



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Forum of Young Parliamentarians

## Youth-related activities in 2022

### Report on activities carried out since March 2022 and upcoming activities

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. IPU research shows that only 2.6 per cent of parliamentarians are under 30 years of age. 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 has been spearheaded by the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. It calls on changemakers to take transformative action to enhance youth participation in parliament around the world. As of 15 September 2022, a total of 937 changemakers have already signed up, including 391 MPs, 28 Speakers of Parliament, and Heads of United Nations agencies and other international organizations. The IPU has also supported parliaments in launching the campaign at the national level and in implementing campaign pledges.

Since March 2022, the IPU has organized the following youth-related activities to enhance youth participation in parliament and in the IPU:

- Meetings of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and its Board were held at the 144th Assembly in Nusa Dua (March 2022)
- The Eighth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians took place in Sharm el-Sheikh (Egypt) and focused on *Young MPs for Climate Action* (15 and 16 June 2022)
- Promotion of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign continued, including through a social media push on International Youth Day (12 August 2022) and support to parliaments to launch the campaign and implement it
- Two briefings as part of the IPU's Empowerment Series for young parliamentarians were held on the topics *Health and nutrition* (30 May 2022) and subsequently *Youth empowerment and political participation* (12 August 2022)
- Contribution by young MPs into international deliberations was supported (from March to September 2022)

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

## 1. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES SINCE MARCH 2022

### Meetings of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and its Board at the 144th Assembly

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians convened on 21 March 2022. Sixty-five participants took part, including 58 parliamentarians – 43 per cent of whom were women – from 40 countries. The Forum was presided by its President Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt).

The Forum members exchanged views on the main theme of the Assembly's General Debate, *Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change*. The Forum agreed that as the young generation would be the most impacted by the crisis, youth must be fully included in political decisions that would shape the future. Young MPs called for holding governments accountable for delivering on the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Their resolve to work on the issue of climate change was boosted by the decision to dedicate the 2022 Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Egypt to climate action. The conference would provide the opportunity to ensure that young MPs' voices were included in the forthcoming 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) to be held also in Egypt.

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 1 "Promoting youth quotas". The current state of youth quotas in the world was reviewed and good practices were highlighted. This included: the promotion of quotas that were ambitious, well-designed to suit the electoral system, and enforceable; mechanisms to place youth candidates in winnable positions on electoral lists; and the inclusion of gender parity provisions in youth quotas to ensure participation of both men and women.

Out of the 404 total number of MPs who took part in the IPU 144th Assembly, 110 were young MPs (27.2%).

### Eighth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians (15 and 16 June 2022)

The Eighth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians was held on 15 and 16 June in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. It brought together over 170 young MPs from some 60 countries. Approximately 40 per cent of the young MPs were women. They were joined by representatives from international and regional organizations, youth organizations, academics and inspirational leaders.

Addressing the theme *Young MPs for Climate Action*, the young MPs acknowledged that climate change required an internationally coordinated response. Informed by the richness of expert presentations and the sharing of parliamentary practices, they adopted an [action-oriented Outcome document](#) calling for the adoption and implementation of bold laws and policies for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, leaving no one behind. They agreed to exercise their oversight power to support implementation of commitments made through the Paris agreement and resolved to ensure that climate change financing commitments to developing countries were upheld. They also agreed to promote more environmentally friendly ways of operating in their respective parliaments. The young MPs also underlined the importance of better including youth in parliamentary work, including by proactively engaging with youth civil society groups and citizens both inside the halls of parliaments, and outside via digital and non-digital means.

The Conference and its conclusions will feed the voices of young parliamentarians into the wider discussions at the COP27, taking place in Sharm el-Sheikh in November 2022.

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

During the 144th IPU Assembly, promotional activities took place, including a dedicated campaign booth and proactive promotion of the campaign to delegates.

On International Youth Day 2022, a social media push and the Empowerment Series (see below) also focused on the campaign.

The different promotional activities since the campaign's launch have gathered support from:

- 937 changemakers who have pledged to support youth participation in parliament, among them 28 Speakers of Parliament and 391 MPs.
- Speakers who have pledged are from: Angola, Armenia, Bahrain, Belgium, Burundi, Cyprus, Egypt, the European Parliament, Georgia, Guyana, Indonesia, Ireland, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Maldives, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, 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, who was until recently the 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 IPU has also been supporting parliaments in launching the campaign as well as implementing campaign pledges:

- In early 2022, support was extended to the Congress of Paraguay to carry out a national launch of the campaign. This contributed to the adoption of a new law in March 2022 by the Senate to lower the age of eligibility of young people to run in municipal elections.
- In July 2022, advice was provided to the National Legislature of South Sudan on the Constitution of their new youth caucus.
- Support to the National Assembly of Zambia in the creation of its youth caucus is ongoing with more activities planned for the fourth quarter of 2022 on strategic planning on capacity-building of young parliamentarians.

### **Empowerment Series briefings for young MPs**

The IPU continued a series of capacity-building activities for young MPs as part of its Empowerment Series, kick-started in March 2022 by a briefing on the theme *Policies to Empower Young Women*. Since then, the IPU hosted the second and third briefings. A briefing on the topic *Health and nutrition* was organized on 30 May 2022 and another on *Youth empowerment and political participation* was held on International Youth Day, on 12 August 2022.

In the briefing on health and nutrition, participants took stock of the advancements and challenges towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 on food security and nutrition and SDG 3 on health, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations were made on policies and legislation on children's and adolescent's health, mental health, and nutrition. This included: ensuring access to information, health services and life-saving supplies for women, children and adolescents; promoting sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality; guaranteeing quality, respectful and dignified health care; providing training; and promoting equal and fair pay and safe working conditions to health workers; and preventing violence against women, children and adolescents.

During the third briefing, young MPs zoomed in on the challenges and barriers faced by young people in entering politics and solutions to address them. Solutions included taking measures to mitigate financial impediments faced by young people to run for office, as well as the inclusion of special measures to encourage participation, such as youth quotas and promoting youth in political parties. The United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake contributed to the briefing and called for participation of young people in all their diversity.

### **Contribution by young MPs to international deliberations**

Young MPs of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians contributed their views on youth participation in international events and deliberations, including:

- An address to the World Bank [Global Young MP Initiative on 14 April 2022](#) on the theme "Innovations to Eliminate Learning Poverty".

- Participation in a roundtable discussion in the launch event for the [Global Parliamentary Report 2022: Public engagement in the work of parliament](#), a joint event of the IPU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- Participation in the International Conference ["Science, Ethics, and Human Development"](#) which took place in Vietnam (13-16 September 2022).

## **2. UPCOMING YOUTH-RELATED ACTIVITIES IN 2022-2023**

- Support activities to help parliaments promote and implement the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign will continue, including national-level activities:
  - o Trainings, including online, on leadership, communication, and mentorship for young parliamentarians
  - o Launch of the campaign and technical assistance on implementing pledges
- An online event to bring together the signatories to the campaign to discuss results and the campaign's impact
- Continued online briefings as part of the Empowerment Series
- Research and preparation of the next IPU report on youth participation in national parliaments.

### **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.