



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

T +41 22 919 41 50  
F +41 22 919 41 60  
E [postbox@ipu.org](mailto:postbox@ipu.org)  
[www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

Chemin du Pommier 5  
Case postale 330  
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex  
Geneva – Switzerland

# Will hybrid working become the “new normal” for parliaments?

Concept note for an online event

Wednesday 25 January 2023, 14.00 to 15.30 CET (Geneva time)

## Context and rationale

The COVID-19 pandemic saw a period of “enforced innovation” in parliamentary working methods. Those parliaments that successfully innovated have dramatically changed how they function, embracing new technologies and remote working.

According to data from the new [World e-Parliament Report](#), over half of parliaments (51%) have held a virtual plenary since March 2020 and more than three quarters (77%) a virtual committee meeting. Forty-six per cent intend to retain at least some virtual capabilities and it seems the virtual parliament will continue to evolve, particularly for committees. Eighty-seven per cent of the parliaments surveyed say they have increased their resilience.

The use of remote tools for committees had begun before the pandemic and has now accelerated dramatically. This trend is likely to continue to evolve, since these technologies offer benefits to parliaments with fewer of the downsides seen with virtual plenaries. Far from being temporary, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been a catalyst for change, leading to the potential for ongoing and incremental improvements in parliamentary functioning.

Hybrid working arrangements have had various impacts on the ways in which parliamentarians do their work. Some parliamentarians have pointed to the value of allowing MPs the chance to work from their constituencies instead of spending time commuting back and forth to the capital on a weekly basis. They note the benefits of flexibility for MPs with caring responsibilities, making comments such as: “I think we’ll get even better people [in parliament] if we can offer some flexibility”. Others have objected to the continuation of hybrid sittings because they felt this had made it harder to hold ministers to account.

## Objectives

Parliaments are now in the “immediate post-COVID” phase, in which they are considering which features of hybrid working to retain and how to embed a digital strategy into their overall planning.

The central objective of this event is to investigate if, why and how hybrid working is becoming the “new normal” for parliaments.

Participants will discuss the findings and recommendations of the [World e-Parliament Report 2022](#). Parliamentarians will exchange perspectives on how hybrid working affects their work. They will consider how hybrid working impacts the legislative and oversight functions of parliament, and also to what extent hybrid working makes parliaments more modern, gender-sensitive and family-friendly workplaces. Participants will also share views on how to ensure the resilience of parliament in future emergencies.

## Date, virtual venue and time

This online event will take place on Zoom on Wednesday, 25 January 2023 from 14:00 to 15:30 CET (Geneva).

## Registration

Participants can register online at

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYrcuqupjMpHNMGygENXsLwPZtgIwLHmlah>

### **Key documents**

- [World e-Parliament Report 2022](#)
- [Centre for Innovation in Parliament](#)
- [\*Kigali Declaration - Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world\*](#)

### **Interpretation**

Interpretation will be provided in English, French, Spanish and Arabic

### **IPU Strategy**

This work contributes towards Strategic Objective 3: “Supporting resilient and innovative parliaments” of the [IPU 2022-2026 Strategy](#).

### **Contact**

For more information, please contact [innovation@ipu.org](mailto:innovation@ipu.org)