

Ensuring accountability and oversight for adolescent health

Interactive session of the 138th IPU Assembly

Date: Monday, 26 March 2018
Time: 12.45 – 2.15 p.m.
Room: Room 18, Floor -1, CICG
Languages: English and French

Parliament is a key institution of accountability in each country. Its responsibility is to hold the executive to account for commitments made at different levels and make sure that they make a difference in the lives of ordinary people, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable such as adolescents. The *Global Parliamentary Report 2017* provides an evidence-based analysis of the current state of parliamentary oversight and offers numerous examples of ways parliamentarians can approach oversight in their countries, including through work in committees on a wide variety of sectoral and cross-cutting areas.

Today, around 1.2 billion people are adolescents aged 10 to 19, making one sixth of the global population. Adolescent health issues vary across regions and according to age and sex. They include: mental health; early pregnancy and childbirth; HIV; infectious diseases such as diarrhoea and lower respiratory tract infections; violence; and tobacco, alcohol and drug use. In the last two decades, global efforts to promote the health and well-being of women and children have substantially increased, yielding tangible, encouraging results. However, the adolescent age group has often been neglected, resulting in weak, fragile national and global accountability and oversight mechanisms for this group. In 2015, the launch of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health aimed to fill this gap.

Ensuring accountability and oversight mechanisms for adolescent health and relying on evidence-informed processes to guide decision making should be part and parcel of national plans and strategies to preserve the health of adolescents and help them reach their full potential to actively participate in their communities and make a transformative change.

This interactive session will provide an avenue for discussion and information-sharing between parliamentarians and experts as well as among parliamentarians on national responses to adolescent health. The session will explore behaviours and social determinants that affect health outcomes of adolescents and opportunities to enjoy good health. It will aim to capture good practices that national parliaments have put in place to adopt or amend legislation on adolescent health, ensure effective oversight of related laws and policies and advocate for continued support to adolescent health.

The session will address the following questions:

- Drawing upon their constitutional functions, what can parliaments do to make sure that adolescent health is a national political priority?
- What can parliamentarians do to ensure that once declared a priority, adolescent health strategies are implemented and monitored effectively?
- What oversight practices have the greatest impact on adolescent health, including committees' work and financial oversight? What good parliamentary practices can be shared?

- In their oversight work, what actions can parliamentarians take to ensure that programmes, information and services reach and work for all adolescents, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable?
- What personal experiences can parliamentarians share in reaching out to adolescents?
- Who are the critical partners to parliaments as they exercise their oversight function?

Provisional agenda

Moderator:	Ms. Helga Fogstad, Executive-Director, The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)
Welcome:	Dr. Habibe Millat MP, Chair of the IPU Advisory Group on Health
Expert presentation:	Dr. Lale Say, Coordinator, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization Dr. Elizabeth Mason, Member, UN SG's Independent Accountability Panel for Every Woman, Every Child, Every Adolescent
Open discussion	about 60 minutes
Wrap-up	5 minutes