



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Joint IPU-ASGP Panel discussion

Committees of the Future: The future of parliaments?

Tuesday, 15 October, 14.30 – 16.00
Plenary E&F, level 3, CICG

Concept note

Parliaments are evolving to meet the complex challenges of an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world, by shaping policies that anticipate future trends. Parliaments have a critical role to play in ensuring that strategic foresight¹ and anticipatory governance² are embedded throughout the entire parliamentary governance architecture, guiding policy, legislation, oversight and decision-making.

In recent decades, parliaments have increasingly made efforts to involve their members directly in addressing future risks and factoring possible future developments into current decision-making. Following the pioneering initiative of the Parliament of Finland to establish a Committee of the Future in 1992 to examine long-term structural challenges for the country, as many as 30 parliaments have now established similar committees.

A recent analysis³ describes the potential of Committees of the Future to improve the quality of future-oriented policymaking by broadening and consolidating the national ecosystems of organizations involved in strategic foresight and anticipatory governance; to strengthen the transparency and accountability of the foresight work of political executives; and to enhance the legitimacy of anticipatory governance by connecting broader democratic publics to foresight work through more inclusive participatory processes.

In September 2023, the Parliament of Uruguay co-organized with the IPU the second World Summit of Committees of the Future, which brought together more than 200 parliamentarians from some 70 countries to focus on strategies to integrate a future-oriented approach to present-day policymaking and legislation. Participants focused particularly on AI and its potential impact on democracy, human rights and society in general. The Senate of Chile will co-organize with the IPU the third World Summit on 13-14 January 2025.

This joint IPU-ASGP panel discussion will provide an opportunity for participants to learn from the experience of parliamentary Committees of the Future in different countries, as well as about other parliamentary mechanisms for anticipatory governance. The discussion will explore issues such as:

- Why is it important for parliaments to devote attention to anticipatory governance, and how should they do this?
- What lessons have been learned from the experience of parliamentary Committees of the Future so far? How does this experience compare with other parliamentary mechanisms for anticipatory governance?
- What are the next steps for parliaments and their work on strategic foresight and anticipatory governance? What capacities do parliaments need to develop, and how best can they do so?

¹ The OECD defines [strategic foresight](#) as “a structured and systematic approach of exploring plausible futures to anticipate and better prepare for change”

² The OECD defines [anticipatory governance](#) as “a proactive approach that integrates foresight, innovation, and continuous learning into the heart of public governance”

³ Koskimaa, Vesa, and Raunio, Tapio. 2023. *Political Institutions and Long-Term Policymaking: How Parliamentary Future Committees Can Make a Difference*. *European Journal of Risk Regulation* 14(4): 686–96. doi: 10.1017/err.2023.85.