



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Third Regional Seminar for the Asia-Pacific Region Parliaments on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals



Islamabad, Pakistan, 22-24 February 2022

Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union
and the National Assembly of Pakistan

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Monday, 21 February 2022

Arrival of delegates

Tuesday, 22 February 2022

09:00-10:00

Registration

10:00-11:00

Inaugural session

Group photo

11:00-11:15

Setting the scene: SDG implementation in Asia-Pacific

This presentation will provide an overview of progress with the implementation of the SDG agenda in the region, highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and emerging challenges in the social, economic and environmental spheres.

11:15-13:00

Session I: Envisioning inclusive development: Socio-economic challenges in Asia

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was estimated that around 400 million people in the region were living in extreme poverty, below the lower international poverty line, and that 1.2 billion people were living below the higher international poverty line, accounting for more than a quarter of the region's population. Due to the impact of the pandemic on the region's economies, with depressed international demand, job losses and bankruptcies, poverty has stopped declining for the first time in two decades. Marginalized and vulnerable segments of the population have suffered the effects of the crisis more acutely. This session will discuss how COVID-19 recovery can enhance economic resilience, adopt an inclusive approach, and ensure resources are not diverted from sustainable development.

The presentation will be followed by a debate with delegates.

13:00-14:00

Lunch and prayer break

14:00-15:30

PARALLEL BREAKOUT SESSIONS: TACKLING INEQUALITIES

A) Ending hunger and malnutrition

Little progress has been made towards ending hunger and malnutrition in the region. A growing body of research demonstrates the negative consequences of food insecurity for the most vulnerable groups, especially women's and children's health and developmental outcomes, including cognitive development and school achievement, as well as overall health. The COVID-19 pandemic further risks pushing people into a state of food insecurity. The aim of the debate on this topic is to discuss ways to successfully address population needs through the

promotion of adequate policies and laws across sectors, including health, agriculture, education and gender equality, and to implement the SDGs by maximizing the available domestic resources for nutrition.

B) Promoting quality education and decent work for youth

Over 500 million young people live on less than US\$2 a day. 43 per cent of the global youth labour force is either unemployed or trapped in working poverty. While youth offers many of the world's poorest countries a demographic dividend, young people are at the forefront of many of the world's emerging political movements calling for economic equality. Education provides young people with the capability to become economically active, contribute to democratic and peaceful societies and improve individual wellbeing. Creating quality learning environments and youth employment could contribute not only to reducing disparities, but also have a multiplier effect for development. This session will focus on the importance of ensuring quality inclusive and equitable education opportunities for all – regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, wealth, political beliefs, or any other status – and of promulgating laws that favour full and productive employment and decent work for all.

C) Ensuring equitable access to health

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on health systems and national budgets, with countries facing challenges in ensuring equitable health outcomes and sustaining efforts towards universal health coverage. Inequitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations between and within countries is further limiting countries' ability to contain the virus and focus on making progress towards health targets. The session will present findings from the follow-up process on implementation of the IPU resolution *Achieving universal health coverage by 2030: The role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health*, and explore what actions parliaments are taking to improve access to health for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

15:30-15:45

Tea break

15:45-16:00

Plenary session – Conclusions of the parallel breakout sessions

16:00-17:15

Session II: Women at the centre of the development agenda

This session will focus on understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and identifying the challenges and root causes of discrimination that curtail women's rights. A case study of Pakistan's cross-party Women's Parliamentary Caucus will be presented. What started as a vision in the Parliament of Pakistan is now an international good practice, having been successfully replicated in over a dozen other parliaments as well as in provincial and regional legislatures. This session will explore SDG Goal 5 and the ways in which gender equality supports the achievement of all the other SDGs. Participants will be invited to reflect on how to integrate Goal 5 into their national legislation, and how to find effective approaches that promote the political, social and economic empowerment of all women.

[The presentation will be followed by a debate with delegates.](#)

Wednesday, 23 February 2022

09:45-10:00

Recap of day 1 proceedings

10:00-11:30

Session III: Building resilience to preserve our common future

In our increasingly interconnected world, risks and impacts are transferred across nations and around the globe. Disasters are complex, interdependent events and their rising social and economic impacts require a fundamental shift in how disaster risks are managed to protect economic and development gains and

achieve the SDGs. Climate change is increasing the frequency and complexity of natural hazard events. There is a link between habitat loss, environmental degradation and climate change on the one hand, and the emergence of novel zoonotic diseases that are transmitted between animals and humans, such as coronaviruses, on the other. This link calls for a sound environmental response to the pandemic. This session will explore approaches to build resilience by reducing disaster risks and promoting a sustainable recovery from COVID-19.

The presentation will be followed by a debate with delegates.

11:30-11:45

Tea break

11:45-13:00

Session IV: Parliamentary mechanisms to institutionalize the SDGs

Parliaments have established different mechanisms and practices to integrate the SDGs into their work, including the establishment of SDG committees, networks or other coordination mechanisms. This session will include the presentation of findings from IPU research on existing parliamentary practices to support the implementation of the SDGs framework with the aim of promoting peer-to-peer learning, and inspiring action and innovation. The session will also provide a platform for participants to showcase existing parliamentary mechanisms, structures and initiatives to advance SDG implementation in their countries and discuss challenges and lessons learnt to further scale up these efforts.

The presentation will be followed by a debate with delegates.

13:00-14:00

Lunch

14:00-15:30

PARALLEL BREAKOUT SESSIONS: PARLIAMENTARY FUNCTIONS

A) Integrating the SDGs into national policy and legislation

This session will focus on domestication of the SDGs into national policies and how legislation can support the implementation of these policies. It will also highlight the importance of reviewing legislation proposed by governments in order to ensure that it contributes to the achievement of both the national development action plan and the wider 2030 Agenda, as well as guaranteeing that the needs of marginalized and vulnerable populations are taken into consideration. Participants will have an opportunity to share challenges, practices and/or success stories from their respective countries.

B) Budgeting for the SDGs

Parliaments have a key role to play in ensuring that funding and resources are invested effectively to support sustainable development and make sure that national budgets address the needs of all, especially the most vulnerable. The session will cover how parliaments can advocate for a coherent integration of the SDGs into budgets and how to ensure that governments are held accountable from an SDG perspective for how resources are spent.

15:30-15:45

Tea break

15:45-16:00

Plenary session – Conclusions of the parallel breakout sessions

16:00-17:00

Closing plenary: Leaving no one behind – The way forward

Adoption of the outcome document

Thursday, 24 February 2022

Field visit