



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Annual Report 2017



What is the IPU?

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the global organization of national parliaments. We work to safeguard peace and drive positive democratic change through political dialogue and concrete action.

The only international organization to bring together the world's national parliaments, we promote democracy and peace through this unique parliamentary membership.

An ever-changing pool of about 45,000 members of parliament, representing citizens worldwide, ensures the IPU always has a finger on the pulse of democracy.

The IPU is an independent, self-governing body funded mainly by our Members. Our current membership includes 178 national parliaments and 12 regional parliamentary bodies as associate members.

The Global Bubble Parade, São Paulo, Brazil — an event created by the 100 Happy Days Foundation. The IPU works closely with parliaments to assist them to contribute effectively to the implementation of the SDGs, including those on health and well-being, and sustainable communities. © NurPhoto/Cris Faga

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Achieving the results to which we have committed

In the autumn of 2016, following extensive consultations with Member Parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union adopted its *Strategy 2017–2021*. It is in this context that this *Annual Report 2017* has been prepared. During this last year – the first year of the IPU pursuing the implementation of our new Strategy, we have accomplished a great deal.

The work of the IPU is grounded in ensuring that parliaments remain relevant and effective in the face of the challenges of our times – in particular, the loss of faith in our democratic institutions and the far-reaching requirements of the universal development commitments. The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Agenda 2030) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are challenging, they are aspirational and they are achievable. And parliaments and parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to help deliver on these global commitments to peace, development and human rights through the fulfillment of their core mandate – the exercise of their legislative, budget and oversight responsibilities.

What parliaments are being asked to do is not new, not extraordinary: Parliaments must use the powers that accrue to them in the constitutions and other fundamental texts, that are invested in them as the representatives of the people. They must use them effectively to stay relevant, and more, to make a difference in the lives of the people they represent. In Agenda 2030, parliaments have a clearly defined and universally accepted platform for action. Everyone can agree – at the international level, everyone has agreed – on this agenda. The development strategy is there, the climate plan is there, the disaster risk reduction framework is there: We need only get on with the work of using the powers entrusted to us to make it happen. And the IPU, in accordance with its *raison d'être*, must continue to support parliaments in this effort.

This Annual Report is principally about that: showing progress against the global agenda and the IPU's Strategy to realize it. To demonstrate progress, the focus of this report has been shifted from that of previous reports:

- The contents are organized by the *Strategy 2017–2021* objectives, but make no mistake: our efforts cut across all objectives. Like pursuing the sustainable development agenda, we cannot work only in silos. The objectives are interdependent, as are the actions and decisions taken to achieve them.
- The narrative primarily describes how the IPU is achieving the results to which we have committed, and where progress against our objectives is being made.



IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong is a member of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Lead Group, which works to cement nutrition – essential to achieving the SDGs – as a national priority.
© IPU/Suroor Alikhan

This focus on results rather than on process also ties in very well with our evolving approach to governance as we move towards a results-based management scheme. The assessment of outcomes also allows us to make the course corrections necessary to improve and accelerate our approach to implementing *Strategy 2017–2021*. At the 137th Assembly in St. Petersburg, Gabriela Cuevas Barron was elected the new IPU President. We look forward to the new perspective she will bring to the IPU leadership team's efforts to deliver on the Strategy.

But how is success measured? We can count the number of seminars we have conducted, the number of missions undertaken, and the social media uptake of our campaigns, and we always hope to do more, to engage more and to reach more people, but progress is assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively, and in this report we focus less on the numbers and more on what our actions and decisions have achieved.

We know, for example, that IPU Assemblies and inter-parliamentary cooperation in general help raise awareness and empower parliamentarians. We know that there are countries that engage, representatives who talk, under the auspices of Assemblies and other IPU gatherings, whose opinions and outlooks are markedly different, and who might otherwise never come face to face. These are meaningful exchanges: they impart learning and understanding, and they promote tolerance and contribute to peacebuilding – for the good of the world's citizens.

These opportunities are available to Member Parliaments, and of course participation in the IPU allows for additional benefits. For the IPU, the rule of universality manifests in terms of numbers but also in terms of issues. The institution addresses issues that are relevant to everyone and to the majority, as well as issues that appeal to a cross-section of the membership. But the IPU also has the desire and capacity to reach out to, to support and foster the work of, the smaller constituencies. For example, we are working with Fiji to build the Parliament's capacity to address Agenda 2030. They are a small country, but they count for us.

At the global level we are working with the United Nations, its agencies, programmes and departments. The key focus of our UN System partnerships is about working together to deliver on the development agenda and, to that end, to improve global governance. In fact all the IPU's strategic objectives call for significant United Nations involvement and cooperation. Our work with UN Women on women's empowerment and parliamentary input to the proceedings and activities of the Human Rights Council (HRC) are examples of this. That this is a partnership is increasingly being recognized by the United Nations: in 2017, for instance, the HRC adopted a resolution in support of stronger cooperation with parliaments. We applaud that decision. But we also recognize the inherent challenge: because of the profile of the United Nations, the people of the planet will expect more of their parliaments. We must deliver on our commitments; we have our work cut out for us.

As for the numbers, the IPU continues to make substantive contributions to the research and data related to the advancement of democracy. More and more, the organization is recognized as an international authority on this information. Democracies must be as inclusive as they can be, and they can only be inclusive if women and youth are involved. It is about legitimacy: can you say your processes and decisions are legitimate when they are not properly informed by all constituencies in society? That is why the IPU promotes women's and youth empowerment, and why parliaments are asked and expected to do so. The research and statistics we collect and publish support this, allowing us to identify gaps and measure progress.

Underlying all of this is an attempt to remain optimistic in our outlook – to focus on the positive experiences we have had and can build upon, and, more, the positive impact being made by parliaments on the lives of the people. The outlook in the world today may indeed be gloomy, but we cannot let that drag us down. Our constituents are depending upon us not to let that define our actions or hinder our progress. We are making progress. We are having an impact. That is not always obvious, however; it is not sufficiently being highlighted. This report seeks to correct that, to speak to parliaments' successes, and the IPU's efforts to continue to foster such positive outcomes.



Martin Chungong
Secretary General

Objective 1: Build strong, democratic parliaments

This strategic objective is the marrying of two profoundly important and interrelated drivers: The first is a core purpose of the Inter-Parliamentary Union – the building of strong and stable parliaments and the advancement of democracy. The second is the essence of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 – the SDG for which parliamentarians are very responsible, that calls for “effective, accountable and inclusive institutions” and “responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making” at all levels.

We make progress against this objective by promoting standards-setting and knowledge generation, and building institutional capacity. Each year we assess: how many parliaments has the IPU supported? What is the nature of that support? What is the evidence that parliaments are leading their own development? And to what extent are the *Common Principles for Support to Parliaments* and other IPU-developed tools being used?

Advancing democracy and strengthening its institutions

Over 30 individual capacity-building activities were delivered in support of nine national parliaments during 2017. In accordance with the principles underpinning this support, all nine parliaments led the design of the activities conducted, many efforts involved self-development by parliaments, and the Common Principles were applied throughout.

Benin – The IPU sponsored a seminar on strengthening legislative drafting skills for the Parliament of Benin. Over 50 staff were trained and 44 members of parliament (MPs) took part in an information session. Evaluations indicated all participants acquired a better understanding of the essential cooperation between parliamentarians and civil servants in the legislative drafting process.



IPU's new leadership team – Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General and Gabriela Cuevas Barron, IPU President – is committed to implementation of the SDGs. © IPU/Jorky



The IPU assists parliaments to be representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective. These core values are the hallmarks of a democratic parliament. © NOTIMEX/ Guillermo Ogam

Comoros – The National Assembly of Comoros organized a seminar on parliamentary practices for good governance. Attendees enhanced their skills related to parliamentary oversight, with a special focus on budgets and effective engagement in budgetary processes. They were also made aware of the IPU-UN Development Programme (UNDP) self-assessment toolkit, *Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals*, and of the importance of such tools to assist in information gathering and management.

Djibouti – An assessment of the National Assembly's needs was jointly undertaken by the Assembly and the IPU in January 2017. Based on discussions with MPs, staff, civil society and the international community, the report identified the parliament's strengths and challenges, making over 60 recommendations to enhance its functioning. Priority areas for capacity-building, as determined by the parliament, included strategic planning, strengthening the secretariat and outreach.

Alongside the assessment, a one-day workshop to improve parliamentary efficiency was conducted for approximately 25 staff members, including department directors. Outcomes included increased collaboration among staff: a teambuilding exercise followed, during which staff identified a set of solutions to enhance efficiency, including options for directly involving civil society in the work of parliament in order to leverage a wider base of knowledge and expertise.

The first of three missions to support the National Assembly's design of its strategic plan took place from 12–14 December 2017. MPs employed IPU tools for self-assessment of their parliament, its gender sensitivity, and its engagement with the SDGs. The approach used facilitates the Assembly's drafting of its own strategic plan.

The mission received good coverage in the local media, ensuring citizens are aware of the work of their parliament. In an era of declining confidence in democratic institutions, this, too, is an important outcome.

Egypt – In 2016, the House of Representatives, with support from the IPU, conducted a needs assessment and began to prepare a comprehensive project document on priority areas for building parliamentary capacity. In 2017 this document was finalized. It includes a 5-year logical framework setting out strategic objectives, supporting activities and indicators to measure progress.

Establishing a parliamentary institute was among the priorities identified; the House of Representatives did this in 2016. While the institute is continuing to fully establish itself, it is already coordinating workshops for MPs: six workshops were organized between May and December of 2017. And the coordination effort itself is in fact “on-the-job” training for institute staff, who with the assistance and guidance of the IPU are getting acquainted with the use of project management tools.

Georgia – The Georgian Foreign Relations Committee, with the aid of the IPU and UNDP, has produced a draft multi-year strategic plan to set the vision, overall objectives, key priorities and strategic goals for Georgia's international affairs and foreign policy. The strategy's aim is to enhance the Committee's functioning, thereby contributing to better informed policy-making and improved legislative processes.

Myanmar – The project work with Myanmar's parliament is a partnership between the IPU and UNDP, with the IPU having specific areas of responsibility. In 2017, an IPU team of four project staff based in Myanmar achieved the following outcomes:

- administrative support to the parliament's Information and Communication (ICT) Steering Committee: drafting agendas, writing minutes and preparing relevant background information and reports
- professional development of 12 ICT staff responsible for SharePoint implementation and database maintenance in the parliament
- middle management training for 78 directors, and deputy and assistant directors to foster project management and team building skills, and to integrate institutional development planning, monitoring and evaluation practices
- 24 executive and senior managers received training in strategically led institutional development focused on managing change and effective decision-making
- all committee chairs and secretaries received training on core government functions
- a professional development seminar on human rights was delivered to over 300 MPs
- a seminar on natural resource governance and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative was delivered to over 200 MPs
- Learning Centre drop-in services were accessed by 95 Assembly of the Union MPs – amounting to over 150 hours of tuition delivered (92 per cent of MPs reported they could use the skills gained in their duties)
- on-the-job training for Learning Centre staff, and
- “train the trainers” (TTT) programming focused on developing and delivering computer skills related to the use of modern technology in providing support to MPs, and plenary and committee staff (addressing the IPU's commitment to engage in developing ICT and information management to strengthen information provision and e-services to MPs and parliaments, and their ability to engage with the public).

Sri Lanka – An IPU February 2017 mission completed the project supporting the parliament's establishment of a functioning digital library. The expert mission resulted in: the migration of important databases to a DSpace digital library, as well as the library catalogue; the development of workflows for document submission and automated data harvesting; and the training of library staff in the technical management of DSpace and the submission of documents. The IPU's *Common*

Principles for Support to Parliaments was used to guide the Sri Lankan digital library project. A survey to measure the application of the Common Principles was piloted on this mission.

Vanuatu – Parliament's ICT needs were assessed and the development of a strategic plan was facilitated through an expert mission. As a result, the Parliament of Vanuatu enhanced its ICT-related capacities.

Zambia – In a mission conducted by the IPU and guided by the Common Principles, the National Assembly of Zambia received support to implement a functioning digital repository. Having comparable objectives and a similar approach, and supported by the IPU – the “hub” for parliament-to-parliament cooperation – Zambia participated in a peer-to-peer exchange with the Sri Lankan parliament around this endeavour.

In addition to the concrete capacity-building activities organized for the above parliaments, the IPU continued in 2017 to liaise regularly with other parliaments, notably the two mentioned below. This occurred primarily in follow-up to or preparation for on-going support.

Timor-Leste – A draft project proposal based on the parliament's strategic plan is being jointly designed by the Timor-Leste Parliament and the IPU for implementation in 2018.

Pakistan – Discussions were held between the Parliament of Japan and the Senate of Pakistan for a tripartite collaboration with the IPU for capacity-building activities for the Senate's Legislative Drafting Unit. Activities are expected to begin in early 2018.

In an effort to continue to improve the approach to delivery of institutional development to parliaments, the IPU looks to what occurs after support is provided: is the supported parliament more resilient? Does its performance improve? Is there positive change? Several parliaments supported during 2017 have already shown evidence of the continuing impact of the assistance received. For example:

- In Zambia, governance of project activities was revised to include a steering body composed of the Secretariat leadership to make decisions and monitor progress.
- In Myanmar, management training resulted in eight internal projects to support achievement of the parliament's strategic planning priorities; SharePoint staff piloted intranet pages for 14 committees and departments following ICT training; and using ICTs to improve processes has enabled MPs and staff of the affected departments to share information more easily and to increase work process efficiencies.
- Djibouti's National Assembly has identified challenges and opportunities for its improved functioning, and has set priorities and begun the development of its first strategic plan.
- Similarly, in Vanuatu, the parliament has identified its ICT needs and developed an ICT strategic plan.

IPU tools, standards and criteria – the ways and means of support

Common Principles for Support to Parliaments

The Common Principles, of which there are 10, are intended to provide a summary of what is most important and aspirational in parliamentary development, and a common language that all actors involved can share. In 2017, they were increasingly taken into account and applied in all activities, with a particular focus on the following:

- individual parliaments directing the assistance they require; this ensures parliaments' real needs are supported and increases the commitment of the beneficiary parliaments – all parliaments supported during the year made this determination
- being inclusive of all political tendencies – in Djibouti, for example, the opposition also participated in capacity-building activities
- support that addresses the potential of women and men equally – this was emphasized in Djibouti, Benin and Myanmar
- where possible, both local and international experts providing the support – this occurred in Djibouti, Egypt, Georgia and Myanmar, and
- peer-to-peer experience sharing that transfers knowledge – participants in Benin, Comoros, Egypt, Georgia, Myanmar, Vanuatu and Zambia benefitted from these opportunities for additional learning this year.

It is important to continue to promote the Common Principles, as support for them and use of them increases their relevance and reach. A promotion strategy was finalized and implemented in 2017 with encouraging results: 8 new endorsements were received, bringing the total number of parliaments and partners backing the principles at the close of the year to 116. And for the first time that we are aware of, a report of a national parliament (Pakistan) on its own development mentioned the Common Principles as an important and relevant methodology to employ. As well, the parliament of Timor-Leste has fully incorporated the Common Principles into its 2017–2022 strategic plan.

Additionally, the IPU produced a report on the first Common Principles roundtable, entitled “Building to last: Parliamentary support aims for sustainable outcomes”. The report includes an annex of practical tools to strengthen the transfer of knowledge among parliaments, and to improve efficiency, coordination and local ownership of parliamentary development.

Global Parliamentary Report 2017

Another flagship publication, this second edition of the report that is co-developed by the IPU and UNDP was delivered at the 137th IPU Assembly in St. Petersburg in October 2017. The report is focused on parliamentary oversight and holding governments to account – responsibilities that lie at the heart of the parliamentary mandate and are fundamental to making our institutions transparent, accountable and effective, and in line with SDG 16. Based on contributions (questionnaires, surveys and interviews with MPs) from more than 150 national parliaments, the 2017 report makes 28 recommendations

for action to strengthen parliamentary oversight of the work of governments. Promotion and implementation of these recommendations is now under way through a combination of approaches being led by parliaments themselves, the IPU and UNDP.

As of 18 December 2017, the *Global Parliamentary Report* had been presented by the IPU or UNDP in the parliaments of Egypt, Fiji and the Republic of Moldova. Follow-up with parliaments will continue in 2018 to maximize the report's impact.

The publication has been launched in English and French, and is being translated into Spanish and Arabic.



Tools and other support to parliaments

Among the resources the IPU provides are three key parliamentary self-assessment kits:

- *Evaluating parliament*
- *Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments*, and
- *Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals*.

The application of these kits and the development activities that are undertaken as a result of their use are fundamental to progress in setting standards, and increasing knowledge and institutional capacity.

The *PARLINE* database took a leap forward in 2017: it now contains data on all 194 national parliaments. Data that has been collected for the revised version of *PARLINE* will be incorporated in the new Open Data Platform that the IPU will publish in 2018. The Open Data Platform will provide a single point of access to the IPU's data on parliaments, including on women, youth and human rights. Between the data provided by parliaments and the research done by the IPU, *PARLINE* will be the leading data source on the world's parliaments. Already a key tool for disseminating information about parliaments – for use by parliaments, partners and other stakeholders, *PARLINE* will be even more robust and useful under the new format.

Research for the *2018 World e-Parliament Report* (WePR) has been initiated via a questionnaire for parliaments and a survey of MPs. This research is ongoing and will lead to the publication of the report in the second half of 2018. The preparation of the WePR is related to the establishment of a new Centre for Innovation in Parliament, which the IPU's governing bodies approved at the 136th Assembly in Dhaka. The centre will operate under the aegis of the IPU and in partnership with participating parliaments, and "through research, capacity-building and networking, will support parliaments in becoming ever more transparent, accountable and effective institutions through the innovative use of digital tools and services".

The IPU has worked with UNDP's Oslo Governance Centre on a possible additional indicator for SDG 16, focusing on the sex and age of chairs of parliamentary committees. This work is still in progress. In addition, a review of the work done to date on developing indicators for democratic parliaments has been carried out, with a view to establishing stronger linkages to the SDG indicators. Both efforts are aimed at support of parliaments engaged in development, and evaluation of their engagement.

Assessment of the IPU

The IPU also evaluates and offers an account of its own work – not least in this Annual Report to Members, partners and stakeholders. In 2017, we developed and deployed various project management tools to enhance the delivery and quality of the support we provide to parliaments. Among these tools are:

- feedback gathering, including an online evaluation conducted six months following completion of an activity
- a template to track project support from baseline to impact – this includes reporting on three types of impact: deliverable impact, process impact and stakeholder impact, and
- a prototype logical framework that merges traditional results-based management approaches with application of the IPU's Common Principles.

An external review to ascertain the effectiveness, impact, efficiency and relevance of the work performed by the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and the Gender Partnership Programme (GPP) in supporting change in parliaments was carried out. The review found that both programmes directly contribute to the IPU's mission to promote democratic governance, institutions and values, and to advance gender equality in and through parliaments. The review also highlighted that the project results framework the IPU employs, which includes solid and effective management

practices such as steering committees, focal points and project management tools, allows for focused monitoring of activities. However, enhanced monitoring of results and evaluation at the level of overall goals was recommended. The report identified more robust collection of data on results indicators and enhanced analysis of progress towards intended results as means to achieve this. To address this recommendation, a revamping of the IPU's monitoring and evaluation capacity and results-based management approach is foreseen for 2018.

Deliverable impact: factors include the number of requirements met (parliament's request, follows IPU Strategy, etc.) and the quality of the final solution.

Process Impact: this includes the way the project is managed, including timeline, budget, communication, collaboration and change controls; adherence to established project management process; and the application of the Common Principles.

Stakeholder impact: this includes subjective elements like collaboration between team members, solution performance and the ability to solve stated requirements/problems.

The Declaration on Democracy turns 20!

There was much to celebrate in 2017, as the International Day of Democracy marked the 20th anniversary of the IPU's *Universal Declaration on Democracy*. The IPU organized events in Geneva and New York in partnership with the United Nations, and 30 national parliaments organized activities to mark the occasion in their home countries. The IPU also launched a global campaign in favour of stronger democracies, based on the principles contained in the declaration. The campaign featured the *#StrongerDemocracies – GET ENGAGED NOW* hashtag, and the social media uptake has to date attracted 406 petition sign-ups, 2,605 webpage views and 1,257 users. As well, in October 2017, the IPU Assembly adopted a new resolution on "Sharing our diversity: The 20th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration on Democracy*" in which parliaments affirmed a renewed commitment to the core principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

International Day of Democracy

15 September 2017

#StrongerDemocracies

**GET
ENGAGED
NOW!**



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy, for everyone.

20 years of the
Universal Declaration on Democracy
JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN
www.ipu.org/campaign

  **#StrongerDemocracies**

Objective 2: Advance gender equality and respect for women's rights

Under this objective, the IPU takes action on women's participation in politics, and on women's rights and gender equality, including through efforts to eradicate violence against women and girls.

Supporting women's political empowerment

Capacity-building among women parliamentarians

Mauritania – IPU technical and financial support allowed Mauritania's caucus of women MPs to travel to all regions of the country to promote women's rights, delivering its message and listening to the voices of citizens. Links with communities – particularly women in rural areas – were strengthened, and their priority issues were addressed. The impact of the consultations was also felt in the Mauritanian Parliament, where MPs of both genders raised questions regarding the socio-economic needs and interests of rural women and girls. This IPU support thereby contributed to building in Mauritania a more gender-sensitive and democratic parliament, which is closer to the people.

Tanzania – The IPU provided support to the Tanzania Women Parliamentary Group (TWPG) to develop a mentorship programme as part of its 2015–2020 strategic plan. Frank discussion identified political party dynamics as an obstacle to be overcome. Members' openness, and the recognition that they were facing similar challenges and wished to pursue common objectives, built solidarity among members. In addition, experience sharing with the Chair of the Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association resulted in discussions on how the TWPG might better reach out to men as allies in the promotion of gender equality.

Côte d'Ivoire – Following the December 2016 parliamentary elections, women MPs decided to re-launch the women's parliamentary caucus. A seminar including 46 MPs (25 women and 21 men) was organized in order to discuss modalities and focus areas for the caucus and to build the capacity of new women MPs. The seminar allowed for taking stock of challenges faced, and participants reached agreement on next steps for the establishment and functioning of the caucus with support from the IPU and UN Women.

Self-assessment of gender sensitivity by parliaments

The IPU's *Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments* self-assessment toolkit was presented and/or employed in the following instances in 2017:

- In Tanzania, during a national parliamentary seminar on gender and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Participants included 100 female and 36 male parliamentarians,



A member of the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), Monrovia, Liberia. © AFP/Zoom Dosso

parliamentary staff and the two Tanzanian ministers of gender (mainland and Zanzibar). Outcomes included plans to set up a gender mechanism such as a dedicated parliamentary committee, enhance gender balance on committees and mainstream a gender perspective in the analysis of bills, policies and budgets.

- In Quebec City, Canada, when the IPU was involved in training 25 women MPs from French-speaking countries on gender-sensitive parliaments and the self-assessment methodology.
- At a "Nordic Countries Roundtable on Equal Parliaments" in Sweden.
- At a regional conference in Moldova organized by UNDP and UN Women, which included MPs and other stakeholders from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Supporting parliamentary bodies in charge of gender mainstreaming

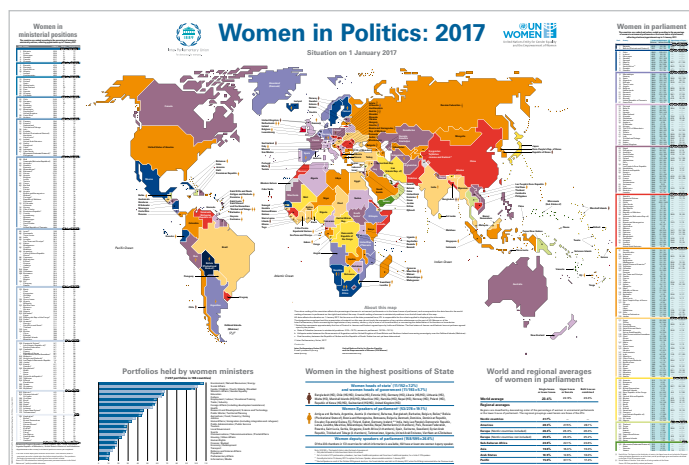
Kenya – The IPU and the Parliament of Kenya co-organized a capacity-building workshop for staff on mainstreaming gender into parliamentary work. The workshop focused on the key concepts and definitions of gender, analysis of bills from a gender perspective, and gender-responsive budgeting,

and paved the way for additional training, planning and the integration of a gender perspective in the parliament's work going forward. Developments were discussed at length in local media, thus building on the momentum for instituting gender sensitive policies in parliament.

Côte d'Ivoire – A workshop was conducted to review the rules of procedure and the draft law of the National Assembly and the Senate from a gender perspective. The workshop followed the adoption of a new constitution that implies changes to the functioning and structures of parliament, and provided an avenue for strengthening the level of gender sensitivity of the institution and meeting gender quotas in parliament and parliamentary structures.

Evidence-based support

The IPU shares with parliamentarians, policy-makers, advocates and researchers data, comparative information and good practices on women in politics. These deliverables support our strategic sub-objective on the political empowerment of women, as well as target 5.5 of the SDGs: "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life." Among these deliverables are the IPU-UN *Women in Politics Map* and the IPU's *Women in parliament: The year in review* report. The 2017 map was launched at the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women, at a press conference held by IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. The 2017 report, which provides detailed global and regional analyses of trends, persisting obstacles and best practices in the area of women's participation in national parliaments, was introduced on the occasion of International Women's Day in Geneva. IPU data on women in parliaments and women in ministerial positions continues to serve as a basis for the work of academics and gender advocates worldwide.



The findings of the IPU study, *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians*, continued to be disseminated to MPs and the general public throughout the world in 2017, including at CSW events, at Committee hearings of the European Parliament (EP) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), and at other international panels organized with partners from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics). The study was also presented to academics and researchers at an international

conference on resistance to women leadership organized by Rutgers University in the United States. The references to the study in newspapers and numerous research papers continue to underline the importance of the study and the expertise of the IPU in this field. A similar, regional study on parliaments in Europe will be co-executed by the IPU and PACE in 2018.

Ensuring women's rights

In 2017 the IPU pursued the following actions and deliverables to assist parliaments with the promotion of women's rights, and the identification and review of discriminatory laws.

Engagement with CEDAW

- The IPU presented reports on women's political participation and parliamentary involvement in the CEDAW reporting process of countries under review at the 66th, 67th and 68th sessions of the CEDAW Committee.
- The Organization engaged with all 28 parliaments whose countries were up for review in 2017.
- The Parliament of Uganda and the IPU organized a seminar on parliament's role in CEDAW reporting, monitoring and ensuring implementation. Key areas discussed included legal reform around marriage and inheritance, and protection from sexual abuse, and a plan of action was adopted to enhance gender equality and protect against gender-based violence.
- The IPU-organized parliamentary seminar on CEDAW in Tanzania addressed divisive issues such as access to education for pregnant teenage girls and teenage mothers. Participants agreed on the need to reform legislation on age of marriage, outlawing discrimination between boys and girls in this regard.
- In Mali, IPU-led parliamentary training on the SDGs and gender equality succeeded in conveying that gender-mainstreaming is key to support the achievement of all the SDGs and to build a parliament that is more inclusive and effective. Two women MPs were appointed to the previously all-male Committee on the SDGs during the session.
- The IPU shared with MPs from the Council of Europe its experience and the good practices it has developed to strengthen the involvement of parliamentarians in monitoring the implementation of CEDAW. The IPU-CEDAW partnership was identified as a good example to follow to enhance MPs' involvement in monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention on combating violence against women (VAW).

Supporting parliamentary action to combat violence against women

- In June of 2017, the IPU together with the Romanian Chamber of Deputies, Global Rights for Women, and Vital Voices organized a regional conference for Central and Eastern Europe on "Making laws work to end violence against women and girls". The conference brought together 25 country delegations consisting of 150 parliamentarians, non-governmental organization (NGO) advocates and legal government officials. In an innovative approach, MPs and relevant actors working to eradicate gender-based violence in their countries collaborated, resulting in concrete action plans and a sense of ownership that will continue to inspire practitioners working on this important issue. The conference contributed to enhancing participating

parliaments' accessibility and accountability regarding VAW. As an example, MPs in Romania proposed a Penal Code amendment to eliminate the possibility for aggressors to be exempt from criminal responsibility when a victim withdraws their complaint, and their conference working group will review the law on domestic violence to ensure it conforms with obligations under the *Istanbul Convention*.

- In Mauritania, the IPU helped prepare the women's parliamentary caucus to intervene on draft laws on gender-based violence and reproductive health. During committee work, the caucus succeeded in including the criminalization of female genital mutilation in both bills. They also called for domestic violence and child marriage to be defined and prohibited in the law on gender-based violence (GBV), and for specific measures to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable. Given the very conservative socio-cultural context, their interventions raised an outcry of contestations on the part of the religious leaders and in the population. The bill on GBV is on hold; however, with the support of national NGOs, the women's caucus continues to advocate for the bill to be revised and passed into law – an example of courageous and effective parliamentary legal action to ensure that laws meet human rights standards and the needs of victims of violence.

Strengthening parliamentary action to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security

During the annual session of the CSW in New York, the IPU, UNDP and other partners organized a side event on “Rising Extremism, Macroeconomic Policies, and the Relevance of Gendered Analysis”. The event provided an opportunity to discuss the role of parliaments in addressing gender inequalities in macroeconomic policies as a precondition for ensuring social justice, building community resilience and fostering a culture of tolerance within society, thus preventing extremism that fuels violence and conflict.



Philippines delegate attending CSW meeting in New York.
© IPU/Joel Sheakoski

Increased gender equality in political leadership and participation

A study visit to Finland and Sweden by members of the Equality of Opportunity Commission of the Turkish Parliament was organized by the IPU in collaboration with the host parliaments and UN Women. Participants met with parliamentary bodies, equality ombudspersons, as well as government and civil society representatives from the two countries. The visit allowed for drawing from best practices in the areas of gender mainstreaming, parliamentary oversight of implementation of gender policies, and cross-sectoral coalition-building to bring about legislative and policy change. Among the policies that were most appreciated by participants were the existence of an independent body tasked with monitoring and promoting implementation of gender equality legislation, and the legal right to public childcare facilities as a means to promote women's equal participation in the economy.

Enhanced parliamentary participation in global forums and debates on gender issues

During the 35th session of the UN Human Rights Council, the IPU participated in the interactive dialogue with the Chair of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice. Prior to the dialogue, the IPU had been consulted in the process of developing the Working Group's annual thematic report to the Council, which focused on “good practices in the elimination of discrimination against women and women's empowerment”. The report contains a dedicated section on the promotion of gender equality in political life, drawing from IPU expertise on the matter.

The annual IPU-UN Women parliamentary meeting at the 2017 CSW focused on “Empowering parliaments to empower women: Making the economy work for women”. The 139 MPs from 47 countries who participated learned from best practices and shared their views on how to lift barriers to women's employment, ensure equal pay, and enhance women's participation in business and their access to financial products. The event's conclusions fed into the IPU resolution on the financial inclusion of women, which was adopted at the IPU 136th Assembly and provided a framework for future work by the IPU and its Member Parliaments in the area of women's economic empowerment. A report summarizing the conclusions of the parliamentary meeting was presented at the plenary of the CSW as a contribution to its work.

A wealth of side events was organized by the IPU on the occasion of the CSW, alongside several partners. These focused on women's participation in politics, addressing sexism, harassment and violence against women in politics, promoting gender-sensitive macroeconomic policies to prevent extremism, ensuring gender equality in nationality laws, and preventing violence against girls and boys. The IPU also contributed to other panel debates held on this occasion, including on the rights of migrant women and women's political empowerment.

The IPU, through the commitment of Secretary General Martin Chungong as a Gender Champion, has continued to serve as a model in promoting gender parity in decision-making and participation in multilateral forums. A report compiling best practices published by International Gender Champions Geneva and UN Women included the IPU's Shaping the international

agenda: raising women's voices in intergovernmental forums as an example. The IPU Secretary General has been called upon to provide expert advice to permanent missions in Geneva on strategies to enhance women's participation. He also took part in an event at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) to present the above-mentioned publication. The event was very well attended and gave wide visibility to the work of the IPU in advancing gender equality.

In addition, the Secretary General moderated an online discussion on the role of male champions jointly organized by the International Gender Champions and iKNOW Politics. The roundtable included the permanent representatives in Geneva of Costa Rica and Fiji, as well as the Director General of UNOG. The discussion focused on personal experiences and lessons learned at the national level on how men can and should promote gender equality in decision-making.

Consideration of women's rights and gender equality issues by IPU Assemblies

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians has continued to be at the forefront in providing guidance on how to advance gender equality in parliament and through the work of parliament. At the 136th IPU Assembly, the Forum held a debate on women's political participation and how to move to gender parity, as well as on the importance of empowering today's girls in order to achieve all SDGs by 2030. At the 137th Assembly, the Forum took stock of 5 years of the IPU *Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments*. Best practices were shared and new impetus was given to parliaments to continue to pursue the goal of improving their level of gender sensitivity.

During the 137th Assembly, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians organized a parity debate on scrutinizing the budget and overseeing public finances and spending. For the first time since these debates promoting parity representation were initiated, an equal number of men and women participated. They addressed parliamentary oversight strategies that would ensure budgets that were inclusive, fair and responsive to the needs of all people. The gender dimension was also mainstreamed in their analyses.

Two IPU resolutions were amended by the Forum in 2017, strengthening their potential to promote gender equality through the work of parliament. One was a resolution drafted by the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development and Trade on Promoting enhanced international cooperation on the SDGs, and in particular on the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development (136th Assembly). The other, drafted by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, was entitled, Sharing our diversity: The 20th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Democracy (137th Assembly).

On the occasion of the 136th Assembly, Member Parliaments adopted an amendment to the IPU Statutes so as to increase the gender quota for elected members of the IPU Executive Committee. The amendment moved the quota from 20 per cent women to 33 per cent representation of either sex.

Objective 3: Protect and promote human rights

Under this objective, the IPU seeks to empower parliaments to safeguard and implement human rights effectively, and to offer protection to individual parliamentarians who face reprisals for carrying out their work. During 2017, progress made to empower parliaments was primarily in the area of collaboration with our counterparts in the UN System, and regional efforts in the Mediterranean, and West and Central Africa. The year saw increasing numbers of MPs in need of protection and hence increased action by the IPU to come to their aid.

Increasing parliaments' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights

The IPU continued its efforts to increase the involvement of parliaments in the promotion and protection of human rights in 2017, including through collaboration with the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and by bringing a parliamentary perspective to HRC session debates. During the year, 130 MPs from 46 countries participated in IPU-led human rights seminars and other initiatives, such as the following.

Together with OHCHR, the IPU organized a side event to the 34th session of the HRC on 15 March at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Discussion centred on exploring new avenues to strengthen the contribution of parliaments to the work of the HRC, including through the establishment of systematic parliamentary involvement in the protection and promotion of human rights, and parliaments receiving regular updates on HRC activities.

The IPU and OHCHR also worked on a compilation of good practices related to parliamentary participation in the work of the HRC and its Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This compilation will encourage continued collaboration between parliaments and the HRC, and serve as a reference for related future initiatives.

A resolution on the contribution of parliaments to the work of the HRC and its UPR was adopted for the second time on 23 June 2017 (a resolution on the same topic had been adopted by the HRC in June 2014). Prepared and submitted by the Core Group composed of the Philippines, Ecuador, Spain, Italy, Morocco, Maldives and Romania, with the contribution of the IPU and OHCHR, this landmark resolution will facilitate collaboration between the executive and parliaments on human rights.

As part of its efforts to make parliaments aware of their countries' record on human rights and encourage them to take the necessary action, recommendations arising from the evaluations by the UN Human Rights Council and other UN mechanisms, along with 50 informational letters, were relayed by the IPU to the parliaments of the countries examined in 2017. The dissemination of this information is yet another way in which the IPU helps to prepare parliamentarians to carry out their responsibilities in the area of human rights.



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Organized jointly by the IPU, the Parliament of Malta and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, an international conference on "Promoting smart and humane migration across the Mediterranean" took place in Valletta, Malta from 16–17 November. The 164 attendees, including 70 parliamentarians, represented 26 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region. The Malta Conference offered the opportunity to address migration through a human rights lens, and to identify concrete actions that parliaments could take to manage migration in the region. Increased consultation by parliaments in the countries of origin, transit and destination was among the initiatives recommended to help harmonize and coordinate actions to be undertaken. Parliaments' core responsibility to see to the implementation of migration related policies and programmes was also underscored. A similar conference addressing migration across the African continent has been proposed for 2018.

An inter-regional seminar on the parliamentary contribution to the promotion of child nutrition in West and Central Africa was conducted in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from 27–29 November. The event was co-organized by the IPU and UNICEF, in collaboration with Alive & Thrive, and with the support of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso, which hosted the event. The 145 participants who attended included 70 parliamentarians from the region. Among the seminar's outcomes were clear strategies for parliaments to play an effective role in combating malnutrition, including through regional coordination among parliaments in West and Central Africa. To this end, participants set up a parliamentary network to coordinate information and exchange good practices for improving nutrition in the region. The IPU's sponsorship of this event specifically relates to our commitment to the rights of children, who are particularly vulnerable to the deleterious effects of malnutrition.

Protecting the rights of MPs

The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CHRP) spearheads the IPU's work to protect parliamentarians at risk. It is actively involved in offering protection to MPs and seeking redress when their human rights have been violated. In addition, the Committee increasingly collects and reports the statistics associated with the risks and abuses faced by MPs, not least to promote awareness of the plight of many MPs around the globe, and to demonstrate that the international parliamentary community speaks out in the face of these injustices.

According to IPU statistics, the number of cases of parliamentarians allegedly subjected to human rights violations increased in 2017 – overall, and in the Americas and Asia in particular.

The CHRP examined the cases of 507 MPs in 41 countries. Parliamentarians from Cambodia, Maldives, Turkey and Venezuela alone, where the political situation has been worsening in recent times, account for 35 per cent of the cases. Cases of abuses against women MPs also reached a record number this year, having tripled since 2014; El Salvador, Turkey and Venezuela account for this huge increase. These unprecedented numbers confirm that there is a link between democracies in crisis and human rights abuses against MPs – information that is important to finding solutions.

Positive outcomes in the defence of the human rights of MPs in 2017 include the following:

- The CHRP closed the cases of 24 MPs, 83 per cent of which were satisfactorily resolved.
- As a result of relentless follow-up by the CHRP and two successive missions to Mongolia, the Government of Mongolia decided – after 19 years of secrecy – that judicial records related to the investigation of the 1998 assassination of Zorig Sanjasuuren, a parliamentarian and pro-democracy leader, should be declassified and made publicly available.
- The Committee closed a longstanding case in Myanmar following wide-ranging reforms and the release of all former members-elect under consideration in the case.
- The cases of three opposition MPs in Malaysia were closed, as they had either been discharged or the charge against them had been dismissed.
- There was significant progress in the case against the suspects of the 2005 assassination of Sri Lankan MP Joseph Pararajasingham. Trial for the case was set to start in December 2017.
- The cases of two Turkish opposition MPs, Mustafa Balbay and Mehmet Haberal, were closed following their release from detention. They were cleared of all unsupported terrorism charges at appeals stage after spending over half of their parliamentary term in custody. Having consistently pushed for this outcome, the CHRP was influential in these decisions being made.
- The case of former Iraqi MP Mohamed Al-Dainy was resolved in 2017. In a travesty of justice, Mr. Al-Dainy was wrongly sentenced to death in 2010, exiled and then jailed upon his return to Iraq. Seven years later, he was finally cleared of all charges and released under a presidential pardon. The CHRP can also be credited with having influenced this long-awaited positive outcome.

To access IPU decisions on the human rights of parliamentarians in 2017, please go to: <http://archive.ipu.org/iss-e/hr-cases.htm>



Protesters hold up pictures of victims of extrajudicial killings during Human Rights Day in Manila, Philippines.
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Objective 4: Contribute to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and security

This objective relates to an IPU core mandate: promoting the peaceful resolution of conflict. The IPU's support of national reconciliation and conflict prevention is centred in:

- encouraging inclusiveness and the use of political dialogue to resolve differences
- raising awareness, including through the exchange of experiences among parliamentarians
- facilitating the exchange of good legislative and regulatory practices, and
- providing tools, data and technical assistance to strengthen parliamentary action to meet disarmament and non-proliferation commitments.

The Organization is recognized as a global partner in efforts related to peacebuilding and security, in particular for its ability to mobilize parliaments around this agenda. Results of the IPU's work in this area during 2017 include the following.

Pursuing peace

Geneva Peace Week (GPW) is a collective action initiative facilitated by UNOG, the Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies (IHEID) and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (GPP), with the support of Switzerland. The IPU is committed to ongoing participation in GPW and had a strong presence there in 2017. IPU representatives were involved in all four GPW 17 coordination meetings, participated in a conference on "Preventing Conflicts through Intercultural Dialogue" and co-organized two events:

- a panel session on "Supporting National Capacities for Conflict Prevention", co-organized with UNDP, the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, and
- a workshop on "Creating Sustainable Peace by Implementing the SDGs", co-organized with Rotary International and the Rotary Peace Group, Lake Geneva Region.

Our GPW participation serves to create and strengthen relationships with like-minded organizations, and heighten the visibility of the IPU and its work in the international Geneva community.

Youth involvement in peace and security and the promotion of UNSC resolution 2250 – Two regional events for young parliamentarians were held in 2017. In the Asia-Pacific region in April, the IPU, in partnership with UNDP and the Parliament of Sri Lanka held a Regional Meeting of Young Parliamentarians focusing on their role in advancing inclusive





A peaceful protest by opposition activists in Caracas, Venezuela. © AFP/Ronaldo Schemidt

and peaceful societies and preventing violent extremism in the region. In Africa in September, an event organized by the IPU and the Parliament of Nigeria considered a similar theme, “Empowering youth: Enhancing political participation for more inclusive and peaceful societies”. Both regional events will be followed up with projects of support to enhance the capacities and actions of young MPs at the national level. Also on this topic, in 2017 the IPU contributed a thematic paper to the UN Secretary-General study on implementation of UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2250. The submission detailed the contributions that young MPs can make to peace and security.

The IPU is increasingly receiving requests of assistance from parliaments in crisis. “Good Offices” is one of our mechanisms for responding. A very flexible project, Good Offices allows the IPU to respond quickly to support parliaments in overcoming bottlenecks and obstacles, and returning to constitutional order. During 2017, the IPU received a request for assistance from the Parliament of Burundi. With the aim of restoring peace through inclusive dialogue, the IPU offered to sponsor a meeting between all stakeholders, including current MPs and opponents in exile. In an effort to solve the political crisis that is currently dividing his country, the Speaker of the Parliament of Guinea Bissau also requested an IPU intervention. The IPU drafted a proposal to mediate discussions with a view to safeguarding the integrity of the institution and enabling it to resume its work. We await direction on both proposals. Meanwhile, the “Good Offices” mechanism has been reinforced: In St. Petersburg in October, the IPU’s governing bodies adopted a decision to establish a high-level panel on parliamentary diplomacy. This panel will assist with the IPU’s Good Offices work going forward.

The Group of Facilitators for Cyprus met in October 2017 to engage in continued dialogue. Members expressed resolute support for a solution that would benefit all Cypriots, in particular the next generation. They expressed the wish for the negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations to

find a peaceful solution for the unification of Cyprus based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation and political equality, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, and the values and principles of the European Union.

Innovative avenues to peaceful co-existence

The Committee on Middle East Questions follows the peace process in the Middle East and facilitates dialogue with members of parliament from all parties involved. During 2017, the Committee organized the second of two roundtables on water for parliamentarians from the Middle East region. The roundtable, entitled, “From word to actions”, was held at IPU Headquarters in Geneva, 6–7 of July. Five members of the Middle East Committee attended, along with experts from the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), WaterHub, WaterLex and the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace. Delegations from the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, Jordan, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates shared their national experiences. The roundtable focused on finding concrete ways to transform elements that have the potential to generate conflict into factors of cooperation and co-existence through the neutral lens of science and technology.

Based on the recommendations arising from this roundtable, the Middle East Committee proposed the establishment of the IPU Science for Peace Schools in collaboration with CERN. The Schools will set up parliamentary networks for collaboration on regional projects. The networks will bring science, and some of its collaboration and operational models, to legislators tasked with solving regional problems on pivotal trans-boundary issues such as water and energy. During the 137th IPU Assembly, the governing bodies of the IPU endorsed the establishment of the first IPU Science for Peace School on Water and a Parliamentary Network on Water. The Secretariat has since developed the curriculum for the School in collaboration with CERN, WaterLex and the Geneva WaterHub, and is finalizing the project document and materials.



Meeting of the Committee on Middle East Questions.
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Regional workshop on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, held in Aswan, Egypt.
© Khaled Mashaal



Action on disarmament and counter-terrorism

During the year, the IPU increased its work on disarmament and counter-terrorism, with significant new outcomes achieved. Efforts related to this sub-objective of *Strategy 2017-2021* continue to be grounded in dedicated activity, where possible done in cooperation with relevant key partners, to raise awareness and mobilize parliamentary oversight and action.

The IPU, through its [Standing Committee on Peace and International Security](#), and along with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, and Strategic Concept for the Removal of Arms and Proliferation (SCRAP – a project of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London), is working on parliamentary strategies for comprehensive disarmament. This work will provide a holistic picture of the various strands of disarmament policy, from controlling small arms and light weapons to nuclear disarmament. As well, it will delineate the role MPs can play in overseeing disarmament policy, keeping track of governments' disarmament obligations, and undertaking initiatives to advance international disarmament norms and standards. This activity aligns with the IPU's mandate to increase parliamentarians' knowledge of UNSC resolution 1540 and other non-proliferation commitments. The plan is also linked to the 2017 edition of the IPU's *Global Parliamentary Report*.

The IPU and UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism was conceived to address gaps in the implementation of related IPU and UN resolutions. Under this framework, the IPU co-organized a regional workshop with UNODC and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean in Aswan, Egypt from 31 January to 2 February 2017. Fifty-five MPs from nine countries of the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf States looked at the challenges that arise when extremism leads to terrorism and options for addressing the problem through preventive criminal justice mechanisms. They identified regional and national strategies for effective responses, and welcomed the draft of a plan of action driven by parliamentarians on how parliaments can act to prevent terrorism. Established during the 137th IPU Assembly in October, the [High-Level Advisory Group](#)

on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism leads the IPU-UNODC Joint Programme and works closely with UNODC for their technical expertise. The Group's first meeting, at which its working modalities will be formulated, is scheduled to take place in February 2018.

The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) is another key international partner in the IPU's work on peace and security. UNODA has agreed to support the IPU on selected activities related to issues surrounding weapons of mass destruction (WMD). A regional activity in Latin America or Asia, and the drafting of a handbook or guide for parliamentarians on WMD were among the collaborations during 2017. It is hoped that this work will get under way in 2018 after funding has been arranged.

[The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs](#) (the UN Committee) has the unique mandate to strengthen awareness of United Nations institutional processes and reforms, facilitating parliamentary engagement with and oversight of the work of the United Nations. As such, the Committee also deals with peace and security processes. At the 137th IPU Assembly, the UN Committee and the Committee on Peace and International Security co-organized an event on the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* to raise awareness among parliamentarians of this new international instrument.

The IPU and Parlantino partner on disarmament – During the 137th IPU Assembly, the Secretary General of the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) proposed that the IPU and Parlantino work together to organize activities on disarmament. Contacts are being made to identify exact needs and implement a project in 2018.

Objective 5: Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation

Tracking progress on Objective 5 is primarily a subjective exercise, although there are some areas that can be measured “by the numbers”. We have much qualitative and anecdotal evidence that we are succeeding in promoting inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation – and building relationships, trust and confidence. Further, there are strong markers that the IPU’s work helps raise awareness on topical issues, empowers MPs, and contributes to peacebuilding, understanding and tolerance among people. And, by the numbers, we can show the extent of our reach: member Parliaments and non-member parliaments; parliamentarians, subject matter experts, leaders and other stakeholders are attending IPU Assemblies and other IPU events, collaborating with the IPU in areas of mutual interest and concern, and participating in IPU processes and structures.

Providing an effective forum for international political dialogue

The first IPU Assembly of 2017 was held in April in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Representatives of 126 national parliaments and of 5 regional parliamentary bodies that are associate members, as well as 28 permanent observers, were in attendance. Nearly 80 Speakers and Deputy Speakers travelled to the 136th Assembly. In the course of the Assembly, parliamentary delegations organized over 130 bilateral meetings. All geopolitical groups met at least once, as did other political groupings such as the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, Socialist International, and the South African Development Community’s Parliamentary Forum.

Mr. K. Satyarthi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Honorary President of the Global March against Child Labour, and Ms. G. Verburg, Coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and UN Assistant Secretary-General, addressed the plenary as special guests. More than 100 legislators from 88 national parliaments, including 29 Presiding Officers, as well as representatives of 11 partner organizations, contributed to the General Debate. The strong outcome declaration, the [Dhaka Communiqué – Redressing inequalities: Delivering on dignity and well-being for all](#), was adopted by the Assembly on its last day.

In October 2017, the St. Petersburg Assembly took place with record attendance. One hundred and fifty-eight national parliaments travelled to the Russian Federation, 84 of which were represented by their Speakers, with another 65 Deputy Speakers attending. More than 170 bilateral meetings took place during this 137th IPU Assembly, and all geopolitical groups held sessions. As is customary, other regional groupings met in side events to the Assembly, including for





The IPU provides a forum for inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. © IPU/Russian Parliament



A press conference on the outcomes of the 137th IPU Assembly in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation. © IPU/ Russian Parliament

the first time the parliaments of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Ms. R. Izsák-Ndiaye, former UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues and member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; His Holiness the Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, Chair of the Commonwealth of Independent States Inter-Religious Council; and Mr. A. Othman Altwaijri, Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, addressed the plenary as special guests during the General Debate. A total of 124 legislators from 118 national parliaments, including 59 Presiding Officers, as well as representatives of 7 observer organizations, contributed to the debate, which ended with the adoption of the highly topical [St. Petersburg Declaration on Promoting cultural pluralism and peace through interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue](#).

Rich discussions and exchanges took place during both Assemblies. All points of view were heard and the right to reply was exercised on several occasions. Delegates from all political horizons and countries contributed to discussions and their views were reflected in the different outcome documents.

Resolutions on emergency items were adopted, one at each Assembly, relating to major situations of international concern and requiring urgent action by the international parliamentary community. The Dhaka Assembly adopted by consensus an emergency item on Urgent international action to save millions

of people from famine and drought in parts of Africa and Yemen. The St. Petersburg emergency item addressed Ending the grave human crisis, persecution and violent attacks on the Rohingya as a threat to international peace and security and ensuring their unconditional and safe return to their homeland in Myanmar.

In addition to the main declarations, each Assembly produces resolutions, decisions – particularly with respect to human rights – and Standing Committee reports. Draft resolutions are amended according to IPU procedure, which provides for inclusive debates in Committees and votes in the absence of consensus. Key outcomes from 2017's Assemblies also included:

At the 136th Assembly:

- the resolution on The role of parliament in respecting the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States
- the resolution on Promoting enhanced international cooperation on the SDGs, in particular on the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development

At the 137th Assembly:

- the resolution on Sharing our diversity: The 20th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Democracy.

Ensuring effective follow-up – by the IPU and parliaments

For the IPU, follow-up entails obtaining feedback on its Assemblies. Prior to 2017, all Members were expected to participate in an annual reporting exercise. Given the consistently low response rate (generally in the 30–40 per cent range), the IPU Secretariat sought a more effective follow-up approach. In 2017, a questionnaire on one or several of the IPU resolutions and decisions adopted in the past five years was sent to only 30 IPU Members. The new reporting modality has significantly improved the response rate – to 63 per cent.

For Member Parliaments, follow-up is about disseminating information from the Assemblies in their home parliaments and taking concrete action as a result of Assembly deliberations and decisions. With regard to the resolutions of the 136th IPU Assembly: 88 per cent of respondent parliaments indicated that they submitted the resolutions to parliament; 68 per cent informed the relevant parliamentary committees of the resolutions; 58 per cent communicated them to the government; and 67 per cent submitted a report to parliament on the parliamentary delegation's participation in the Dhaka Assembly. And, significantly, 61 per cent of the respondent parliaments acknowledged that a number of their decisions were influenced directly or indirectly by the work of the IPU in the past five years.

Action that was taken in follow-up to resolutions adopted by the 136th Assembly included the following:

- Belgium – In April 2017, the Senate adopted a resolution on Strengthening the financial autonomy of women in developing countries, which makes specific reference to the IPU resolution on Promoting enhanced international

cooperation on the SDGs, in particular on the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development.

- Islamic Republic of Iran – A parliamentary Working Group on Yemen was created to follow up on the 136th IPU Assembly emergency item on Urgent international action to save millions of people from famine and drought in parts of Africa and Yemen. The IPU resolution was discussed in parliament and also with the African parliamentary Friendship Groups.
- Zambia – Parliament sent letters to various Ministers calling for action on three IPU resolutions – on the financial inclusion of women, disaster management in relation to the famine in Yemen, and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States.

Strengthening cooperation between the IPU and other parliamentary organizations

Progress on this sub-objective is assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively: The IPU looks at the number of regional and other non-member parliamentary organizations attending IPU events and at the number and type of parliamentary bodies using IPU resolutions and reports in their work.

Turkmenistan attended a regional workshop in Budapest, Hungary, in February prior to submitting a request for affiliation at the St. Petersburg Assembly. At the Dhaka Assembly in April, 17 regional and parliamentary organizations, such as the Arab Parliament, and the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), participated. At the St. Petersburg Assembly, 24 such regional groupings were represented. Observers from the United States and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic



Informal meetings help to promote parliamentary cooperation. © IPU/ Bangladesh Parliament



A new IPU President, Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, was elected at the 137th IPU Assembly. © IPU/Russian Parliament

Cooperation (PABSEC) followed the work of the Regional Seminar held in Bucharest in June on Making laws work to end violence against women and girls. The Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (PUIC) and the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) observed the Fourth World Conference of Young Parliamentarians, held at the end of the year in Ottawa, Canada.

As an example of one parliamentary body using IPU resolutions and reports in their work, the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS) held a conference in St. Petersburg dedicated to the International Day of Democracy, following IPU's call to celebrate the day. IPA CIS has also translated into Russian the IPU's self-assessment toolkit on parliaments and the SDGs, and two of its Permanent Committees – the Political Affairs and International Cooperation Committee and the Social Policy and Human Rights Committee – discussed ways to implement the recommendations from the IPU's *Handbook on Human Rights for Parliamentarians*.

Towards universal membership

In January 2017, the IPU's membership stood at 171 national parliaments. By the end of the year, we had moved closer to our goal to achieve universal membership, gaining an additional seven Members – the Central African Republic, the Marshall Islands, Saint Lucia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan and Vanuatu, bringing the total membership to a record 178 parliaments. At the 137th Assembly, a permanent observer, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, submitted a request to become an Associate Member, which was approved. Twelve parliamentary assemblies now have IPU Associate Membership status. Going forward, the IPU hopes to build on this momentum.

Build greater coherence and effectiveness in global parliamentary cooperation

The IPU President and Secretary General continued their formal exchanges with parliamentary and government leaders throughout 2017. These meetings were held during IPU Assemblies, missions, on the sidelines of international meetings or at IPU Headquarters in Geneva. More than 30 high-level meetings with Heads of State, Speakers of Parliament and Ministers of Foreign Affairs took place with representatives from Azerbaijan, Canada, China, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Lithuania, Mongolia, Niger, Pakistan, Tuvalu, and the United Arab Emirates. Courtesy visits were also paid to the Presidents of Hungary, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Latvia. Both the IPU President and the Secretary General also carried out a large number of missions and conducted numerous meetings in the course of 2017.

Objective 6: Promote youth empowerment

As with the inclusion of women and women's perspectives, youth participation is a prerequisite to advancing democracy. Objective 6 calls upon the IPU and parliaments to continue to take action to enhance the recognition and participation of youth in political processes and the work of parliaments, and to promote the interests and rights of young people.

Ensure youth participation in politics and decision-making

In today's world we are by and large surrounded by ICTs, and social media in particular is the forum of the young. In our efforts to ensure youth participation in politics and decision-making, we leverage these tools and approaches to connect with young people and encourage their contribution to the parliamentary agenda.

In 2016, the IPU launched the very successful Not Too Young to Run campaign to lower ages of eligibility to run for public office. In 2017, we continued to build on the momentum: the IPU promoted the campaign during meetings of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, as well as during two regional Conferences and the global Conference of Young

Parliamentarians. And we are continuing to support the *Not Too Young to Run* campaign in Nigeria. This national campaign was championed by a former Member of the Board of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians. In the summer 2017, the National Assembly of Nigeria passed the "Nigerian Not Too Young to Run Bill" – clear evidence of the influence of the campaign.

Social media campaign to commemorate International Youth Day 2017 (12 August) – In line with the 20th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration on Democracy*, the IPU asked young MPs worldwide to share their experiences on how they have had an impact in strengthening democracies through greater youth empowerment. On Facebook and Twitter, young parliamentarians provided examples of how they have reached out to youth in their communities, and ensured that their concerns are integrated into parliamentary debates. The highly successful campaign generated tens of thousands of social media impressions.

Participation in the iKNOW Politics platform – In collaboration with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), UNDP and UN Women, the IPU organized interviews with 18 young men and women MPs from different geographical regions. Interview footage was used to create a video documentary on the role of youth in politics today.



Teenagers at a Parliamentary Sitting of Children and Youth in Sejm on Children's Day in Warsaw, Poland. © NurPhoto/Maciej Luczniewski

Youth-led mechanisms and platforms for the empowerment of young MPs

During 2017, the following events – in countries across the globe and with attendees from across the spectrum – served to promote the youth agenda. Outcomes of these meetings support work on the objectives of the IPU's *Strategy 2017–2021*. And participation in these meetings affords young MPs the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills, and increase their effectiveness through access to experts, resources and peer-to-peer exchanges of experience and advice.

- The [IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians](#) met on 2 April 2017 with about 90 young MPs in attendance. It also met on 15 October with 60 young MPs participating. The Forum meetings resulted in the reporting and sharing of developments at the national level to enhance youth participation, and the integration of youth perspectives in the resolutions and debates of the IPU. It also led to the introduction of measures to enhance participation of young parliamentarians at IPU Assemblies.
- The Regional Meeting of Young MPs of the Asia-Pacific convened in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 25–26 April. The theme of the session was The role of young parliamentarians in advancing inclusive and peaceful societies and preventing violent extremism. Organized in partnership with the Parliament of Sri Lanka and UNDP, the event brought some 40 MPs from 11 countries, along with approximately 60 youth activists from civil society, youth parliaments and youth associations. It resulted in enhanced awareness and understanding of the concepts and frameworks pertaining to violent extremism and proposals for actions for its prevention.

- The Regional Conference of Young Parliamentarians of Africa on Empowering youth: Enhancing political participation for more inclusive and peaceful societies was held in Abuja, Nigeria from 27–28 September. Organized in partnership with the National Assembly of Nigeria, the event brought together about 60 MPs from 18 countries, alongside approximately 140 representatives from Nigerian state parliaments, youth associations and parliaments, and civil society. The conference focused on youth participation in Africa, and the link between political participation and the prevention of violent extremism.
- The Fourth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians was held in Ottawa, Canada, on 17–18 November. It brought together more than 120 young MPs from 51 countries, as well as international stakeholders, private companies, civil society organizations and academic experts, to define a youth-centred action plan to promote inclusive democratic and socio-economic policies for all. The young parliamentarians made bold commitments to promote inclusion of all people along three vectors: migration and asylum seeking, inclusive economic growth, and political participation.

The conference also featured the use of the IPU Young MPs App, which facilitated digital linkages between participants; the use of interactive online features such as word clouds and online polling to inform discussions, and social media platforms to foster the community of young MPs and help coordinate actions.

- Members of the IPU Forum of Young MPs participated at the annual UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Global Youth Forum on The role of youth in poverty eradication and promoting prosperity in a changing world, which was held



Over 120 young MPs from 51 countries gathered in Ottawa, Canada, for the Fourth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians.
© HOC-CDC/Christian Diotte

in New York on 30–31 January 2017. The young MPs took leadership roles at the event and provided a parliamentary perspective to the international discussions. Importantly, they also provided a youth perspective: Because the young are severely affected by poverty, it is critical that their voices are heard and concerns considered by parliaments. The most effective way to accomplish this is by young people being in parliament. The young MPs carried the message that parliaments, as conduits to bring young people to the decision-making table, are key if we are to eradicate poverty.

- Following the participation of members of the Forum of Young MPs at the OHCHR Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law in November 2016, in January 2017 the Forum's report was released. Strengthened by the young parliamentarians' advocacy during the forum, it explicitly recommended the lowering of eligibility ages to run for parliament, and the introduction of youth quotas in parliament.

Support to parliaments in addressing youth related issues

Youth activities – at IPU events in general and youth-focused events in particular – also emphasized the importance of establishing and strengthening youth caucuses and forums in national parliaments. Following presentations on the topic made at the IPU Regional Conference of Young Parliamentarians of Africa in Abuja, the young MPs from Ghana who attended requested assistance for the establishment of a national Forum of Young MPs. In November a delegation of young MPs from Nigeria travelled to Ghana to provide support to their counterparts to set up this youth body.

Members of the IPU's Forum of Young Parliamentarians report on youth participation at the national level. Reporting at the 2017 sessions showed that many young MPs are taking action in their respective countries – at the national and at the regional level – to enhance youth participation.

Enhanced integration of youth perspectives in parliament and in the work of the IPU

UN agencies, academics, MPs and parliamentary staff rely on the IPU's research to inform decision-making concerning parliamentary institutions and their pursuits – and the media relies on this research to inform the public. To this end, IPU deliverables related to the political empowerment of youth – and its impact in advancing democracy – include the collection and dissemination of related data and information. As well, the IPU Secretariat continues to monitor, record and report out on associated good practices, especially at the national level, and to conduct informal consultations with experts and MPs to provide qualitative and quantitative input to its investigations.

The research pertaining to the IPU's 2016 *Youth participation in national parliaments* report continues to be shared with parliaments and partner organizations, and was consistently disseminated and promoted in national parliaments and at international events during 2017. The data compiled by the IPU was increasingly shared with academic experts for their own research. The report is now widely considered the world's most authoritative resource on youth participation in parliaments. Data collection has now also begun for the 2018 report, which, following a decision of the Forum of Young MPs,

will focus on targets for youth participation in parliament, and propose concrete action to achieve those targets.

The IPU commissioned a thematic paper on Youth Participation in Parliaments and Peace and Security as a contribution to the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security mandated by UN Security Council resolution 2250 (2015). The paper was the product of extensive review of existing research, including IPU data and information on youth participation in parliaments, and interviews with approximately 40 respondents. It examined the current levels of participation of young parliamentarians in peace and security efforts, and proposed a series of recommendations to strengthen their contribution. The paper integrates a parliamentary perspective in the international effort to implement UNSC 2250.

Through the actions of members of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians, 2017 saw increased participation of young MPs and enhanced integration of their perspectives at IPU Assemblies. Among the measures that successfully facilitated this:

- the decision to include the President of the Forum of Young MPs as an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee, and
- the adoption of a measure to enhance youth participation in IPU Assemblies that set a target of at least one young man or woman MP in each delegation, with a view to reaching a target of 25 per cent young MPs by 2020.

Efforts are also made to ensure that youth perspectives are reflected in IPU publications, especially those that serve to provide support to parliaments in promoting youth empowerment. As an example, reporting provided by young MPs during IPU youth meetings informed contributions to the IPU's *Global Parliamentary Report 2017* on parliamentary oversight.

Defending the human rights of the world's youth

Parliaments have an obligation to promote the interests and rights of young people. The work that parliaments do in this area – and that the IPU does to support this work – is cross-cutting. For example, efforts to eradicate poverty; to eliminate child, early and forced marriage (CEFM); to improve maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH); and to address the impact of forced displacement and migration – all of which profoundly affect the young – are priorities on parliaments' and the IPU's human rights and development agenda. Please see Objectives 3 and 7 of this report for discussion of actions and decisions taken in these areas.

Objective 7: Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda

Objective 7 of the IPU's strategy focuses on ensuring that parliaments have the awareness and capacity to take effective action on the SDGs and mainstream them in their work. Health and climate change are areas that cut across all SDGs as their impact on the lives of the people is most strongly felt. As a result, these are particular areas of focus under this objective.

Mapping the implementation of Agenda 2030

There is an old saying that "change starts at home" and the SDGs are no exception. Parliamentarians have a responsibility to the SDGs as the representatives of their people. But each country is different, and the SDGs must be tailored to national and regional circumstances, with specific objectives and targets established. To this end, the IPU organized the following seminars in 2017, mobilizing more than 60 parliaments in 5 regions to engage on the SDGs.

South Asian Speakers' Summit on Achieving the SDGs (Indore, India, 18–20 February)

Attended by the Speakers of the national parliaments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, participants met to discuss the theme, "Strengthening regional cooperation and resources for the SDGs". The summit adopted the Indore Declaration, which concluded that gender inequality and the challenge of climate change must be addressed to achieve the SDGs in the region. The Speakers also called for more cooperation among South Asian countries on this issue, and called on the IPU to facilitate dialogue.

Regional Seminar on the SDGs for the Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Budapest, Hungary, 23–24 February)

Representatives of 22 parliaments met for the third time under the auspices of the IPU to continue to discuss their role in SDG implementation. Climate change and water governance were identified as issues of importance to the region. Participants also reinforced the need to share their conclusions and recommendations with their colleagues in parliament and relevant regional stakeholders and, through the IPU, with the global parliamentary community.

Regional Seminar on the SDGs for the Parliaments Sub-Saharan Africa (Kampala, Uganda, 1–3 March)

This was the first IPU regional seminar on the SDGs for this region. It brought together MPs from 18 countries to discuss issues of importance related to SDG implementation in their region, most notably, good governance, health and resources.





Heavy flooding in Mandra, Greece. © SOOC/George Vitsaras

Regional Seminar on Achieving the SDGs for the Parliaments of Asia-Pacific (Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, 11–13 May)

This event, the first of its kind for the region, brought together MPs from 22 countries, as well as representatives of key UN agencies. Climate change emerged as a key development challenge for the region. As part of the seminar, the participants visited the Can Gio district of Ho Chi Minh City, which is affected by rising sea levels. They also visited a mangrove forest along the fragile coastline; the forest reduces the negative impact of climate change, flooding and other harsh weather conditions.

Interregional seminar for Asian and African parliaments in China (Beijing, China, 5–7 and 17 September)

This was the second time that the IPU collaborated with China's National People's Congress to foster interregional exchanges on SDGs implementation between Asian and African parliaments, and to reinforce South-South development cooperation. Discussions focused on climate change and on agricultural and industrial modernization as a critical precondition for SDG achievement. The seminar was attended by seven national parliaments – Benin, Cameroon, China, Djibouti, Côte d'Ivoire, Laos and Viet Nam – and was followed by a field trip to familiarize the parliamentarians with the Chinese climate change mitigation models and technology developments.

National workshop for Mali Parliament on SDGs and gender equality (Bamako, Mali, 25–26 July)

The IPU conducted this seminar following a request for assistance from the National Assembly of Mali. The Assembly wished to raise awareness on the SDGs and strengthen parliamentary skills to promote the effective implementation of Agenda 2030 and gender equality. The meeting brought together about 50 MPs and representatives of civil society organizations. The seminar paved the way for the use of the SDG self-assessment toolkit, which was scheduled for the end of January 2018.



© IPU/Isabel Obadiaru

Institutionalizing the SDGs – tools and activities

Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals – A self-assessment toolkit was designed by the IPU and UNDP to enable parliaments to answer key questions associated with institutionalizing the SDGs and mainstreaming their implementation in parliamentary processes: *Do we have the capacity to undertake this work? How well have we performed to date? Where are there gaps and opportunities? What priorities need to be set in order to succeed?*

In 2017, the toolkit was launched at all regional events, and the Parliaments of Fiji, Serbia and Djibouti used the guide to assess their performance to date and plan for future action. Results of the toolkit's use included: a change of the Rules of Procedure to make the SDGs and oversight of their implementation an obligation of the parliament; intensified outreach to young people and marginalized groups to better understand their needs and incorporate them into parliamentary work on the SDGs; and inclusion of the SDGs in induction courses for new MPs.

The IPU assisted the Parliament of Mali in better integrating its work on the SDGs and gender equality. As a result, the parliament's SDG Standing Committee now includes two women MPs.

The SDG guide was originally available in English, Spanish, French and Arabic. To raise further awareness and strengthen the sense of national ownership, the toolkit has now also been translated into Azerbaijani, Georgian, Russian, Serbian and Vietnamese.

In 2017, the IPU commissioned an update to the Guidance Note for Parliamentarians on Effective Development Cooperation to align it with the SDGs. The updated document will be published in 2018.

Action on climate change

Objective 7 of the IPU's *Strategy 2017–2021* compels us to pursue action – including legislative action – on climate change and disaster risk reduction. As well, it calls for enhanced awareness of and an increased parliamentary contribution to negotiations on climate change at the global level – in part through deepening and expanding relationships with climate change partners. The IPU made considerable progress in these areas in 2017.

The IPU has been mobilizing parliaments around the UN Climate Change Conferences since 2009. As in previous years, it organized a Parliamentary Meeting at the 2017 “conference of the parties” to 2015's Paris Agreement (COP23). The meeting brought together more than 250 delegates from more than 50 countries, as well as climate change leaders such as the COP23 Chair and the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Participants held substantive debates on practical aspects of implementation of the *Paris Agreement*, including issues related to climate-induced migration and transition to a low-carbon economy. The meeting adopted an outcome document that further underscores the importance of parliamentary action on climate change.

In addition, the IPU organized a special session on climate change at its 137th Assembly. As this occurred prior to the Parliamentary Meeting at COP23, MPs had an opportunity to provide input to what would become the outcome document of that meeting.

During the year, the IPU and UN Environment started working on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to come into effect in 2018. The MOU will strengthen the collaboration between the two organizations, particularly through provision of expertise to parliaments in the area of SDGs, climate change, and environment legislation, oversight and financing. Towards the end of the year the two partners began the development of a background paper for parliamentarians on the green economy, which will be published in early 2018.

In May 2017, the IPU co-branded a study and database on climate change laws of the world with the London School of Economics and Columbia University. The study summarizes key trends in climate change legislation for 177 countries, providing an important resource for parliamentarians and other stakeholders.

Action on health-related goals

Activities to strengthen parliamentary engagement on child marriage, sexual and reproductive health and other relevant issues were organized in key countries during 2017, and concrete results were achieved – particularly with respect to access to essential services for women, adolescents and children. As well, parliamentary contributions to global health processes increased, and the work of the IPU and parliamentarians on health-related objectives became both more strategic and more visible.

Work to improve maternal, newborn and child health – and to enhance parliaments' accountability for this work – included initiatives in the following countries:

- In [Tanzania](#), the IPU organized an inception seminar and budget advocacy workshop targeting newly-elected MPs. The MPs recognized the need for stronger domestic financing for health, with a focus on ensuring services for women and girls in hard-to-reach areas.
- The IPU supported outreach visits by MPs to all 30 districts of [Rwanda](#) to sensitize communities, especially adolescents, on sexual and reproductive health and the provisions of the *Reproductive Health Law* adopted in 2016.

- In [Bangladesh](#), outreach visits by senior MPs, led by the Speaker, were held in four districts with high child marriage rates. The objective was to sensitize the population about the new *Child Marriage Restraint Act* (2017) and advocate against the practice. These activities fostered strong alliances between MPs and civil society organizations, which are key for an effective response.

During 2017, the IPU participated in the second global consultation on health security, focusing on securing adequate budgetary allocations. As a result, a number of countries are now developing National Action Plans for Health Security (NAPHS) that aim to ensure integrated budgets and a multi-sectoral approach to health emergencies.

Research has begun for the WHO-IPU study on child, early and forced marriage legislation in Africa. The study will be published in early 2018.

A second Parliamentary Meeting was organized at the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 2017. It brought together MPs, and health scientists and advocates to discuss ways to ensure evidence-informed health laws and policies.

As a member of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Lead Group, the IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong urged parliaments of the SUN Movement countries to prioritize nutrition in their work. SUN Movement Coordinator Ms. G. Verburg delivered a keynote speech at the 136th IPU General Assembly. As of 2017, 36 SUN countries are leveraging the budgetary, legislative and political powers of parliamentarians – helping to cement nutrition as a national priority.

The IPU President Saber Chowdhury continued to actively participate in the Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) High-Level Steering Group, which is chaired by the UN Secretary-General.

The IPU increased its visibility around the health agenda in 2017: IPU input featured prominently in the *EWEC Global Strategy Progress Report*, *Independent Accountability Panel Report*, the *2017 Universal Health Coverage Global Monitoring Report* and the *Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health Annual Report*.

Objective 8: Bridge the democracy gap in international relations

In the areas of governance, the IPU's strategic partnership with the United Nations, and the operations of the Office of the Permanent Observer, the IPU's *Strategy 2017–2021* calls for parliamentary input and follow up to major international debates and processes. In this first year of the revised Strategy, we achieved:

- a consolidation of the IPU's working relationship with UN representatives in general, and UN leadership and ambassadors to the United Nations in particular
- higher visibility of the IPU as the leading parliamentary organization at the United Nations, and
- strong recognition of the role of parliaments in advancing important international commitments (e.g., SDGs, nuclear disarmament, and addressing the challenges associated with the ocean and migration).

Effective engagement with the United Nations

During 2017, the IPU further deepened its working relationship with the United Nations, providing parliamentary input to key UN processes, engaging parliamentarians in global governance debates, including through its Committee on UN Affairs, and facilitating the participation of senior UN officials in IPU events. Specific joint activities included updating the UNDP-IPU Memorandum of Understanding, and advancing joint planning and coordination of work through the annual UN-IPU senior management meeting.



IPU SG Martin Chungong and UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner sign Memorandum of Understanding.
© IPU/Paddy Torsney

The IPU continued to engage parliaments and parliamentarians in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals in 2017. A special effort went into providing a parliamentary perspective to major UN processes on the ocean, migration and nuclear disarmament. The IPU event at the annual High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development – the primary global mechanism to track the implementation of the SDGs – attracted a record number of parliamentarians and helped raise awareness of the role of parliaments in SDGs implementation.

Together with UNDP, the IPU launched *Global Parliamentary Report 2017*, the second instalment of this joint research and analysis of parliaments' efforts to hold governments responsible for their actions and decisions. (See "Objective 1: Build strong, democratic parliaments" for additional information about the report.)

Impact of the IPU Annual Parliamentary Hearing

The IPU Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations in the spring of 2017 was entitled, "A World of Blue: Preserving the oceans, safeguarding the planet, ensuring human well-being in the context of the 2030 Agenda". The hearing reinforced that the ocean is a vital ecosystem for humanity's sustainability and allowed MPs to debate and discuss the many issues related to ocean governance and sustainable development in their region/country. The hearing also set the tone for and underscored the importance of The Ocean Conference supporting the implementation of SDG 14, which was held at UN Headquarters in June.

Speaking at the opening of the session, then President of the General Assembly Peter Thomson of Fiji recognized the critical role parliamentarians play as standard bearers, policy shapers and legislative decision makers in societies around the world. He noted that the Annual Parliamentary Hearings provide the central opportunity for collaboration between the world's parliamentarians and the United Nations, and called it the best platform for jointly identifying, discussing and finding solutions to key issues on the international agenda.

Outcomes of the work of the IPU Committee on UN Affairs

The Committee focused its spring session at the 136th Assembly in Dhaka, Bangladesh on the follow up to the SDGs. The session provided a forum where parliamentarians shared best practices and ideas to ensure the goals are factored into national budgets and legislation going forward. This annual session is designed to serve as the institutional link between the IPU and the UN HLPF on Sustainable Development, which is mandated to perform a global review of SDGs implementation during its yearly July session. The cross-cutting theme of discussion for the 2017 HLPF was "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". The Dhaka debate drew upon the 128th Assembly's Quito Communiqué and included representatives of UN Women and, for the first time, of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP). This high-level interaction represents progress on Objective 8 of our *Strategy 2017–2021*, wherein the IPU seeks to increase the level of UN representation and participation in IPU meetings and events.



UN ECOSOC Youth Forum in New York. © Rania Elwany

During its fall session at the 137th Assembly in St. Petersburg, the Committee reviewed the evolution of the relationship between the IPU and the UN over the past 20 years, and the work done to bring the peoples' representatives closer to the decision-making processes of the United Nations. The role of national parliaments in international relations – filling the so-called “democracy gap” – has gained strong recognition at the United Nations. A new resolution of the UN General Assembly on Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is due in the spring of 2018. As we are in the lead up to this resolution, our discussion took stock of progress and current challenges in building the parliamentary dimension to the United Nations. In conjunction with this, the Committee also held a debate on the role of the UN General Assembly in international governance, and examined the modalities of its work, the role of its president, and the legal value of General Assembly resolutions and decisions.

Achievements in parliamentary advocacy at the United Nations

In the course of the year, IPU officials participated in a number of UN debates and processes in New York and Geneva. Further, the IPU Secretary General and IPU President interacted in public and private meetings with senior UN officials, from the UN Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General to several UN agency heads. Discussions focused in particular on ways to strengthen interaction between UN Country Teams and national parliaments in cooperation with the IPU.

Among many productive efforts to increase parliamentary input to UN debates and processes, IPU representatives delivered a dozen statements to the United Nations and related agencies, including those delivered during meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women, the HLPF on Sustainable Development, the UN Economic and Social Council Youth Forum, and a number of other important debates. The IPU also provided input to high-level discussions on the reform of ECOSOC and the overall follow-up process for the SDGs through the HLPF on Sustainable Development.

The IPU campaigned successfully to have the role of parliaments reflected in the process to establish a new Global Compact for Migration. And the voices of parliamentarians were heard in UN consultations in New York, Geneva and Puerto Vallarta.

In addition, the IPU achieved three major successes in its advocacy in 2017: In June, the UN General Assembly Resolution, Our ocean, our future: call for action, included members of parliament among those “stakeholders” who can help integrate ocean preservation in national sustainable development plans. In July, the Nuclear Ban Treaty explicitly acknowledged the role of parliamentarians in helping create a nuclear-free world. And, in December, the General Assembly Resolution, Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, specifically referenced the IPU's St. Petersburg Declaration on Promoting cultural pluralism and peace through interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue.

Overall, 2017 provided fresh impetus to the IPU's vision for a global governance system that people can believe in. The United Nations is under renewed pressure to do more with less, and all kinds of new crisis points have emerged during the year that will require stronger cooperation between the two organizations going forward.

Partnering with the WTO

There was progress in 2017 on the IPU's overall strategy and specific objective to strengthen parliamentary action in relation to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The IPU contributed to the sensitization campaign for the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA): It intervened in order to raise Members' awareness and facilitate ratification, as approval by parliaments is required to complete the ratification process. Following these efforts, the agreement entered into force on 22 February 2017. It is considered the most significant global trade deal in the last two decades. The TFA affords developing countries the flexibility to tailor implementation timing to their specific needs and level of development. Parliamentarians

committed to working on its implementation – and the IPU has committed to encouraging these efforts, starting with the translation of the TFA’s provisions into national legislation, and the allocation of sufficient resources for the implementation of related policies and programmes.

The Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO (PCWTO), held three sessions in 2017. During the sessions, WTO officials briefed Committee members on recent developments at the WTO; and PCWTO members explored avenues to strengthen parliamentary contribution to the work of the WTO, including through the institutionalization of the cooperation between the two organizations.

The IPU and the European Parliament jointly organized a parliamentary session on the occasion of the WTO Annual Forum on 26 September. The well-attended session included 132 participants, about 60 of them parliamentarians. Discussion centred on the theme of “Making trade fair: the contribution of parliaments”. Participants agreed that it would be necessary for parliaments to create a legislative environment that would support this outcome. They also committed to engaging in further discussion on trade to ensure that proposed regulatory changes would benefit all citizens.

On the occasion of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, the IPU and the European Parliament organized another successful Parliamentary Conference. It was attended by 500 participants, including 220 parliamentarians from 56 countries. The conference offered parliamentarians the opportunity to have a hearing with the Director General of the WTO, a dialogue with WTO senior negotiators and officials, and comprehensive debates on some important and current challenges to the global trading system. In the outcome document of the conference, participants identified concrete parliamentary actions to be taken. These included calls for a strong boost to multilateralism – considered the best option for the global trading system. Other measures to be pursued included putting women at the forefront of macroeconomic policies; action to prohibit and eliminate certain forms of subsidies to fisheries; a framework for the facilitation of trade in services; and the development of safeguards against growing protectionism. In addition, participants agreed that international trade is an effective tool to support sustainable development. The IPU will undertake follow-up actions to the implementation of this outcome document in 2018.

Media and communications

During 2017, 29 press releases and 12 e-Bulletins were issued, and 84 web stories published. The press releases had 69,907 views.

In October, the IPU switched to the new website. There were 22,112 new visitors and 8,122 returning visitors, with a total of 30,234 sessions and 71,080 page views. The top five countries they came from were: United States (3,831), India (1,793), United Kingdom (1,680), France (1,404) and Canada (1,146).

The IPU was mentioned in the press 28,454 times, with the two main events being the 136th Assembly in Dhaka and the 137th Assembly in St. Petersburg.

In social media, the number of Twitter followers went up by 5,121, from 8,000 on 1 January to 13,121 on 31 December. We posted 1,069 tweets over the year, which appeared in 1,387,820 newsfeeds and were engaged with (retweeted, liked or clicked on) 24,762 times.

The IPU Facebook page was created on 25 April. By the end of the year, it had 881 followers and 222 posts, which reached 76,438 people. A total of 9,529 people engaged with the posts.

Sixty-seven videos were uploaded to YouTube, including those for the International Day of Democracy. The channel had 7,251 views and a total of 201 subscribers (in 2017, the channel gained 133 subscribers), with 278 shares.

On the IPU Flickr page, 99 albums were posted in 2017 with 19,645 views. The page has 54 subscribers. Most of the albums were from the Assemblies in Dhaka and St. Petersburg.

The IPU produced several publications, including the *Annual Report*, *The Analysis on Women's Representation in Politics in 2016*, the *Global Parliamentary Report* and its Executive Summary, and the map, *Women in Politics in 2017*.

The Communications Division worked to increase the visibility of the IPU through various channels, both digital and print. The IPU's digital platforms grew both in size and engagement.

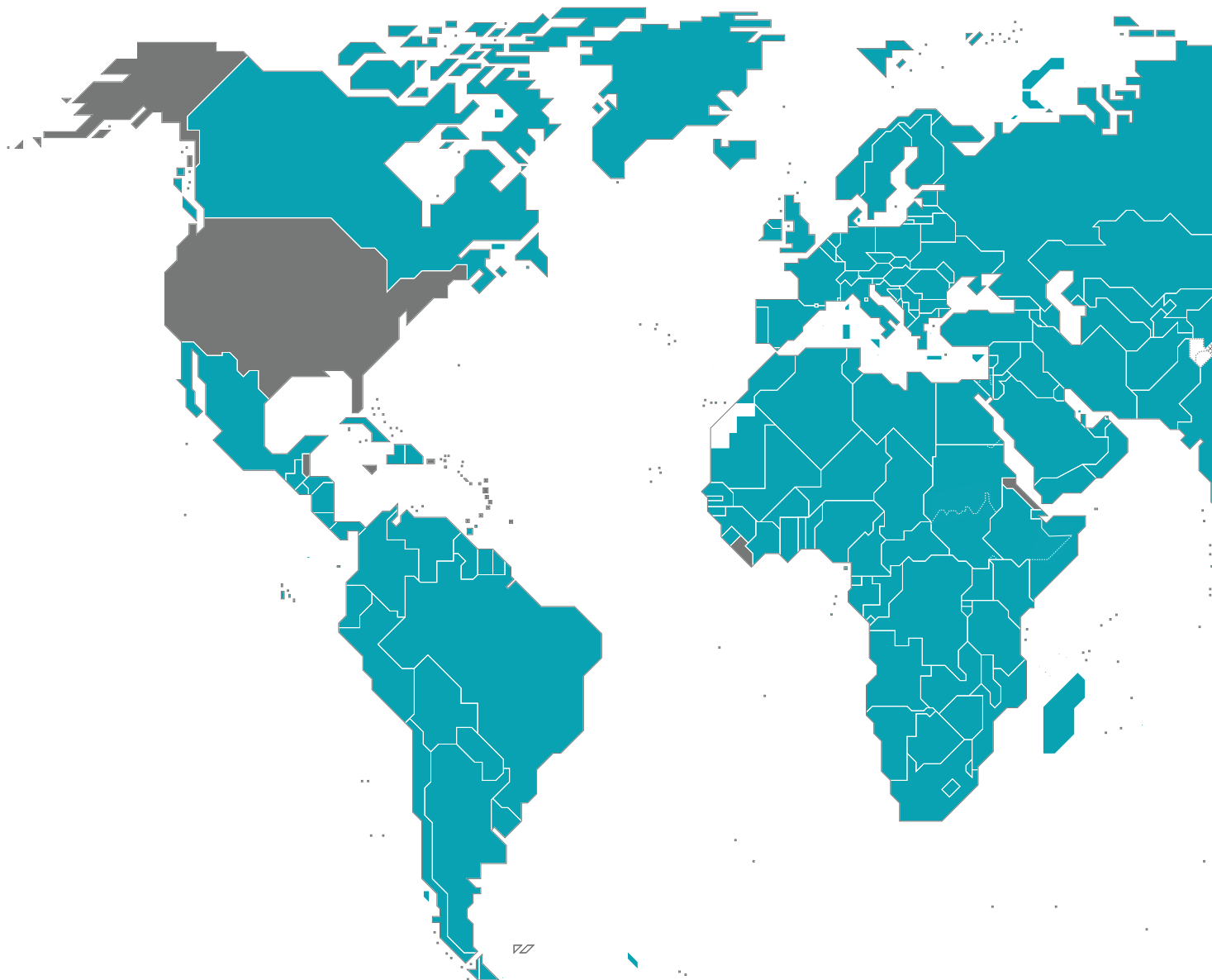
Strategy 2017-2021

Strong democratic parliaments serving the people



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.





The IPU at a glance

Membership

In 2017, the Parliament of the Central African Republic was readmitted to IPU. The Parliaments of Tuvalu, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vanuatu were affiliated. Associate member status was accorded to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC).

IPU currently comprises 178 national parliaments and 12 Associate Members.

Members (178)

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands**, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar,

** Membership rights become effective as of 1 January 2018.



Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia**, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu**, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Associate Members (12)

Andean Parliament, Arab Parliament, Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), European Parliament, Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO), Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) and Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

Composition of the Executive Committee as of 1st of March 2018

	Members	Expiry of term
Ex-officio President:	Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico)	October 2020
Vice-President of the Executive Committee:	Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation)	October 2019
IPU Vice-Presidents:	Ms. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba)	October 2020
	Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt)	April 2021
	Mr. K. Jalali (Islamic Republic of Iran)	October 2019
	Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation)	October 2019
Members:	Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria)	October 2018
	Ms. M.I. Oliveira Valente (Angola)	October 2019
	Mr. A. Lins (Brazil)	October 2019
	Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada)	October 2021
	Mr. R. del Picchia (France)	October 2018
	Mr. S. Suzuki (Japan)	October 2018
	Mr. K.M. Lusaka (Kenya)	October 2019
	Ms. A. Habibou (Niger)	March 2019
	Ms. H. Haukeland Liadal (Norway)	October 2019
	Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland)	October 2021
	Mr. Nguyen Van Giau (Viet Nam)	October 2019
Ex-officio members:		
President of the Forum of Women MPs	Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia)	March 2018
President of the Forum of Young MPs	Ms. M. Osoru (Uganda)	March 2019

Standing Committees: Composition of the Bureaux as of 1st of March 2018

	Members	Expiry of term
Peace and International Security		
President:	Ms. L. Rojas (Mexico)	March 2018 (first term) Elected President until March 2018
Vice-President:	Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal)	March 2018 (second term) Elected as Vice-President until March 2018
African Group	Mr. R. Ossele Ndong (Gabon)	March 2018 (second term)
	Mr. A.L.S. Ssebagala (Uganda)	March 2018 (first term)
	Ms. G. Katuta (Zambia)	March 2019 (second term)
Arab Group	Ms. S. Hajji Taqawi (Bahrain)	March 2018 (second term)
	Mr. K. Albakkar (Jordan)	March 2018 (first term)
	Mr. A. Al-Ahmad (Palestine)	March 2018 (second term)
Asia-Pacific Group	M. H.B. Kambhampati (India)	March 2019 (second term)
	Ms. S. Saeed (Pakistan)	October 2018 (first term)
	Mr. A. Suwanmongkol (Thailand)	October 2018 (first term)
Eurasia Group	Ms. K. Atshemyan (Armenia)	March 2018 (second term)
	Mr. M. Ashimbayev (Kazakhstan)	March 2018 (second term)
	Mr. A. Klimov (Russian Federation)	March 2018 (second term)
Group of Latin America and the Caribbean	Ms. G. Fermín Nuesi (Dominican Republic)	March 2018 (second term)
	<i>Current President</i>	
	Mr. Y. Jabour (Venezuela)	March 2018 (second term)
Twelve Plus Group	Mr. A. Neofytou (Cyprus)	March 2018 (second term)
	<i>Current Vice-President</i>	
	Ms. L.I. Ceritoğlu Kurt (Turkey)	October 2019 (first term)
Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee to the 138th Assembly:		
	Ms. M. Vargas Barcena (Mexico)	Mr. A. Caroni (Switzerland)

	Members	Expiry of term
Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade		
President:	<i>Vacancy</i>	
Vice-President:	Mr. A. Cissé (Mali)	March 2018 (second term) Elected Vice-President until March 2018
African Group	M. M. Djellab (Algeria) <i>Current Vice-President</i>	October 2019 (first term)
	Ms. J. Mhlanga (Zimbabwe)	March 2018 (first term)
Arab Group	Ms. W. Bani Mustapha (Jordan)	March 2019 (first term)
	Mr. K. Abdullah Abul (Kuwait)	March 2018 (second term)
	Mr. A. Hussain Adam (Sudan)	March 2018 (first term)
Asia-Pacific Group	Ms. N. Marino (Australia) <i>Vacancy</i>	March 2018 (second term)
	Mr. N. Singh (India)	October 2019 (second term)
Eurasia Group	Mr. C. Tursunbekov (Kyrgyzstan)	October 2018 (first term)
	Ms. Z. Greceanii (Republic of Moldova)	March 2018 (first term)
	Ms. L. Gumerova (Russian Federation)	March 2018 (first term)
Group of Latin America and the Caribbean	Ms. D. Soliz (Ecuador)	October 2019 (first term)
	Mr. R.F. Acuña Nuñez (Peru)	October 2019 (second term)
	Mr. L.A. Heber (Uruguay)	October 2019 (second term)
Twelve Plus Group	Mr. O. Hav (Denmark)	March 2018 (second term)
	Ms. S. Dinica (Romania)	March 2019 (first term)
	Ms. T. Lindberg (Sweden)	March 2018 (first term)
Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee to the 138th Assembly:		
	Mr. Andries Gryffroy (Belgium) Mr. Duong Quoc Ahn (Viet Nam)	
	Members	Expiry of term
Democracy and Human Rights		
President:	Ms. B. Tshireletso (Botswana)	March 2018 (first term) Elected President until March 2018
Vice-President:	Ms. S. Koutra-Koukouma (Cyprus)	March 2018 (second term) Elected Vice-President until March 2018
African Group	<i>Current President</i>	
	Mr. A. Niyongabo (Burundi)	March 2019 (first term)
	Mr. D.P. Losiakou (Kenya)	March 2018 (second term)
Arab Group	Ms. J. Alsammak (Bahrain)	March 2019 (second term)
	Mr. M.N. Al-Gburi (Iraq)	March 2018 (second term)
	Ms. F. Dib (Syrian Arab Republic)	March 2018 (second term)
Asia-Pacific Group	Mr. P. Wangchuk (Bhutan)	March 2018 (first term)
	Ms. L. Kheng (Cambodia)	March 2018 (second term)
	Mr. A.Y. Desai (India)	March 2018 (first term)
Eurasia Group	Mme S. Isayan (Armenia)	March 2018 (first term)
	Mr. S. Yershov (Kazakhstan)	March 2018 (first term)
	Mr. L. Slutsky (Russian Federation)	March 2018 (first term)
Group of Latin America and the Caribbean	Ms. K. Sosa (El Salvador)	March 2018 (second term)
	Ms. R.M. Bartra Barriga (Peru)	March 2019 (second term)
	Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname)	March 2018 (second term)
Twelve Plus Group	Mr. S. Spengemann (Canada)	March 2019 (first term)
	<i>Current Vice-President</i>	
	Mr. J. Lacao (Portugal)	March 2018 (first term)
Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee to the 139th Assembly:		
	To be confirmed (Morocco) / other rapporteurs to be confirmed	

	Members	Expiry of term
United Nations Affairs		
President:	Mr. A. Avsan (Sweden)	March 2019 (second term) Elected President until March 2018
Vice-President:	Mr. A.F.I. Al-Mansour (Sudan)	March 2018 (second term) Elected Vice-President until March 2018
African Group	Mr. S. Chiheb (Algeria) Mr. D.G. Boko (Botswana) Ms. A.D. Dagban-Zonvide (Togo)	October 2018 (second term) March 2019 (second term) October 2019 (first term)
Arab Group	<i>Current Vice-President</i> Mr. A. Toumi (Morocco) Ms. A.R. Albasti (United Arab Emirates)	March 2018 (second term) March 2018 (second term)
Asia-Pacific Group	Mr. A.K. Azad (Bangladesh) Ms. E. Nursanty (Indonesia) Ms. B. Sampatisiri (Thailand)	March 2019 (second term) October 2018 (second term) October 2018 (first term)
Eurasia Group	Mr. D. Asylbek uulu (Kyrgyzstan) Mr. S. Gavrilov (Russian Federation) <i>Vacancy</i>	October 2018 (first term) April 2019 (first term)
Group of Latin America and the Caribbean	Ms. C.L. Crexell (Argentina) Mr. J.C. Mahía (Uruguay) <i>Vacancy</i>	April 2019 (first term) March 2018 (second term)
Twelve Plus Group	<i>Current President</i> Mr. D. Dawson (Canada) Ms. A. Trettebergstuen (Norway)	March 2018 (second term) October 2019 (second term)

In accordance with Rule 8.1 of the Rules of the Standing Committees as amended in October 2013, Members of the Bureau shall be elected for a term of two years and may be re-elected for a further period of two years. featuring in the column “Expiry of term as a Bureau member” corresponds to the maximum theoretical duration of the mandate.

Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

The Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) brings together secretaries-general and other senior office holders in charge of parliamentary services. It studies the law, procedure, practice and working methods of different parliaments and proposes measures for improvement and for securing cooperation between the services of different parliaments. It is a consultative body of the IPU, and the ASGP President reports annually to the IPU Executive Committee on the Association’s activities. The ASGP assists the IPU on subjects within the scope of the Association. Studies carried out by the IPU relating to parliamentary law and practices are routinely shared with the ASGP and benefit from its input.

In 2017 the ASGP cooperated with the IPU on a number of projects. The ASGP and individual Secretaries General made substantive contributions to the preparation of the Global

Parliamentary Report on parliamentary oversight, which was presented to the ASGP at the 138th IPU Assembly in October 2017. The ASGP and individual Secretaries General also contributed to the IPU’s efforts to establish a new Centre for Innovation in Parliament, to support and enhance parliaments’ use of digital tools. In particular, Secretaries General from a number of parliaments took part in a focus group in Dhaka in March, and an expert-level working meeting in Geneva in November.

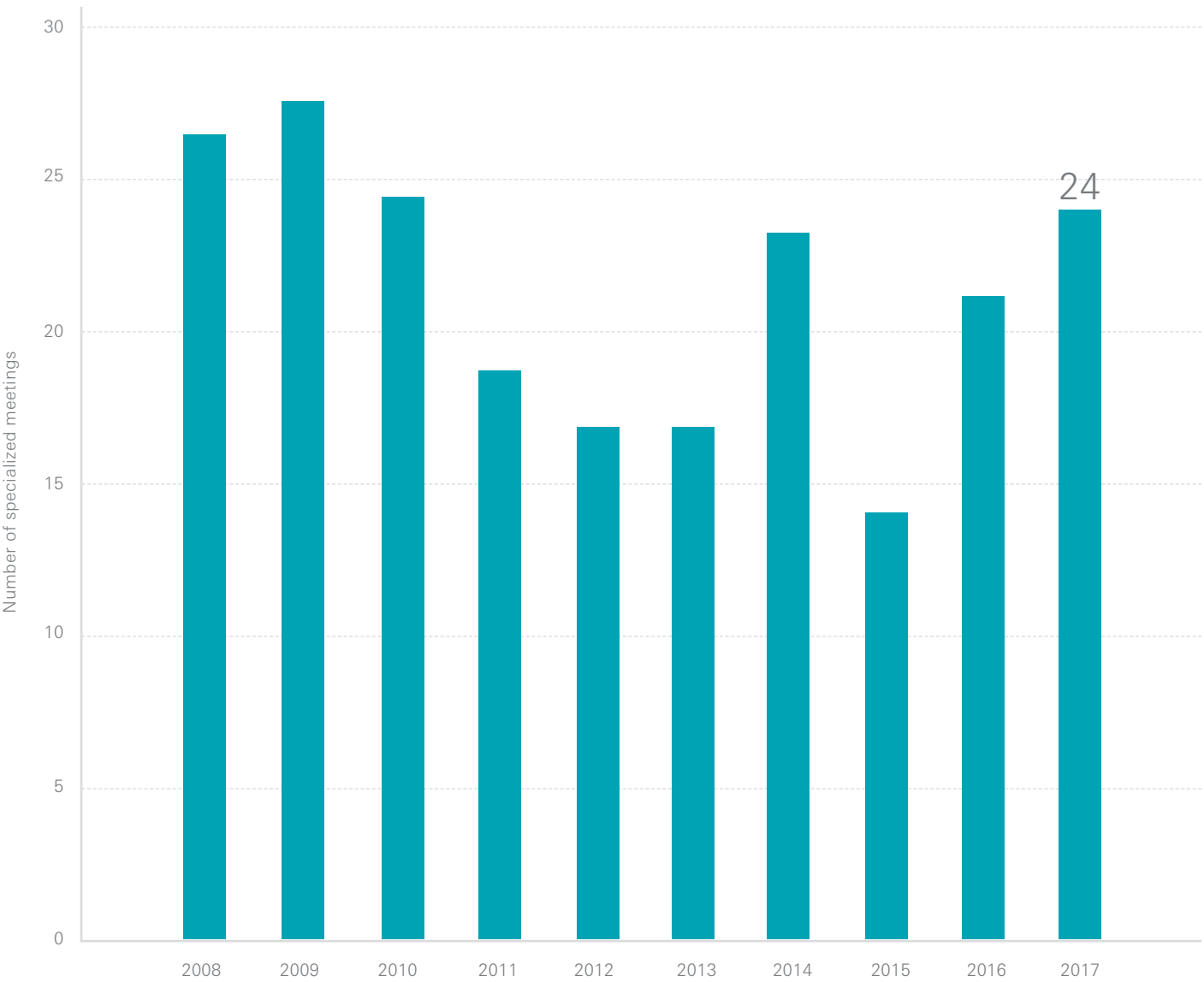
In 2017, the ASGP also provided substantial support to many of the parliamentary capacity building projects carried out by the IPU. Several of its members provided expertise for capacity building activities in Afghanistan, Egypt, Myanmar, Pakistan Sri Lanka, Vanuatu and Zambia.

In October 2017, the ASGP elected Mr. Philippe Schwab, Secretary General of the National Council of Switzerland, as its new President.

Specialized meetings in 2017

- [Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations](#)
NEW YORK, 13-14 February
- [South Asian Speakers' Forum on the implementation of the SDGs](#)
INDORE (India), 18-20 February 2017
- [Regional seminar for Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia on parliaments and the implementation of the SDGs](#)
BUDAPEST (Hungary), 23-24 February 2017
- [Regional Seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals for the Parliaments of Sub-Saharan Africa](#)
KAMPALA (Uganda), (1-3 March 2017)
- [38th session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO](#)
BRUSSELS (European Parliament), 9 March 2017
- [Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women](#)
NEW YORK, 17 March 2017
- [Regional seminar for Young Parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific region](#)
COLOMBO (Sri Lanka), 25-26 April 2017
- [Regional Seminar for the Asia-Pacific region on the SDGs](#)
Ho Chi Minh City, 11-13 May 2017
- [Information seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter Parliamentary Union for English-speaking participants](#)
GENEVA (IPU Headquarters), 16-19 May 2017
- [Parliamentary meeting at the 70th World Health Assembly](#)
GENEVA (Switzerland), 29 May 2017
- [Regional Conference on Violence against Women and Girls for Central and Eastern Europe](#)
BUCHAREST (Romania), 12-14 June 2017
- [Regional seminar on Promoting Child nutrition in Western and Central Africa](#)
OUAGADOUGOU (Burkina Faso), 27-29 June 2017
- [Second Roundtable on Water: from words to actions](#)
GENEVA (Switzerland), 6-7 July 2017
- [Parliamentary meeting at the UN high-level political forum on sustainable development](#)
NEW YORK, 17 July 2017
- [13th Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians](#)
WROXTON (United Kingdom), 29-30 July 2017
- [Second interregional seminar on parliamentary capacity-building and the further implementation of the SDGs](#)
BEIJING (China), 5-7 September 2017
- [Parliamentary session within the framework of the annual WTO Public Forum](#)
GENEVA (Switzerland), 26 September 2017
- [39th session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO](#)
GENEVA (Switzerland), 27 September 2017
- [Regional Conference for Young Parliamentarians in Africa](#)
ABUJA (Nigeria), 27-28 September 2017
- [Regional seminar on the contribution of parliament to the promotion and the protection of the rights of the child on the occasion of the CEMAC Parliamentary session](#)
CEMAC Parliament HQ MALABO (Equatorial Guinea), 30-31 October 2017
- [Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the UN Climate Change Conference \(COP23/CMP13\)](#)
BONN (Germany), 12 November 2017
- [The Fourth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians](#)
OTTAWA (Canada), 17-18 November 2017
- [International Conference on Promoting better regional cooperation toward smart and humane migration across the Mediterranean](#)
VALLETTA (Malta), 16-17 November
- [Annual Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO](#)
BUENOS AIRES (Argentina), 9-10 December

Ten-year evolution in IPU meetings



Resource mobilization: who funds the IPU?

The IPU's work to promote peace, democracy and sustainable development is financed primarily by our Members and Associate Members. We also receive a growing amount of voluntary contributions from governments, development agencies, UN bodies and foundations.

Several donors have provided multiyear funding agreements that were active during 2017. These include the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, Worldwide Support for Development and the Governments of Angola, China, Micronesia and the United Arab Emirates. Partnerships with the UN family, particularly UNDP and WHO, deliver support to a number of country-level programmes. The Republic of Korea continued to offer support in terms of secondment of senior research staff to the IPU.

The IPU remains committed to looking for more voluntary funding to help meet the objectives of its Strategy.

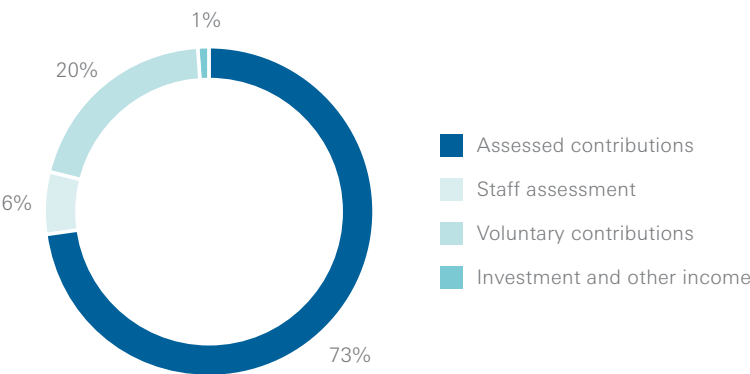
Financial results

Financing

The IPU is financed primarily through the annual assessed contributions from Member Parliaments. Additional revenue is derived from the internal staff assessment, programme support cost charges, interest, fund income and meeting room rentals. In line with International Public Sector Accounting Standards, the IPU no longer recognizes the staff assessment element as either income or expenditure in its Statement of Financial Performance but utilizes it for budgetary purposes.

In addition, the IPU also solicits bilateral and multilateral donors for voluntary funding that is used to finance technical cooperation projects and activities. A summary of revenue sources for 2017 is presented below, including staff assessment for expenditure comparison.

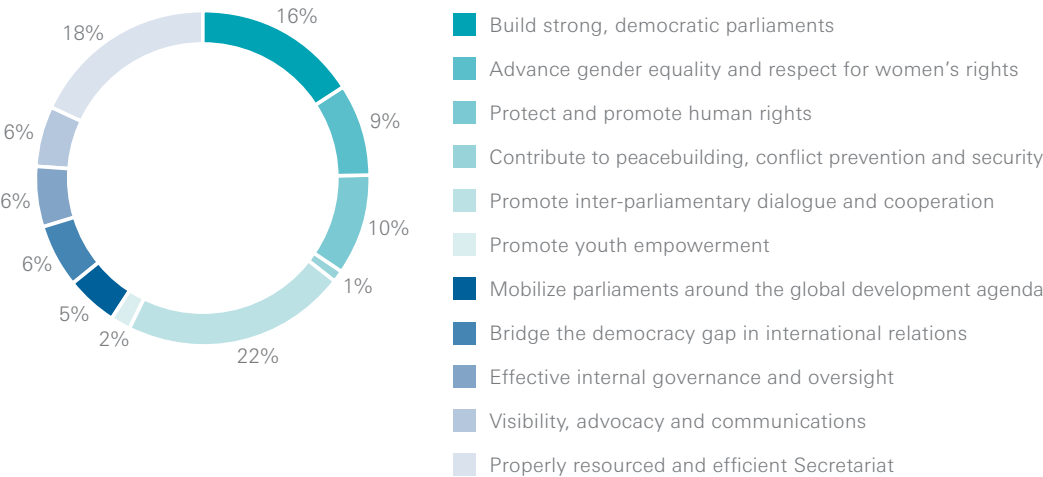
IPU Revenues by Source (budget basis)		
	CHF (Swiss francs)	%
Assessed contributions	10,243,450	73%
Staff assessment	911,587	6%
Voluntary contributions	2,844,632	20%
Investment and other income	124,371	1%
Total revenue	14,124,040	



Expenditures

IPU expenditures are dedicated to achieving the strategic objectives of the Organization. A breakdown of expenditures by strategic objective is shown in the following chart, which includes staff assessment for comparison.

IPU Expenditures by Strategic Objective (budget basis)		
	CHF (Swiss francs)	%
Build strong, democratic parliaments	2,214,172	16%
Advance gender equality and respect for women’s rights	1,224,481	9%
Protect and promote human rights	1,393,057	10%
Contribute to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and security	187,786	1%
Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation	2,977,778	22%
Promote youth empowerment	236,848	2%
Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda	660,689	5%
Bridge the democracy gap in international relations	832,799	6%
Effective internal governance and oversight	807,446	6%
Visibility, advocacy and communications	898,136	6%
Properly resourced and efficient Secretariat	2,431,227	18%
Other charges and eliminations	-105,150	-1%
Total expenses	13,759,269	



Financial statements

The consolidated financial statements of IPU and its legacy Pension Fund for 2017 are prepared in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) on a full accrual and going-concern basis. The organization's financial statements are audited annually by IPU's external auditor under mandate from the Executive Committee. The external auditor is appointed from a national audit office, currently the Swiss Federal Audit Office.

This is the sixth year in which the IPU financial statements have been consolidated with the legacy Pension Fund and prepared in full compliance with IPSAS.

Further information on IPU's financial processes, including its annual financial statements and consolidated budgets, are available at: <https://www.ipu.org/about-us/structure/secretariat/budget-and-finance>

The IPU and closed Pension Fund

Statement of Financial Position at 31 December 2017 in CHF (Swiss francs)

	2017	2016
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash on hand	7,377	11,881
Cash in current accounts	5,734,320	6,959,389
Cash held by investment fund manager	344,217	264,122
Term deposits and savings accounts	4,738,777	4,738,677
Sub-total cash and cash equivalents	10,824,691	11,974,069
Accounts receivable		
From Members	965,983	721,626
From donors	161,443	36,358
From tax reimbursements	37,334	44,966
Others	5,761	25,316
Sub-total accounts receivable	1,170,520	828,266
Investments	8,567,896	8,702,020
Other current assets	273,787	311,781
Sub-total current assets	20,836,895	21,816,136
Non-current assets		
Fixed assets		
Building and grounds	8,255,438	8,490,950
Furnishings	24,782	33,457
General equipment	60,317	-
IT equipment	73,993	66,793
Vehicles	16,775	22,875
	8,431,304	8,614,076
Intangible assets	68,021	-
Sub-total non-current assets	8,499,326	8,614,076
Total assets	29,336,221	30,430,212

2017

2016

Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued payables	429,956	204,290
Advances from Members	227,124	527,195
Deferred revenue	2,677,682	3,492,146
Loans	189,600	189,600
Sub-total current liabilities	3,524,363	4,413,231
Borrowings long term	5,248,065	5,373,687
Closed Pension Fund	9,733,387	10,387,112
Other employee benefits	1,503,344	1,488,738
Sub-total non-current liabilities	16,484,796	17,249,537
Total liabilities	20,009,159	21,662,768

Net assets

Restricted funds	434,251	427,828
Accumulated fund balance (Working Capital Fund after contribution)	8,892,812	8,339,618
Net assets	9,327,063	8,767,446

IPU and closed Pension Fund

Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2017 in CHF (Swiss francs)

	2017	2016
Revenue		
Assessed contributions	10,243,450	10,066,000
Voluntary contributions	2,844,632	2,826,841
Investment income	587,787	411,823
Other income	14,300	58,362
Total Revenue	13,690,169	13,363,026
Expenses		
Personnel expenditure – permanent staff	7,940,942	8,382,833
Personnel expenditure – temporary staff	2,617,544	2,792,457
Change in closed pension fund provision	-587,384	-686,186
Travel expenditure	1,053,124	1,013,941
Contractual services	698,662	785,138
Operating expenses	668,074	766,269
Supplies, materials and equipment	96,586	120,416
Allowance for doubtful accounts	29,857	41,489
Grants and honoraria	168,754	68,183
Depreciation	296,719	309,491
Amortization of loan	63,978	65,406
Loss on foreign exchange	83,698	-
Total Expenses	13,130,552	13,659,436
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	559,617	(296,409)

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Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.



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