

Panels – Brief description

Panel 1

Towards a new global compact for gender equality

Gender equality is a pillar of sustainable development, peace and democracy, and a precondition for the achievement of all the SDGs. COVID-19 has eroded hard-won incremental progress worldwide in women's participation in leadership and decision-making, the economic empowerment of women, and the adoption of laws and policies aimed at the eradication of discrimination and violence against women and girls. This panel will be an opportunity to shape a robust agenda for gender equality in the law, women's participation and leadership in politics, and prioritizing and enhancing resource allocations for gender equality.

Four men and women Speakers of Parliament will be invited to share transformative action they have taken or are currently undertaking.

Panel 2

Mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on democracy

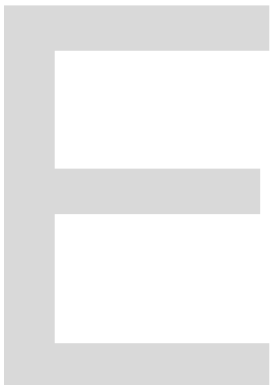
Democracies everywhere were already facing serious challenges before the COVID-19 pandemic. Those challenges have without doubt multiplied significantly in recent months. As political leaders, Speakers of Parliament have a responsibility to take action to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on democracy, and to reinforce faith in democracy.

Speakers will exchange experiences on how they are approaching the challenges and draw out lessons of common interest.

Panel 3

The post-pandemic recovery: Transforming the economy to combat climate change and promote sustainable development

Climate change is threatening progress on sustainable development. Key aspects of development such as access to water, food security and health are undermined by a warming climate. Unsustainable economic practices that increase greenhouse gas emissions have further worsened climate change impacts. COVID-19 has posed an additional set of challenges as countries must now also deal with the severe economic consequences of the pandemic, while also addressing climate and development challenges. Parliaments should use the recovery as an opportunity to transform economic systems so that they better support climate action and sustainable development. Speakers of Parliament will discuss and identify key parliamentary actions that can be taken to facilitate this economic transformation so that climate and development commitments linked to the Paris Agreement and the SDGs are met.



Speakers will be invited to share experiences, including both challenges and opportunities, from their own parliaments in designing and implementing both immediate and long-term sustainable economic recovery measures that help combat climate change, for example in relation to clean and renewable energy, green jobs, ecosystem protection, while also ensuring gender responsiveness and social inclusion.

Panel 4

Parliaments' openness, transparency and accessibility versus security: How to strike a balance?

Parliaments and MPs all over the world try to be as accessible as possible to their electorate. Yet the more parliaments open up, the more they have to bear in mind the security risk for themselves and the institution. It is a fine balance between being as transparent and open as a parliament should be while at the same time ensuring the safety and security of its members, not just physically but also with respect to attacks on computer devices and cybercrime in general. In the context of growing misinformation and hate speech in the public domain, careful consideration also needs to be given to the role and responsibility of social media platforms.

Speakers of Parliament will identify and discuss key parliamentary actions related to balancing the openness of their institutions with infrastructure and human security needs. Speakers will share experiences, including both challenges and opportunities, and good practices from their own parliaments in safeguarding order and security in parliament and protecting the safety of all parliamentarians while ensuring that the institution remains open to the public and does not operate behind closed doors.

Panel 5

Parliaments and global governance: The unfinished agenda

The "parliamentary dimension to the work of the UN" was born out of the first World Conference of Speakers held at the United Nations in September 2000. That groundbreaking vision aimed to democratize global governance by adding the voices of parliaments and parliamentarians to policy processes at the UN and other international organizations. In light of the legislative, budget and oversight prerogatives of parliaments, such an approach has helped translate international commitments into national realities.

Since then, parliaments and the IPU have gained recognition at the UN as a legitimate counterpart, and parliamentarians increasingly participate in UN processes. But there is still a long way to go for them to become a force to be reckoned with at the UN. This panel will consider the practical ways as well as the political shifts required to deepen the role and influence of parliaments at the UN. Speakers of Parliament will identify and discuss key parliamentary actions to provide parliamentary leadership for maintaining multilateralism and improving global governance based on the principles of dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation.