbooks for parliamentarians) make their way to other parliamentary organizations for their consideration.

8. The IPU makes a conscious effort to regularly convene meetings with the heads of regional and other parliamentary organizations during the IPU Assemblies. These meetings are both thematic (focusing for example on the role of regional parliamentary bodies in peacebuilding and national reconciliation, or on the implementation of the SDGs) and informal (working luncheons to share information and good practices). The IPU also engages with regional and other parliamentary organizations in the context of the technical assistance it carries out in various countries and regions.

9. In recent years, the IPU has also been approached by some of the informal parliamentary networks to work together on specific issues. This has been the case, for example, of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC), the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND). Cooperation with the latter has been particularly productive, with joint initiatives that include a handbook of good parliamentary practice, as well as the organization of events both in national parliaments and at the United Nations.

10. In order to better streamline inter-parliamentary cooperation, it would be useful to first gain greater clarity in this field, as no systematic collection of data on international parliamentary structures exists in the world today. It has been suggested that, based on the success of the PARLINE database (a unique online source of information on the structure and working methods of parliaments in all countries (<http://www.ipu.org/parline/>)), the IPU could take the lead in collecting information about the purpose, organizational structure, activities and sources of financing of international parliamentary assemblies, organizations and networks, and keep this information up-to-date in the form of an electronic database. For this to happen, the requisite resources would need to be allocated.

11. There is clearly scope for more dialogue, exchange of information and engagement in order to capitalize on the comparative strengths of the various international parliamentary organizations and to avoid duplication. From this perspective, the IPU is uniquely placed to help enhance the linkages and exchanges among different parliamentary bodies. This would yield several benefits, not least help to bridge the gap between the global, the regional and the local spheres.

Members of the Preparatory Committee are therefore invited to address the following questions:

- (a) What has been the overall experience of your Parliament in terms of the various inter-parliamentary initiatives?
- (b) How can greater coherence and efficiency in global and interregional parliamentary cooperation be best achieved?
- (c) Can the IPU be of assistance in this process and, if so, how?

International Parliamentary Institutions

(non-exhaustive list)

A. Stand-alone official Inter-Parliamentary Organizations or Assemblies

Global

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

African Parliamentary Organizations

- African Parliamentary Union (APU) **(o)***
- Conference of Speakers of the West African Parliaments (CSWAP)

Parliamentary Organizations of the Americas

- Central American Parliament (Parlacen) **(a)****
- Forum of the Presidents of the Legislative Powers of Central America and the Caribbean Basin (FOPREL)
- Indigenous Parliament of the Americas
- Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) **(a)****
- ParlAmericas **(o)***
- Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) **(o)***

Arab Parliamentary Organizations

- Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU) **(o)***
- Arab Parliament **(a)****

Asian Parliamentary Organizations

- Asian-Pacific Parliamentarians' Union (APPU)
- Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) **(o)***
- Association of Pacific Island Legislatures (APIL)

European Parliamentary Organizations

- Association of European Senates (AES)
- Barents Parliamentary Conferences
- Interregional Parliamentary Council (IPR)
- Nordic Council (formerly Nordic Inter-Parliamentary Union) **(o)***
- Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation (PAEAC)

Interregional

- ACP-EU (Africa Caribbean Pacific-European Union) Joint Parliamentary Assembly **(o)***
- ACP (Africa, Caribbean Pacific) Consultative Assembly
- Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA) **(o)***
- Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP)
- Conference of Speakers of Ibero-American Democratic Parliaments
- Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat)
- Euro-Mediterranean Speakers Conference
- Forum of Senates and Second Chambers of Africa and the Arab World
- G8 Speakers' Conference
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) **(o)***

B. Official Parliamentary Assemblies attached to an Intergovernmental Organization

(a) Specialized Parliamentary Institutions (Working Independently)

International and Inter-regional Specialized Institutions

- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) **(o)***
- Community of Democracies' Parliamentary Forum
- Forum of Portuguese-Speaking Parliaments (FPLP)
- NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Parliamentary Assembly
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) **(a)****
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM) **(o)***
- Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC) **(o)***

Specialized African Institutions

- Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IPU-IGAD) **(o)***
- Network of Parliamentarians of Central Africa (REPAC)
- SADC (Southern African Development Community) Parliamentary Forum **(o)***

Specialized Institutions in the Americas

- Amazonian Parliament **(o)***
- Andean Parliament **(a)****
- Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians (ACCP)
- Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)

Specialized Asian Institutions

- ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) **(o)***
- Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF)
- Association of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Speakers and Parliamentarians

Specialized European Institutions

- Baltic Assembly (BA) **(o)***
- Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)
- Benelux Inter-Parliamentary Consultative Council (Benelux Parliament)
- Cetinje (formerly Balkans) Parliamentary Forum
- Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (CPAR)
- Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments and of the European Parliament
- Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of the SEECF (South-East European Cooperation Process)
- European Conference of Presidents of Parliament
- EUREKA Inter-Parliamentary Conference
- Network of Parliamentary Committees for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the European Union (NCEO)
- Parliamentary Dimension of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (All)
- Parliamentary Dimension of the Central European Initiative (CEI)
- Parliamentary Association of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)
- South-East Europe Parliamentary Cooperation (SEECF)
- South Caucasus Parliamentary Initiative (SCPI)
- Conference of the Parliamentary Committees for European Integration of the countries participating in the Stabilization and Association Process of South-East Europe (COSAP)

(b) Parliamentary Organs of International or Regional Organizations

Organs of Interregional Organizations

- Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie **(o)***
- Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS) **(a)****
- Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community (IPA EurAsEC) **(o)***
- Interparliamentary Committee on the Dutch Language Union
- OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) Parliamentary Assembly **(o)***
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (AP-CPLP) **(o)***
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) **(o)***
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic-speaking Countries (TURKPA) **(o)***
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia **(o)***

Organs of African Organizations

- East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) **(a)****
- Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) **(a)****
- Maghreb Consultatif Council (Arab Maghreb Union – UMA) **(o)***
- Pan-African Parliament (PAP) **(o)***
- Parliament of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) **(a)****
- ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) Parliament **(a)****
- Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR) **(o)***

Organs of Organizations in the Americas

- MERCOSUR Parliament (Parlasur)

Organs of Asian Organizations

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization (PAECO) **(o)***

Organs of European Organizations

- Committee of Members of Parliament of the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) Countries (CMP)
- Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC)
- European Parliament (EP) **(a)****
- Interparliamentary Conference on CFSP/CSDP (EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, Common Security and Defence Policy)
- GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) Parliamentary Assembly
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) **(a)****

C. Inter-Parliamentary Networks

General Networks

- Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA)
- African Parliamentary Knowledge Network
- State Legislative Leaders Foundation (SLLF)

Issue-specific networks

Population and Development

- Global Committee of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (GCCPPD – and regional sections)
- Global Parliamentarians on Habitat (GPH) and European Parliamentarians on Habitat
- International Medical Parliamentarians Organization (IMPO – with regional sections)
- NEPAD Forum of African Parliamentarians

Environment and Health

- Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians' Conference on Environment and Development (APPCED)
- Climate Parliament
- Coalition of African Parliamentarians against HIV and AIDS (CAPAH)
- Global Legislators Organization (GLOBE – with regional sections)
- Latin American Inter-Parliamentary Commission on the Environment (CLIMA)
- Parliamentary Network on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (PNoUNCCD)
- Parliamentary Forum on Democracy
- Parliamentary Forum on Renewable Energy
- TB Caucus

Education and Science, Culture and Religion

- Conference of Parliamentarians of Italian origin
- Forum of Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians for Education (FASPPED)
- International Parliamentarians' Association for Information Technology (IPAIT)
- International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace
- Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education (FAPED)
- World Scout Parliamentary Union (WSPU) (o)*
- Parliamentary Forum on Information Technology
- UNESCO Communities
- World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association (WHIA)
- Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO)

Economic and Trade Issues

- African Parliamentary Poverty Reduction Network (APRN)
- International Parliamentarians' Association for Agriculture and Fisheries (IPAAF)
- International Parliamentary Network (IPN – with regional sections)
- Inter-Parliamentarians for Social Services (IPSS)
- Parliamentary Network of the OECD
- Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (PNoWB)

Disarmament and Space

- European Inter-Parliamentary Space Conference (EISC)
- Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)
- Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons

Discrimination

- Inter-Parliamentary Council against Antisemitism (o)*
- Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism

Governance

- Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) (o)*

Peacebuilding

- Parliamentarians Network for Conflict Prevention and Human Security
- World Women Parliamentarians for Peace (WWPP)

* (o) = Observer status in the IPU

** (a) = Associate Member of the IPU