

## Conference report

### *The role of parliaments in shaping our digital future*

#### Introduction

The pervasive nature of digital technologies and the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) are fundamentally reshaping economies, public services and governance systems. The speed and scope of this digital transformation are placing significant pressure on institutions, legal frameworks and the resilience of democratic systems. While digital tools can boost competitiveness, they also pose risks such as bias, privacy violations and social fragmentation, making the balance between innovation and regulation a central concern.

Parliaments, as key institutions of representative democracy, have a responsibility to ensure that digital technologies serve the public good and to protect citizens from emerging risks – a dual role that encompasses both the legislative oversight of AI and digital policy, and the strategic adoption of these technologies within parliamentary operations themselves. The choices parliaments make today will determine the future of democracy in the digital age.

#### Section 1: The legislative and oversight role of parliaments in AI and digital policy

##### Current situation and emerging challenges

Rapid advances in AI are outpacing legislative reform, creating complex legal and ethical issues. Technology-driven content manipulation – such as synthetic voice cloning, AI-generated fake news, and image and video tampering – poses serious threats to public trust, gender equity and the integrity of democratic processes.

The borderless nature of AI technologies makes it difficult for any one country to fully manage the associated risks or reap the benefits alone. This reality demands that parliaments not only develop robust domestic frameworks but also align their efforts with international standards and engage in meaningful global cooperation.

##### IPU initiatives supporting parliamentary work on AI governance

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) resolution [The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law](#), adopted unanimously at the 149th IPU Assembly in October 2024, marked a watershed moment in global parliamentary cooperation. The resolution urges stronger legislative oversight and balanced AI regulation that promotes innovation while safeguarding rights through transparency, accountability and global cooperation.

The IPU co-organizes, with the United Nations (UN), the Parliamentary Track at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). At the 19th IGF, held in December 2024, parliamentarians adopted an output document calling for inclusive regulation, agile lawmaking and stronger institutional capacity to address emerging technology risks, while urging international cooperation to implement the [UN Global Digital Compact](#). This collaboration continued with the Parliamentary Track at the 20th IGF, held in June 2025, which further advanced parliamentary engagement in digital governance discussions.

These efforts align with the WSIS+20 (World Summit on the Information Society) review process, reinforcing the commitment to inclusive and coordinated approaches to digital policy development on a global scale. In December 2025, the UN General Assembly is expected to adopt a resolution that will further solidify the international framework for digital cooperation and governance.

## Examples of parliamentary actions on AI policy

Global parliamentary efforts are tracked through the IPU's [Parliamentary actions on AI policy](#) platform which, as of June 2025, includes developments from 37 countries: bill reviews, published reports, adopted resolutions, and specially established committees and working groups on AI. Some of these actions are detailed below:

### Aligning AI governance models with international standards

- **Brazil:** [Bill no. 2338/2023](#), passed by the Senate in December 2024 and currently under discussion in the Chamber of Deputies, adopts a rights-based, ethical and risk-based approach aligned with the [European Union \(EU\) AI Act](#).
- **Chile:** The Chamber of Deputies prepared for a final plenary debate on the [AI Regulation Bill](#) in June 2025. The bill was shaped through comparative analysis and reflected global benchmarks such as the [UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence](#) and the EU model.
- **Republic of Korea:** In December 2024, the Republic of Korea enacted the [Framework Act on AI](#), mandating transparency and safety standards for high-impact and generative AI systems, including pre-disclosure and labelling obligations accompanied by administrative penalties. The legislation also supports industry development through national AI strategies, entrepreneurship support, financial aid and the establishment of AI clusters.

### Evaluating the impact of AI on society, with input from all stakeholders

- **Argentina:** In the second half of 2024, the Science, Technology and Productive Innovation Committee of the Chamber of Deputies held [expert round tables](#) with entrepreneurs, researchers and public officials to discuss AI development and regulation.
- **Australia:** In 2024, the [Senate Select Committee on Adopting Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#) gathered individual submissions and held hearings with a view to preparing recommendations on regulating high-risk AI, protecting workers' rights and addressing environmental impacts.
- **Mexico and Türkiye:** The parliaments of both countries have created special committees focused on AI research, actively seeking input from experts and stakeholders.

### Combating harms from emerging technologies

- **EU:** The [Digital Services Act](#) and the AI Act require platforms to label AI-generated content for user clarity and remove harmful or illegal material, providing a common regulatory foundation across member states and strengthening accountability and transparency.
- **Bahrain:** The Shura Council has passed a [comprehensive AI law](#) banning non-consensual content manipulation. The legislation is currently being reviewed by the Council of Representatives.
- **Singapore:** The Parliament enacted the [Elections \(Integrity of Online Advertising\) \(Amendment\) Act 2024](#) to address the use of deepfakes during elections.
- **Spain:** In 2024, a [draft organic law](#) regulating AI-generated simulations of images and voices was introduced in the Congress of Deputies.

### Preparing for the future through anticipatory governance

- **Chile, Finland, Lithuania, Philippines and Uruguay:** In 1993, the Parliament of Finland established the first parliamentary [Committee for the Future](#), pioneering legislative approaches to national long-term strategy and future challenges. The parliaments of the other four countries have created similar committees to institutionalize consideration for future generations and to identify emerging opportunities and threats.

- **Estonia, Republic of Korea and United Kingdom:** The parliaments of these countries have established in-house expert bodies dedicated to futures research and science and technology foresight.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations build on the operative section of the IPU resolution *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*:

- **Strengthen legal and institutional capacity for AI and digital governance:**
  - Establish ethical guidelines for AI and emerging technologies while designing meticulous, risk-based regulatory frameworks.
  - Align domestic legislation with international standards in order to protect citizens' rights and contribute to coherent global digital governance.
- **Institutionalize mechanisms for citizen and expert engagement:**
  - Embed structured processes for engaging civil society, industry and academia in policymaking related to digital technologies at all stages.
  - Organize regular public hearings, expert roundtables and participatory policy forums in order to enhance legitimacy and build public trust.
- **Confront high-risk AI with decisive regulation:**
  - Enact clear, universal, non-negotiable regulatory boundaries for AI systems that pose clear threats to democratic integrity, public safety and human rights.
  - Ensure such boundaries are strong enough to prevent misuse, which erodes democratic institutional trust.
- **Advance anticipatory, inclusive and protective digital governance:**
  - Develop anticipatory frameworks to assess and manage the societal impacts of emerging technology.
  - Incorporate long-term foresight, trend analysis and ethical scenario planning into legislative activities.

## Section 2: Digital transformation of parliaments

### Current situation and digital adoption trends

“Supporting resilient and innovative parliaments” is one of the five strategic objectives identified in the [IPU 2022–2026 Strategy](#). Through its work in this area, the IPU aims to help parliaments effectively respond to rapidly evolving digital environments and emerging technological risks.

The [World e-Parliament Report 2024](#), which surveyed 115 parliamentary chambers in 86 countries, revealed accelerating digital transformation alongside persistent challenges. The report found that the share of parliaments using AI had tripled from 10% in 2020 to 29% in 2024, while cloud adoption had risen dramatically from 39% to 68% over the same period. These figures point to a fundamental shift in how parliaments approach core business and operational efficiency.

The report also revealed that 68% of surveyed parliaments had multi-year digital strategies, with increased ICT budgets and greater senior leadership engagement in digital governance. Cybersecurity had emerged as a critical priority, with 70% of parliaments having adopted national standards. However, while 98% of parliaments said they used social media, only 35% reported having formal strategies for online public engagement, highlighting gaps in strategic digital communication approaches.

The persistent digital divide between high- and low-income countries remains a major challenge. Parliaments in high-income countries generally show above-average digital maturity, while those in lower-income countries fall below the global average. This gap reflects structural issues impacting parliamentary efficiency, inclusiveness, access to information and responsiveness in the AI era.

## International support for parliamentary digital transformation

The IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament (CIP) has established itself as a leader and convener in the field of global parliamentary digitalization and modernization, prioritizing and supporting AI adoption through comprehensive guidance and practical tools.

The [Guidelines for AI in parliaments](#), developed by participating parliaments, offer a framework for responsible AI use. They emphasize that AI adoption should be approached as a strategic transformation initiative requiring strong leadership and clear vision, and that AI implementation should be gradual, well-planned and aligned with democratic principles, with AI systems designed to augment rather than replace human decision-making in parliamentary processes.

The Guidelines establish essential principles for AI implementation including privacy, transparency, accountability, fairness and non-discrimination, and human autonomy and oversight. They recommend that parliaments start with small pilot projects to build experience and confidence, focusing on use cases with clear benefits and manageable risks.

Key areas identified for AI application include enhancing legislative research and analysis, streamlining administrative processes, improving public engagement and transparency, enabling better data analysis for evidence-based policymaking, automating document processing and translation, and supporting post-legislative scrutiny. A companion document, [Use cases for AI in parliaments](#), outlines practical examples of these applications in action.

The CIP is building on this foundation with quick guides and an AI maturity framework to help parliaments track adoption and share a common language around digital transformation. It is also collating case studies to support safe AI adoption and provide practical examples of potential benefits.

In June 2025, representatives of 17 parliaments attended a CIP-facilitated AI maturity meeting in The Hague. Participants emphasized that successful AI implementation demanded a shift from technology-driven to business problem-focused approaches, treating AI as another – albeit disruptive – tool for solving specific parliamentary challenges and increasing efficiency.

The CIP also holds webinars and other events to facilitate knowledge-sharing between peers. Recent sessions have explored examples of AI governance in parliaments and the implications of AI for public engagement with legislatures.

## Examples of AI use in parliaments

Parliaments around the world are exploring the potential of AI to augment their current practices. Some examples of parliamentary actions in this area are detailed below:

### AI-powered legislative support tools

- **Bahrain:** The Council of Representatives has introduced an AI-powered chatbot that allows MPs and staff to access, search and summarize legislative documents.
- **Brazil:** The Chamber of Deputies uses AI tools to analyse citizens' opinions on bills and to categorize the main arguments for and against each proposal.
- **Finland:** The Parliament uses AI-enabled systems for document analysis and legislative research, building on its pioneering role in future-oriented governance.

### Enhanced transcription and documentation

- **Canada and Italy:** The parliaments of both countries have adopted AI-powered speech-to-text technologies for faster and more accurate production of parliamentary transcripts.
- **India:** The House of the People uses AI to analyse debates in real time, provide context, translate documents, enhance public access and digitize records to improve legislative processes.

- **Estonia:** The Estonian Parliament uses advanced digital infrastructure for automated transcription and document management, supporting its reputation as a leader in digital government.

#### **Citizen engagement and communication**

- **Thailand:** The National Assembly uses AI to collect and analyse citizen feedback, integrate it into policymaking and improve public communication.
- **South Africa:** The Parliament uses AI technologies and digital systems to support remote working for MPs and to respond promptly to emails from citizens.

#### **Recommendations**

The *World e-Parliament Report 2024* makes the following recommendations for parliaments:

- **Develop clear visions and comprehensive digital strategies** aligned with parliament's overall strategic objectives, and ensure strong political and administrative leadership to drive digital transformation.
- **Allocate adequate financial, human and technological resources** to support digital transformation, considering both short-term and long-term requirements.
- **Establish robust governance frameworks** and regulations for emerging technologies like AI to ensure responsible and transparent use while safeguarding democratic values.
- **Invest in capacity-building**, providing training and skills development opportunities for members and staff, particularly in cybersecurity, data management and emerging technologies.
- **Prioritize public engagement**, developing formal strategies and leveraging digital tools to involve more citizens in the legislative process and build trust in democratic institutions.
- **Strengthen inter-parliamentary collaboration** and knowledge-sharing to enable parliaments to learn from each other, share good practices and collectively address common challenges in digital transformation.

#### **Conclusion: Global collaboration for inclusive digital transformation**

At a time of rapid digital transformation, with its attendant opportunities and challenges, parliaments stand at a critical crossroads. The speed of technological change demands visionary governance that anticipates long-term societal impacts. In order to safeguard democratic values, it is essential to strengthen institutional capacity, bridge the digital divide and foster inclusive innovation.

Parliaments should actively leverage international platforms to share legislative best practices, conduct joint research and undertake comparative legal analysis. AI governance frameworks, established collectively by the international community, could serve as a valuable foundation for shaping effective and coherent domestic legislation.

In the borderless realm of digital technology, global networks play a crucial role in embedding shared ethical considerations and long-term perspectives into legislative processes, while fostering foresight-based strategies grounded in international cooperation. As the influence of digital technology expands across all sectors, parliaments must evolve to become more agile. The choices parliaments make today will determine democracy's future in the digital age.