



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Draft 2022-2026 Strategy

This document is the result of an inclusive consultative process with the IPU's Members and stakeholders based on an impact assessment of the 2017-2021 strategic period. Led by the IPU Executive Committee, 902 individuals in 107 countries participated, including parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, institutional donors, partners, as well as the IPU political leadership (past and current Presidents, members of the Executive Committee), the IPU Secretary General and staff, through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. This strategy is also informed by the deliberations of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

The IPU 2022-2026 Strategy will be implemented through annual operational work plans and budgeting including monitoring and evaluation matrices to measure success.

A synopsis of key consultation findings is included at the end of this document.

Introduction

The IPU has served as the hub of worldwide parliamentary dialogue since 1889, working for “peace and cooperation among peoples and the solid establishment of representative institutions,” in accordance with Article 1.2 of its Statutes.¹ Over 130 years later, the IPU continues to be driven to improve the lives and ensure the human rights of all people. Its vision is a world where parliaments and parliamentarians work “for democracy, for everyone” in a manner that is inclusive, collective, forward-looking, resilient, and responsive to the ever-evolving set of actors and dynamics that contribute to parliamentary ecosystems.²

In all of its work, the IPU seeks to strengthen national parliaments’ capacity to carry out their many important roles – from serving and representing diverse constituents, to acting to hold their governments accountable at home and abroad, to creating and resourcing legislation on a wide array of issues to ensure the well-being of their people now and in the future. The IPU’s work is predicated on the idea that strong and effective parliaments can safeguard fundamental human rights, ensure sustainable development that leaves no one behind, achieve gender equality, empower youth, create pathways for peace and security, and protect the planet. The IPU recognizes that parliaments are called upon to constantly evolve to better serve their constituents. They therefore need to be equipped with the best insights, ways of working, and resources that allow them to anticipate and solve problems and make decisions for the long-term interests of all their people.

Yet, as much as individually strong parliaments are instrumental to progress, they are not enough. The IPU is unique in bringing together 179 of the world’s parliaments to work jointly on an equal footing. This global position allows it to: 1) accelerate progress, by connecting parliaments to each other for peer learning with mutual respect and support; 2) complement parliaments’ experience with data and research; and 3) catalyse joint political action on critical global issues that affect the lives of all people everywhere.

Values

The IPU accompanies parliaments, in a facilitating manner, in their own development, as referenced in the *Common Principles for Support to Parliaments*, encouraging them to use the collective intelligence of its membership. It is guided in its work by five core values:

Equality: Ensuring individuals and groups of individuals are treated fairly, in the same way and no less favourably than others irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion, belief, wealth, political persuasion, sexual orientation or age with the ultimate aim of eliminating discrimination and injustice.

Inclusiveness: Harnessing the full spectrum of views, needs and concerns within society in order to foster a sense of belonging and represent the interests of all sectors of society.

Respect: Recognizing, showing regard for and valuing cultural, religious, ethnic, political, linguistic and other differences as a prerequisite for constructive dialogue and resolving disputes.

Integrity: Acting with transparency, fairness, probity, and as an impartial broker in conflict or post-conflict situations.

Solidarity: Fostering a sense of community, togetherness and unity of interests for the world parliamentary community by supporting each other and working collectively.

¹ [IPU Statutes and Rules](#).

² “Parliamentary ecosystems” refers to the broader set of actors and dynamics that influence parliaments. Parliaments do not exist in isolation but in a complex system in constant interaction with other institutions of government, beginning with the executive, as well as political parties, civil society organizations, constituents, the media, academia, and others.

Current context

The IPU's 2022-2026 strategy coincides with 5 significant trends that will continue to shape the global agenda over the coming five years:

- 1) The need for immediate action on the global existential threat of climate change.
- 2) Growing social and economic inequalities including an increasing digital divide, further exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3) Weakening public trust in national and global institutions of governance and increasing threats to parliaments and their ability to serve their constituents effectively.
- 4) Regression on key democratic, human rights and development achievements.
- 5) Growing threats to peace and security and peoples' yearning for a more peaceful and secure world.

In setting the agenda for the next strategic period, IPU Members have recommended more focus on the areas of IPU's greatest impact and where parliamentary action is indispensable. They have also recommended working in a more integrated way to leverage the interconnectedness of key issues and "build forward better". This means focusing on fewer, cross-cutting objectives in order to help prepare Member Parliaments for an uncertain future. In addition, Member Parliaments have stressed the need for the strategy to be flexible and responsive to a rapidly evolving context.

This echoes the lessons learned by parliaments in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic – the need to better understand and engage a wider variety of stakeholders and develop a clearer understanding of the broader (and rapidly changing) operating environments in which they find themselves, as well as the need to recognize, manage and take advantage of the accelerated digital transformation brought about by the pandemic. Many parliaments were confronted with the way that the pandemic upended traditional parliamentary ecosystems – changing the composition of stakeholders and partners with whom they engage, the actors and elements that contribute to their continued functioning, and the way interactions take place.

In response, the 2022-2026 strategy builds on parliaments' COVID-19 experience and sets as the ultimate objective the development of parliamentary ecosystems for democracy, for everyone. The guiding logic is that by strengthening parliaments, helping to ensure their resilience over time so they can better respond to crises, and expanding the focus from parliaments in isolation to a wider, ecosystems view, the IPU and its Member Parliaments can better deliver on the Organization's vision.

Response and strategic orientation

The IPU's five new interconnected strategic objectives are designed to consolidate the IPU's action and deepen its impact in two ways. First, the IPU will concentrate its efforts on the areas where the Organization has achieved the best results to date. Second, it will adapt to changing circumstances with a new focus on Member Parliaments' resilience, a greater emphasis on the broader inclusion of marginalized groups and strengthened accountability for both Member Parliaments and the Secretariat.

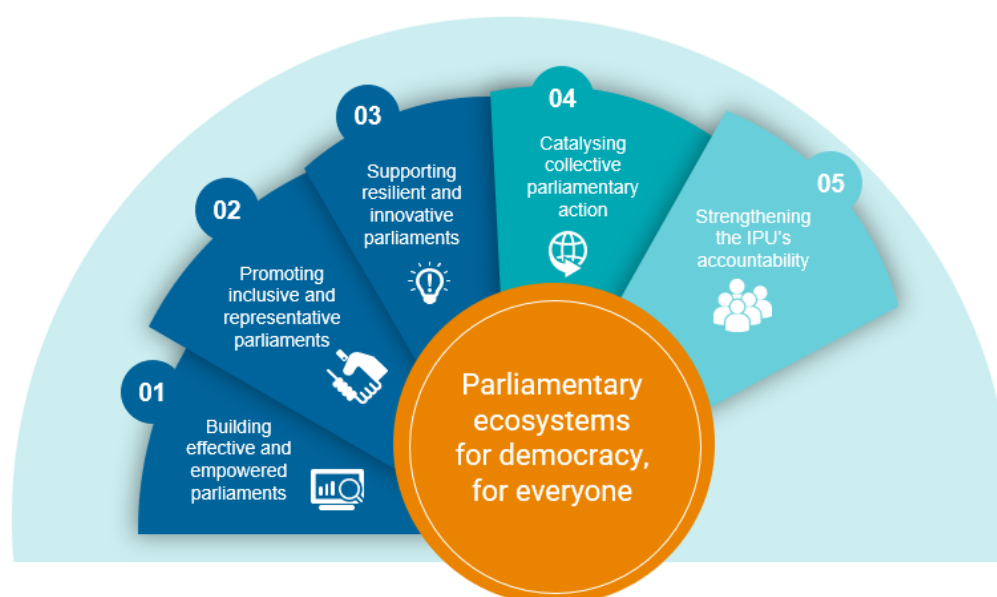
The ultimate goal of the new strategic objectives is to **develop parliamentary ecosystems for democracy, for everyone** as underscored in the IPU's emblem.

The parliamentary ecosystem approach involves a shift from looking at parliaments in isolation to incorporating a wider, evolving, systems-based view of the actors, interactions and dynamics that influence parliaments and parliamentarians, including the executive, political parties, constituents, civil society, experts, United Nations and other partners, and the media.

These five strategic objectives represent the pathways through which the IPU will reach that ultimate goal:

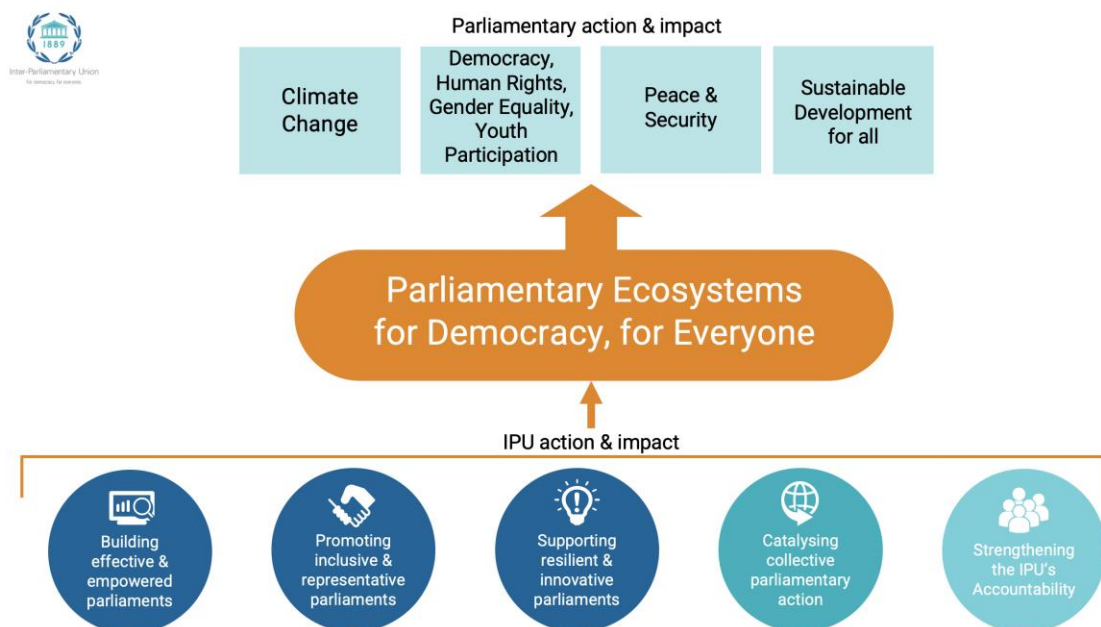
1. Building effective and empowered parliaments
2. Promoting inclusive and representative parliaments
3. Supporting resilient and innovative parliaments
4. Catalysing collective parliamentary action
5. Strengthening the IPU's accountability

Strategic Objectives 1-3 emphasize strong democratic parliamentary institutions; Strategic Objective 4 focuses on political mobilization and global and regional interaction; and Strategic Objective 5 strengthens the IPU as a whole for greater Member and organizational accountability across all strategic objectives.



Policy focus

Together, these objectives will be leveraged to make an impact in the policy areas that Members have indicated require prioritization and urgent action over the next five years. The aim is to ensure that parliaments' actions are consistent with people's expectations today. These four policy areas are of equal importance: climate change; democracy, human rights, gender equality and youth participation; peace and security; and sustainable development for all.



Climate change

Climate change represents a global existential threat. Given the urgency, Members have stressed the need for the IPU to take urgent action to contribute to global efforts to restore the planet's ecological health. To uphold the multilateral consensus and accelerate the green transition globally, the IPU will help parliaments, make progress on and increase accountability for the Paris Agreement and advance other climate-relevant treaties, accelerate decarbonization and reduce the carbon footprint within parliaments themselves.

The IPU will also endeavour to reduce its own carbon footprint in its annual activities as an organization, including its Assemblies. The ultimate goal of the IPU's action on climate change during the strategic period is to allow all people to live on a healthier planet with warming limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Democracy, human rights, gender equality and youth participation

The IPU will work toward ensuring all people have a voice in how they are governed and can enjoy all human rights without distinction of any kind such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, wealth, political beliefs, or any other status. It will work to strengthen parliament's role in addressing contemporary challenges to democracy. Specifically, the IPU will support access to and representation of under-represented groups in parliament, and enhance outreach, engagement with, and accountability to all members of society with a particular focus on women, youth and the most marginalized populations. It will furthermore support parliamentary action that ensures respect for human rights and addresses discrimination. Particular attention will be given to work to preserve freedom of expression while addressing the nefarious uses of social media (for example, misinformation, hate speech, harassment of elected representatives), which constitute a critical challenge to democracy. Finally, the IPU stands by its commitment to actively defend the human rights of parliamentarians.

Peace and security

To work toward ensuring that all people live in peace, free from violence and conflict, the IPU will work multilaterally, and prioritize helping parliaments take action on: upholding the UN Charter, the implementation of UN instruments related to disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation, humanitarian and refugee law; passing laws and implementing measures to prevent violent extremism and to counter terrorism; and engaging in multilateral dialogue around peaceful coexistence and building and sustaining peace. It will also take a forward-looking stance to anticipate and mitigate foreseeable impacts that global challenges like climate change have on peace and security. It will accord particular attention to the role of women and youth as key players in conflict resolution, peace-building and prevention of violence.

Sustainable development for all

To help ensure that all people benefit from sustainable development and that it is equitable, effective, and inclusive, with no one left behind, the IPU will prioritize action towards the overall achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a particular focus on the socio-economic factors contributing to marginalization and vulnerability. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will also work to help parliaments ensure that government recovery packages are greener and benefit the most marginalized. Finally, it will work toward ensuring all segments of society have access to basic services, on an equal footing, prioritizing access to health for all.

As a cross-cutting driver of change, together with gender equality, youth participation will be mainstreamed across all four policy areas as a core element in achieving progress. While focusing on the four policy areas, the IPU will continue to contribute to other key issues of importance to Member Parliaments over the strategic period.

Communications is another key driver of change. A refreshed Communications Strategy will be put in place during 2022 following an assessment of the previous strategy. The refreshed strategy will consolidate and build on the work started in the 2019-2021 Communications Strategy, in which the IPU began its digital transformation and raised its visibility significantly in both traditional and social media.

IPU Communications will scale up its investments in digital platforms and reach, supporting the development of new online platforms, and improving the IPU websites and databases. These tools will help improve more targeted engagement with Member Parliaments, facilitate communication between the world's 46,000 parliamentarians, and help reduce the IPU's carbon footprint.

Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 1: Building effective and empowered parliaments

Rationale: Parliaments and parliamentarians that are able to effectively exercise their mandates, represent and defend the rights and interests of the people, make decisions based on independent, evidence-informed and credible information, and exercise oversight of their governments are essential to democracy.

Aim: The IPU will expand its work to ensure that MPs are able to exercise their mandates freely and safely in response to the growing threats and challenges that many MPs are facing. It will also respond to the current challenges facing representative democracy by pursuing its efforts towards growing parliamentary effectiveness, representation, transparency, accountability and accessibility – all elements of democratic parliaments. It will do so through institutional and individual capacity building, technical support and research, as well as by supporting national parliaments to deliver on key national priorities (human rights, development, etc.).

In response to the need to focus efforts where action is most urgent, while remaining accessible to all, priority will be placed on parliaments in countries emerging from conflict or in transitional situations, which require reinforced support. In addition, IPU research and data will leverage its rich history in standard setting on democratic parliaments and the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments to work towards defining the elements and actors that sustain an effective parliamentary ecosystem over time.

Strategic Objective 2: Promoting inclusive and representative parliaments

Rationale: A key success factor for parliaments is the degree to which their members represent and articulate the concerns of society at large and the extent to which inclusive parliamentary practices enable the institution to create access and influence pathways for all members of the community.

Aim: The IPU will enhance its longstanding work on increasing the participation of women and youth in parliament. It will build on that strong track record to expand its focus to include the participation of marginalized and vulnerable populations. Working with Member Parliaments, the IPU will use research, data and tools to define and measure the participation of underrepresented groups of society in parliament, understand the challenges faced in participation, and identify structures and ways of working that result in better inclusion and better influence for these populations.

In addition to their composition, the way parliaments function and are organized will also be a focus of action, leveraging the IPU's existing work on gender-sensitive parliaments and the findings of the Global Parliamentary Report on public engagement.

In response to growing social and economic inequalities and historically uneven access, the long-term aim of the work over the strategic period is to determine which elements in the larger ecosystem best support and sustain access to parliaments for the community.

Strategic Objective 3: Supporting resilient and innovative parliaments

Rationale: The COVID-19 pandemic is one of a number of recent events that have highlighted the need for parliaments and parliamentarians to be forward-looking, resilient, and able to evolve, adapt and manage risk as circumstances change. It has also brought to the fore the importance for parliaments to innovate, harness the potential of technological and scientific innovation, and transform parliamentary strategy and business processes.

Aim: The IPU will develop a new area of work and way of engaging with its Members to increase the resilience of parliaments and respond to the increasingly multifaceted challenges they face by connecting them with a larger number of actors who influence the environment in which parliaments operate.

Leveraging research, data, discussion and sharing of good practice, the work will strengthen parliaments' ability to absorb, adapt and transform in the face of external shocks, and help them manage emerging risks within the framework of a multi-stakeholder community of practice.

To do so, the IPU will pursue and expand its work on innovation in parliament, and support parliaments in building capacity to better anticipate the future, including on cutting edge issues such as the acceleration of scientific and technological innovation and its attendant ethical challenges. The IPU will also facilitate online learning exchanges with parliamentarians and parliamentary staff and create opportunities for them to connect and exchange with experts, media and civil society to build their institutions' capacity for greater resilience over time, and jointly identify and respond to challenges as they emerge. Overall, building bridges between policy and science contributes to foster good governance and trust, as scientific values of rationality and transparency serve as a common language in support of parliamentary diplomacy.

This work implies new ways of communicating with its Members through enhanced digital platforms, strengthening the IPU's current relationships with non-parliamentary actors, and facilitating communication between these actors.

While resilience will be the initial aim of the learning community, it will be expanded during the strategic period to ensure that the IPU and Member Parliaments remain future-focused.

Strategic Objective 4: Catalysing collective parliamentary action

Rationale: Since its inception, a key strength of the IPU has been its ability to connect Member Parliaments to each other, create a safe space for diverse, sometimes opposing, views, serve as the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue, exchange, solidarity and diplomacy, and leverage the collective political strength of its Members at the global level and with regard to the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. Furthermore, the global convening power of the IPU is unique. The potential to harness this collective influence and transform it into greater political action is particularly critical now.

Aim: The IPU will accelerate national, regional and multilateral policy solutions to key global issues by catalysing inter-parliamentary cooperation and action through regional and global events, including its flagship Assemblies. It will also work to further strengthen the parliamentary dimension of multilateralism and global governance including the voice of parliaments at the United Nations and other multilateral organizations; undertake collective advocacy at the global level, including for enhancing governance; and support national parliaments in contributing to the formulation and implementation of global commitments at the national level. It will continue to pursue its long-term goal of universal membership.

In response to the need to focus on issues of greatest urgency, the IPU will prioritize collective parliamentary action on: combatting climate change, promoting the democratic, human rights and gender equality agendas, strengthening peace and security, and working toward sustainable development for all.

Strategic Objective 5: Strengthening the IPU's accountability

Rationale: Reinforcing and sustaining a culture of trust and mutual accountability on all levels – for and between Member Parliaments, between Member Parliaments and the IPU Secretariat, and within the Secretariat – is both a key organizational value and a critical factor in ensuring that progress towards all strategic objectives is sustained and occurs in a transparent and democratic manner.

Aim: The IPU will enhance existing accountability efforts both at the level of Member Parliaments and within the Secretariat itself. It will: clarify, standardize and strengthen processes that require follow-up action by Member Parliaments on key issues; expand Member engagement (in particular between events); streamline and enhance parliamentary tracking and reporting mechanisms by Members; and more consistently track, consider and apply Member feedback.

Within the Secretariat, the IPU will aim to expand existing efforts towards its digital transformation, achieve a "green IPU" (i.e. carbon neutrality) during the strategic period, continue work towards a "gender transformative" IPU, and develop and apply an organization-wide monitoring, evaluation and learning system which will allow tracking and reporting of progress on the strategic objectives to Member Parliaments, staff and the public on an annual basis.

Synopsis of consultation findings

Key Impact Areas



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy, to women.

Strengthening parliaments	Defending the human rights of parliamentarians	Data on women's participation	Dialogue	Strength of bilateral relationships between MPs	Learning about/exposure to global content

Unique Value Add

Combined convening and programmatic delivery power	Global reach	History of experience	Knowledge about data and access to parliaments	Capacity to connect parliamentarians to each other

Future strategic priorities

Interdependent and cross-cutting	Robust measurement and accountability	Delivered through hybrid in-person/online approach	Evidence-based with clear and communicated decision-making
		Expand parliaments' and parliamentarians' knowledge and technical capacities	

Stop Doing

Trying to be relevant on all issues	Partnerships not tied to strategic objectives	'Least common denominator' resolutions	Insufficient follow-up to knowledge products and activities