



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# 144th IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS Nusa Dua (Indonesia), 20-24 March 2022

Forum of Young Parliamentarians

## Youth-related activities in 2021-2022

### Report on activities carried out since November 2021 and upcoming activities

Just over ten years ago, IPU's Member Parliaments adopted an ambitious [resolution on youth participation in the democratic process](#). Since then, parliaments from around the world have made great progress in its implementation. Many have taken action to further open up to young people, including through legislative changes to promote greater numbers of young parliamentarians. Parliaments have also created mechanisms to better integrate youth perspectives in their work, such as youth committees and caucuses.

Despite this progress, globally, the level of youth representation in parliament remains very low. Only 2.6 per cent of parliamentarians are under 30 years of age. Thirty-seven per cent of parliamentary chambers do not have any young MPs under 30. Young people are among the most impacted by today's critical issues, such as the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and new technologies. Yet they are among those most absent from the political institutions that address them. Much greater political mobilization is needed to allow more young people to take their rightful places at decision-making tables.

To address this gap in youth representation, in spring 2021 the IPU launched the [I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!](#) campaign calling to action in and through parliaments to have more young women and men MPs. The campaign calls on changemakers to take transformative action to enhance youth participation in parliament all around the world.

As of 1 March 2022, a total of 730 changemakers from around the world have already signed up, including 320 MPs, 25 Speakers of Parliament, and Heads of United Nations agencies and other international organizations. The United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth also signed up in January 2022. The IPU has also supported parliaments in launching the campaign at the national level and in implementing campaign pledges.

Since November 2021, the IPU has organized the following youth-related activities:

- Meetings of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and its Board at the 143rd Assembly (November 2021)
- Inclusion of youth participation as a "policy area" in the new IPU 2022-2026 Strategy
- Promotion of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign (November 2021)
- Pilot online training courses for young MPs at the national level (February 2022)
- Technical support to parliaments to facilitate launches and implementation of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign (February-March 2022)
- Inaugural "Empowerment Series" briefing on young women's empowerment (March 2022)

More information on these activities is provided below, along with a list of future activities.

## 1. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES SINCE NOVEMBER 2021

### Meetings of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and its Board at the 143rd Assembly

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians convened on 27 November 2022. Seventy-two participants took part, including 59 parliamentarians – 44 per cent of whom were women – from 45 countries. The Forum was co-chaired by Ms. O. Rudenko (Ukraine) and Mr. M.A. Rakotomalala (Madagascar), who replaced the President of the Board, Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt), and the youngest member of the Board, Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus), who were both absent.

The Forum members exchanged views on the main theme of the Assembly's General Debate, *Contemporary challenges to democracy: Overcoming division and building community*. They agreed that for democracy to be strong it needed to be youth-driven by more inclusive and more youth responsive parliaments.

The Forum contributed a youth perspective to the IPU's work on the new IPU 2022-2026 Strategy. Although the young parliamentarians welcomed the inclusion of youth participation as a cross-cutting issue, they made a strong call to have youth participation included in its own right as a policy area of the Organization's new Strategy. Further to the meeting's discussions which included the President and Secretary General of the IPU, the draft strategy was subsequently modified to include "Youth participation" as a policy area as advocated by the Forum.

As part of the promotion and support for implementation of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign, the young MPs also held a special session to share experiences and lessons learned on campaign Pledge 3 "Supporting youth channels in parliament". The creation of youth forums, networks, or caucuses of young MPs in respective parliaments was discussed. The question-and-answer session helped link young MPs who had experience in setting up forums with those who wanted to do so in their countries.

Members of the Board discussed key activities to take place in 2022 including an empowerment series of online briefings; online training courses for young MPs; and the 2022 Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians to be held on climate action.

Out of the 515 total number of MPs who took part in the larger IPU Assembly, 128 were young MPs (24.9%).

### *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign

In addition to the special session on Pledge 3 of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign at the IPU Assembly, further actions were carried out to promote and support implementation of the campaign.

During the Assembly, a number of promotional activities took place, including a dedicated campaign booth, a special session on the campaign in the plenary room, and proactive promotion to participants. The different promotional activities since the campaign's launch have resulted in the following signatories as on 1 March 2022:

- 730 changemakers who have pledged to support youth participation in parliament, among them 25 Speakers of Parliament and 320 MPs.
- Speakers who have pledged are from: Angola, Armenia, Bahrain, Belgium, Burundi, Cyprus, Egypt, the European Parliament, Georgia, Indonesia, Ireland, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Madagascar, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, and Zambia.
- Other leaders who signed up to support youth participation in parliament include: Dr. Daniel Risch, Prime Minister of Liechtenstein; Ms. Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; Mr. Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator; Mr. Derek Mitchell, President of the National Democratic Institute (NDI); Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the UN General Assembly and Foreign Minister of Maldives; and Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

The campaign has now been launched in almost 20 national parliaments including: Andorra, Austria, Bahrain, Belarus, Ecuador, Egypt, India, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Montenegro, Pakistan, Paraguay, Serbia, Thailand, Uruguay, and Uzbekistan. Discussions for further launches supported by the IPU are ongoing in a number of parliaments.

Launch events included: conferences and workshops, plenary sessions with young people, video messages from the Speakers, statements by young MPs, press releases, promotional videos, etc.

The IPU has also been supporting parliaments in implementing campaign pledges, such as the one on “Supporting youth channels in parliament” (Pledge 3). In February and March 2022, the IPU provided technical support to the National Assembly of Zambia in the establishment of its Zambia Youth Parliamentary Caucus (ZYPC). This contributed to the drafting of the new Caucus’s rules.

### **Online training courses for Young MPs**

Also helping parliaments implement the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign pledge of “Empowering young parliamentarians” (Pledge 4), on 24 and 25 February 2022, the IPU facilitated online empowerment trainings on the topics of leadership and communications for young parliamentarians of the Nigerian Young Parliamentarians’ Forum.

The online training courses helped young MPs from Nigeria enhance their political skills through workshops, engagement and networking, and equipped them with greater competencies to influence the policy-making process at the national and global level. Twenty young MPs had a chance to increase their knowledge and awareness on leadership and communication and apply new skills in their parliamentary work. The participants shared their positive feedback and evaluated the topics and methodology of the training highly relevant to their work.

### **New “Empowerment Series” for young MPs**

The IPU hosted its first Empowerment Series briefing on the theme “Policies to Empower Young Women” on 15 March 2022 on the occasion of the International Women’s Month.

Panellists gave an overview of the situation of young women – including barriers to their political participation – and provided policy orientation. Young male and female parliamentarians shared information on the situation of young women in their respective countries and good legislation, policies and programmes developed to empower women in general and young women in particular.

The briefing was in line with IPU’s commitments to the Generation Equality Forum to build intergenerational solidarity and to mobilize parliamentarians of all ages for young women’s empowerment. The event also came as a follow up to the IPU’s and UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth’s [Call to Action on young women’s political participation and leadership](#) that appeals for a strengthening of gender-responsive youth policies and programmes.

## **2. UPCOMING YOUTH-RELATED ACTIVITIES IN 2022**

- Activities in support to parliaments to implement the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign, including:
  - o Online training on leadership and communication for young parliamentarians of Egypt (April 2022)
  - o National-level activities to launch the campaign and provide technical assistance (South Sudan, Zambia, and other parliaments foreseen)
- The Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Egypt on the theme *Young MPs for climate action* (time and venue TBD) (2022)
- Facilitation of the engagement of young MPs in the larger global youth agenda, including the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum and the World Bank Global Young MP Initiative (Spring 2022)

- Continued briefings for the “Empowerment Series” to be held virtually (2022)
- Continued promotion and support for implementation on the international level of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign (2022)
- Celebration of International Youth Day (12 August 2022)

### **Partnerships**

Partnerships exist and are maintained with the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the Kofi Annan Foundation (KAF), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), Plan International, various international, regional and national youth organizations, academics, and many others.