

Take away points – Dr. M. Mousmouti

1) How can Parliaments use SDGs in their work? How are parliaments working to accelerate the implementation of SDG7? Examples

There are 3 key things that Parliaments can do to promote the implementation of the SDGs:

- Create bodies that have the mandate to look at the issue, whether SDG 7 or a combination of goals

Several countries are creating dedicated committees, caucuses or interparliamentary groups¹.

Congress of Peru: Parliamentarians created a multi-party Green Caucus to lead and support the design and implementation of environmental legislation, raising the awareness of other parliamentarians on the importance of this work, and promoting citizen engagement on these topics. The Caucus established a working document to set the foundation and commitments for work, as well as coordinated actions with the Ministry of Environment.

Congress of Guatemala: Parliamentarians created a multi-party parliamentary group called “Frente parlamentario del cambio climático” to conduct technical analysis and promote bills focused on the environment, as well coordinate efforts with national and international institutions to create consensus, as well as promote citizen participation.

Senate of Canada: The Standing Committee on Energy, Environment and Natural Resources undertakes special studies and has released five interim reports relating to relevant sectors of the Canadian economy, namely: electricity; transportation; emissions-intensive and tradeexposed industries; oil and gas; and buildings. Additionally, Senators are joining forces to create a Senate working group on climate change modelled from the UK House of Lords’ Peers for the Planet, leveraging Canadian Senators’ long-term appointments to build consensus, momentum and identify practical solutions to bring about a fair transition to a net-zero world.

- Use the SDGs as a lens for scrutiny meaning
 - Scrutiny of new laws, to establish whether they are aligned with the SDGs and contribute to them
 - Scrutiny of progress in meeting national or international commitments
 - Ex-post scrutiny of existing laws to ascertain whether and to what extent they are contributing to

The National Assembly of Ecuador, through the Parliamentary Group for the Eradication of Poverty and Achieving the SDGs, developed a **Verification Checklist** that identifies how bills align with and support the implementation of the SDGs. The Organic Law of the National Assembly (its standing orders) was modified to require that each bill include a completed checklist.

House of Commons of Canada: The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development enquires into and reports on matters referred to it by the House of Commons. These include legislation,

¹ Examples are sourced from WFD, Globe, Inter pares, ParlAmericas, Parliaments and the Paris Agreement Strengthening parliamentary engagement in the development and implementation of international climate commitments. An overview of emerging global experience, September 2021.

departmental activities and spending, and reports of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development who is appointed by the Auditor General of Canada, Officer of Parliament, and reports on the effective use of resources, progress, and state of the work undertaken by the Government in environmental and sustainable development issues.

- Raise awareness within society on the need for alliances and behavioural change

2) How can parliaments better engage with society and stakeholders to monitor SDGs, collect and generate data?

Due to their unique role in democratic systems, Parliaments are well placed to raise questions that no one else can ask. To this aim, they need

- a clear method to mainstream the SDGs in their work (legislative or oversight)
- they can investigate aspects that are hidden or have not been highlighted
- listen to voices that have not been heard and highlight the real or potential impacts of different solutions.

Parliaments can use their entire toolkit to actively consult and engage but can also use new instruments to actively involve citizens in participatory decision making.

National Assembly of France: In May 2021 the French National Assembly adopted the Climate and Resilience Act. This Act was studied over three weeks, one of the longest parliamentary debates of the Fifth Republic (three weeks). It codifies into law the measures proposed by the Citizens' Assembly. The Assembly, convened by the French President, gathered 150 citizens representing France in its diversity. Over five months, The Assembly designed 149 climate and resilience measures covering all aspects of life. The National Assembly reviewed, modified, and legislated for 146 of the 149 proposed measures; more than 1,000 amendments were considered during the legislative process

Parliament of Ireland: A resolution of the Oireachtas, the Irish Parliament, commissioned a Citizens' Assembly that deliberated on five different topics, including climate change. The Assembly convened between 2016 and 2018 and reported back to Parliament in spring 2018. The Citizens' Assembly addressed climate change in 26 hours of listening, discussion and deliberation involving 99 participants in autumn 2017. The participants, seated around round tables, heard from scientific and other experts on climate change. At the end of the process, they voted on a series of 13 recommendations, some of which proposed quite radical commitments and policy changes. More than 80% of Assembly members supported all 13 recommendations. Parliament then established a special Committee on Climate Action to study the recommendations from the Citizens' Assembly. In March 2019, the parliamentary Committee on Climate Action published its own report, that endorsed and amplified the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly. The Assembly and the parliamentary committee report informed the government's ambitious Climate Action Plan announced in June 2019.