



2026 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations

12-13 February 2026 New York, U.S.A



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.



President of the
General Assembly
80th Session



Better
Together

Parliaments and the UN: Better together, delivering for the people

Moderator: Mr. Dan Dunsky

Thursday, 12 February 2026	
10:00–10:15	Welcoming remarks
	<p>H.E. Ms. Annalena Baerbock, President of the United Nations General Assembly</p> <p>Hon. Dr. Tulia Ackson, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union</p>
10:15–10:45	Interactive survey
	<p>Participants will be invited to respond to a series of questions designed to identify basic positions and trends with regard to the topics of the Hearing, as articulated in the following sessions. The survey will be conducted on Mentimeter.com and will require participants to use their phones or tablets.</p>
10:45–12:45	The UN at 80: Renewing trust and purpose through cooperation and partnership
	<p>The multilateral system, with the United Nations at its centre, which came into being in 1945, is at an impasse, and while global challenges are on the rise, the United Nations' ability to address them is under scrutiny.</p> <p>The Pact for the Future, adopted in September 2024 by Member States of the United Nations, serves as a key roadmap to forge a new global consensus and restore the full operability of the UN-led multilateral system, including by strengthening the partnership with parliaments and civil society actors <i>“to deliver on existing commitments and address new and emerging challenges”</i>.</p> <p>This first session, a “fireside chat” with New York-based Permanent Representatives, will focus on discussing problems and solutions for a more effective multilateral system and include an opportunity for questions and comments from participants. The following key questions will be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What challenges undermine the effectiveness and impact of the United Nations as the leading multilateral organization? • How can parliaments help the United Nations deliver on its promises? • What models exist for strengthening oversight, transparency and citizen engagement in multilateral processes? <p>Discussants:</p> <p>H.E. Mr. Tareq AlBanai, Permanent Representative of Kuwait, Co-Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council</p>

	<p>H.E. Ms.Carolyn Schwalger, Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations, Co-Chair of the informal ad hoc working group on the mandate implementation review, UN80 Initiative</p> <p>Respondents:</p> <p>H.E. Ms. Annalena Baerbock, President of the United Nations General Assembly</p> <p>Hon. Dr. Tulia Ackson, President of the IPU</p>
Lunch break	
15:00–18:00	Translating global commitments into national realities
	<p>The Pact for the Future consists of an integrated reform agenda built on existing global commitments, divided into five policy areas – sustainable development and finance; international peace and security; youth and future generations; science, technology, innovation and digital cooperation; and global governance. Implementing these and other existing commitments will be a litmus test of the multilateral system’s ability to deliver to the people, for the people.</p> <p>This session will explore how a multi-stakeholder and rights-based approach can support the Pact’s integrated agenda, and how parliaments can help deliver on shared commitments. The following key questions will be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the Pact for the Future build on existing global commitments under the UN’s three key pillars – peace and security, development, and human rights? • How can governments and parliaments respond to the commitments that emerged from the Pact? • How can parliaments help implement the Pact for the Future through budgetary and legislative process? <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Ms. Gabriela Moraska-Stanecka, Senator, Vice President of the IPU</p> <p>Ms. Naomi Waqo, MP, National Assembly of Kenya</p> <p>Mr. Themba Kalua, Director, Pact for the Future Implementation, Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General</p> <p>Mr. Ishaan Shah, Co-founder of Stolen Dreams, UN Foundation Generation Fellow</p>
18:15 –19:30	Reception: IPU Permanent Observer Office - 336 East 45th Street, 10th Floor

Friday, 13 February 2026

10:00–12:00	Protecting democracy from within: Parliamentary safeguards, responsibilities and renewal in times of democratic erosion
	<p>Around the world, signs of democratic backsliding are evident in both established and emerging democracies, while countries experiencing conflict face amplified challenges. Many factors are to blame, from voters’ apathy to political polarization and insecurity, skewed electoral systems and the influence of “big money” in politics.</p> <p>Underpinning this regression of democratic practices are the growing challenges faced by parliaments in carrying out their mandate and in particular their oversight and representative role. Indeed, the extent to which parliaments can protect democratic values and practices depends in large measure on their capacity and authority to hold governments accountable, which, in turn, hinges on parliaments being fully legitimized as representatives of all the people.</p> <p>This panel will examine current contexts and challenges faced by parliaments that impact on their representative, oversight and legislative roles and that undermine public trust in government at national and global levels, including the United Nations. The following key questions will be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can parliaments safeguard the integrity of their key democratic functions such as oversight, budget scrutiny and legislative deliberation? • How can parliaments help foster a political culture that prioritizes the rule of law and human rights at both national and international levels? • What models exist for strengthening collaboration within parliaments, and between parliaments, independent institutions, civil society and the media to protect democratic checks and balances? • How should the multilateral system respond to widespread democratic backsliding, and what role should national parliaments play in that response? <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Ms. Carolina Cosse, President of the Senate, and Vice-President of Uruguay</p> <p>Ms. Susan Brown, Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy, UNDP</p> <p>Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, United Nations</p> <p>Mr. John Gilroy, Chief of Service, UN Democracy Fund</p>
12:00–13:00	IPU report launch
	<p>This special segment will draw on the findings of the IPU’s forthcoming report entitled <i>When the public turns hostile: Political violence and intimidation against parliamentarians.</i> The discussion will focus on the erosion of civic space, online harassment – exacerbated by AI – and political repression and violence that threaten democratic functioning. The following key questions will be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does intimidation from the public impact the lives of parliamentarians and their ability to carry out their mandates? • What practical safeguards can be introduced nationally and internationally to protect parliamentarians? <p>Presenters:</p>

	<p>Mr. Rogier Huizenga, Director, IPU Human Rights Programme</p> <p>Ms. Meri Disoski, MP, National Council of Austria</p> <p>Mr. Jose Miguel Insulza, Senator, Chile</p>
Lunch break	
15:00–16:50	Financing and future-proofing the United Nations
	<p>The future of the United Nations as a pillar of a strong multilateral system depends on its financing. For years now, the United Nations has faced a severe liquidity crisis. More importantly, the United Nations’ ability to deliver on its mandate effectively is greatly limited by assessed contributions not being paid on time or in full, donors’ use of earmarked voluntary funds, and the Organization’s over-reliance on a few large contributors.</p> <p>This session will examine current issues affecting the financing of the United Nations, including the annual assessments paid by Member States and extra budgetary contributions to the budget for peace, development and human rights. The current UN80 reform initiative – divided into three work streams, which aims to review the UN budget and its mandates, and to streamline the work of the UN system as a whole through structural changes and programme realignment, will also be discussed. The following key questions will be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can parliaments help ensure that the UN receives the predictable and balanced resources it needs to remain effective in the current global context? • Should the UN budget include new, innovative financing streams? How? • How can we ensure that all three pillars of the United Nations – peace and security, development, and human rights – are adequately and equally supported? <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Mr. Guy Ryder, Under-Secretary-General for Policy</p> <p>H.E. Ambassador Lok Bahadur Thapa, Permanent Representative of Nepal, President of ECOSOC</p> <p>Ms. Minh-Thu Pham, Co-Founder & CEO, Starling Institute</p> <p>Ms. Sofia Garcia Garcia, Director of Advocacy and Partnerships, Article 109 Coalition</p>
16:50 –17:00	Closing
	Mr. Martin Chungong , Secretary General of the IPU