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For democracy. For everyone.

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Annual report of the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU in 2018

(a) Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017–2021 and cooperation with the United Nations system

This report is an overview of activities undertaken since January 2019 to implement the IPU Strategy. It is to be read in conjunction with the IPU's Annual Report 2018/19 and the document entitled Reporting on the Summarized Logframe 2018, which is found in Annex III. It focuses in particular on initiatives that provide support to parliaments in building their capacity, strengthening their work at the national level and in delivering on national objectives. It also provides a list of activities planned for the next six months and a checklist of actions that IPU Members are invited to consider taking, as well as information on ongoing or new partnerships, such as the trilateral agreement between the IPU, UNOCT and UNODC.

Objective 1: Build strong, democratic parliaments

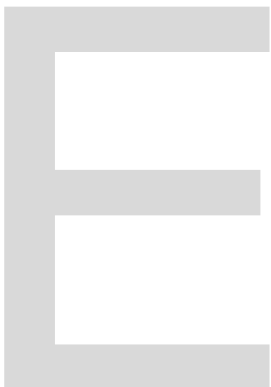
Standards setting and knowledge generation

1. Overview of activities

The main focus since the beginning of 2019 has been the Centre for Innovation in Parliament which was launched in December 2018. The Centre for Innovation in Parliament is a partnership between the IPU and parliaments to support parliamentary innovation through improved use of digital tools. It provides a platform for parliaments to develop and share good practices in digital transformation strategies, and practical methods for building capacity in areas such as: strategic planning of digital tools and services; parliamentary openness, open standards and open data; citizen engagement in the work of parliament; internet and social media; electronic document and records management; and digital library and research services.

The IPU has continued to support the four regional and thematic hubs that have been established (Southern Africa, Latin America, Open Data, ICT Governance) as they begin activities. In addition, new partnerships are being finalized with the parliaments of Kenya (East Africa regional hub) and Trinidad and Tobago (Caribbean regional hub).

The first edition of a new quarterly bulletin, the Innovation Tracker, is in preparation. Background work on a new social media guide for parliaments and parliamentarians is underway. Two events at the Doha Assembly will feed in to the overall work of the Centre, one on "disinformation and 'fake news'", the other on "the future of parliament".



#IPU140

In parallel, the IPU is fundraising to ensure the Centre's financial stability. A letter was sent to all parliaments in early February to inform them about ways to participate in the Centre, and to seek voluntary contributions to its activities.

Work is underway to introduce improvements to the New Parline database on national parliaments, as are the preparations of a self-assessment toolkit on parliamentary oversight as a follow-up to the 2017 Global Parliamentary Report.

2. Future activities

- Creation of a network of Parline correspondents to help ensure that the New Parline database remains accurate and up to date.
- Collection of data for SDG indicator 16.7.1(a) on the inclusion of women and young people in decision-making positions in parliaments.
- Publication of the self-assessment toolkit on parliamentary oversight.
- Publication of the Innovation Tracker.
- Publication of the social media guide for parliaments and parliamentarians.
- Preparatory work for the 2020 World e-Parliament Report.

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Review data on their parliament in the New Parline database; provide feedback and updates. (see: data.ipu.org).
- Consider participating in the Centre for Innovation in Parliament and providing voluntary financial and other contributions to its operations.
- Consider carrying out self-assessments, including of their oversight performance.

Build institutional capacity

1. Overview of activities

The Technical Cooperation Programme undertook several activities in the beginning of 2019.

- In Vanuatu, to follow-up and build on the various activities undertaken since 2017 in the area of information and communication technologies (ICT), a mission took place in January 2019 with a view to establishing a digital library platform.
- In February 2019, the IPU, in collaboration with the Parliament of Uganda, supported the National Assembly of Zambia in the planning and delivery of a series of self-assessments. National Assembly staff were trained to serve as the primary facilitators of the exercise. Forty or so senior staff and approximately 35 MPs carried out a self-assessment on parliamentary performance. The IPU draft self-assessment toolkit on parliamentary oversight was also tested by 15 Chairpersons of parliamentary committees.
- In Myanmar, in March 2019, the IPU conducted a course on Parliamentary diplomacy, including on IPU Assemblies.

2. Future activities

Activities are foreseen to take place in the following countries: Algeria, Benin, Djibouti, Malawi, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Seychelles, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Zambia.

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Encourage parliaments that have not yet done so to endorse the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments and integrate them in their work. (See [Annex II](#) for the map of parliaments that have endorsed the Principles.)
- In line with the Common Principles, contribute to developing a guide that would serve as a reference tool for parliaments and their partners to help increase parliament's proactive engagement in self-development.

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

1. Overview of activities

In early 2019, the IPU's work on advancing gender equality focused on research on women's political participation; parliamentary activities within the framework of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW); and national capacity building activities for gender equality.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, the IPU launched its annual report on *Women in parliament in 2018: The year in review* (<https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2019-03/women-in-parliament-in-2018-year-in-review>). The report covers progress and setbacks in women's participation in parliaments that held elections in 2018, points out trends, good practices and persisting challenges. The IPU and UN Women launched the map *Women in Politics: 2019* (see: <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/infographics/2019-03/women-in-politics-2019>). The map includes information on women in parliament, women in ministerial positions, women Heads of State and Government and women Speakers of parliament.

On 8 March, the IPU and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) issued a joint statement calling for stronger measures to boost women's representation and leadership in politics (see: <https://www.ipu.org/news/news-in-brief/2019-03/womens-political-leadership-striving-50-cent-balance-in-2030>).

The IPU pursued its research on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament early 2019 as it prepared guidelines for parliaments on this issue to be launched later in the year. It has also continued promoting action against all forms of violence against women in politics by presenting its 2018 report jointly published with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The report was presented at meetings in Beirut, Brussels, Reykjavik and Strasbourg.

On the occasion of the 63rd session of the CSW held in March 2019 in New York, the IPU and UN Women hosted the annual parliamentary meeting entitled *Investing in gender equality: Parliaments ensuring social protection, public services and infrastructure deliver for women and girls*. The IPU also organized several side events to present its most recent studies and reports on violence against women in politics and on women's political participation.

At the national level, the IPU supported women in Mali in their preparation for political participation in the elections to be held this year. The workshop organized in the National Assembly brought together male and female MPs, governmental officials, international and regional experts and civil society organizations. The participants identified means to promote women's participation and meet the targets set by the gender electoral quota in the coming elections.

The IPU also supported the Parliament of Djibouti in organizing a workshop on addressing violence against women and girls in preparation for coming parliamentary deliberations on the issue. Male and female MPs expanded their knowledge on the legal and policy requirements for the effective elimination of gender-based violence with a particular focus on harmful practices. A capacity building session on advocacy to combat violence against women and girls was also carried out.

In Namibia, the IPU supported the Parliament in organizing a workshop for MPs on the establishment and good functioning of women's parliamentary caucuses, and on the influence of women parliamentarians.

2. Future activities

- Research on the importance of the influence of women in parliament and what supports and what hinders such influence. Case studies are being carried out and will be launched in the coming months.
- Support male and female MPs to advance gender equality and women's rights as well as to enhance women's political participation.
- Support parliaments in carrying out gender audits and self-assessments based on the IPU Toolkit and *Plan of action for gender-sensitive parliaments*, including in Botswana and Colombia.

3. Next Steps for IPU Members

- Consider carrying out gender-sensitive parliament self-assessments (see www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/gender-toolkit-e.pdf).
- Share data and information on women in parliament after elections and whenever a change occurs in their membership.
- Share with the IPU Secretariat good practices developed in parliament to address sexism, harassment and gender-based violence.
- Support parliamentary involvement in the CEDAW reporting process. Reports from more than 20 countries will be reviewed during the June and October 2019 sessions (see [Annex II](#)).

Objective 3: Protect and promote human rights

1. Overview of activities

The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CHRP) held its 158th session in Geneva in January-February 2019. During this session, the Committee examined the situation of 417 MPs in 37 countries. Thirty per cent of the cases concerned parliamentarians from Asia, 23 per cent involved parliamentarians from the Americas, 19 per cent concerned members of parliament from Africa, 15 per cent from Europe, 12 per cent from the Middle East and North Africa, and 1 per cent from the Southern Pacific. Seventy-eight per cent of the cases concerned MPs from the opposition. Eighteen per cent of the cases concerned women MPs.

A matter of direct or indirect concern in most cases was freedom of expression. The violations most frequently considered by the Committee during the session were abusive revocation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate, lack of due process in proceedings against parliamentarians, violation of freedom of expression, and torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence.

During the session, the CHRP adopted a total of 15 decisions. The Committee decided to close the cases of 51 parliamentarians.

Throughout the period under review, the IPU Secretariat followed up on recent decisions of the IPU Governing Council and the CHRP on individual human rights cases, monitored and responded to ongoing developments in existing cases and took action in response to new complaints submitted to the CHRP.

2. Future activities

- Follow up on the 158th and 159th session (October 2018 and January 2019) of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Follow up on cases of alleged human rights violations of parliamentarians currently under consideration by the CHRP and inform the IPU Secretariat of any such follow-up action. (See [Annex II](#) for list of countries with cases under examination.)
- Give visibility to the Committee statistics presented during the most recent International Human Rights Day (10 December) by speaking out in support of parliamentarians at risk. Make full use of the global map and the analysis with the Committee's statistics that was released on that day as well as of other, already existing, visual and information tools to raise awareness in parliament about the work of the Committee and the ideals it seeks to defend (see www.youtube.com/user/iparliamentaryunion).
- Support parliamentary involvement in and follow-up of the next sessions of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), the Human Rights Committee of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (HRC OHCHR), the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- Disseminate and make use of the handbook for members of parliament on freedom of expression (see: <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/handbooks/2018-10/freedom-expression-parliaments-and-their-members-importance-and-scope-protection>).
- Mobilize the participation of parliamentarians who have relevant expertise and hold relevant functions in parliament in human rights events that the IPU co-organizes.

Objective 4: Contribute to peace-building, conflict prevention and security

1. Overview of activities

In February 2019, Parliamentarians from 17 countries from the Middle East and North Africa met in Luxor, Egypt, for the high-level regional conference *The role of parliamentarians in addressing the threat of foreign terrorist fighters and associated challenges*. The conference aimed to improve parliamentary cooperation and the exchange of good practices; to get views from parliamentarians on the challenges in implementing UN resolutions; to contribute to establishing a Global Parliamentary Network on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism; and to raise MPs' awareness of recent developments related to foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs).

In parallel, the secretariats of the IPU, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) have been working together to finalize a Memorandum of Understanding to present to the governing bodies (see [Annex IV](#)). The United Nations has approved funding for the next two years for the IPU programme on counter-terrorism to the tune of USD 2.2 million.

2. Future activities

- Seminar on parliamentary strategies for non-proliferation of weapons, arms control and comprehensive disarmament to, among others, promote the United Nations Secretary-General's new agenda for disarmament and the need for strict oversight of national disarmament actions.
- Regional seminar for parliaments in the Pacific region on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the prohibition of access to WMDs by non-State actors.
- Regional workshop on counter-terrorism and violent extremism in Niamey, Niger, for the Sahel countries, followed by a workshop for the IPU's Eurasia Geopolitical Group.
- Preparations for the first Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism and Violent Extremism, in cooperation with the United Nations.

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Monitor political developments regionally and build parliamentary solidarity at the regional level.
- Consider signing and ratifying the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Objective 5: Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation

1. Overview of activities

Focus was placed on preparations for the 140th IPU Assembly in Doha.

2. Next steps for IPU Members

- Follow up on resolutions and other decisions adopted at the 139th Assembly and to be adopted at the 140th Assembly.
- Prepare country reports in due time — the countries concerned for the 2019 reporting exercise (with a deadline of 31 July 2019) are the following:
 - **African Group** - Burundi, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho.
 - **Arab Group** - Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman.
 - **Asia-Pacific Group** - Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands.
 - **Eurasia Group** - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan.
 - **Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC)** - Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras.
 - **Twelve Plus Group** - Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania.

Objective 6: Promote youth empowerment

1. Overview of activities

In early 2019, the IPU continued promoting its 2018 report on youth participation in national parliaments. There has been very little progress in youth participation over the past two years.

Preparations are ongoing for the promotion of the youth participation targets identified by the Forum of Young Parliamentarians in October 2018.

2. Future activities

- This year the IPU has partnered with the World Future Council to work on the Council's Future Policy Award whose theme for 2019 is youth policies. A call for nominations has been issued. The Award will be granted on the occasion of the 141st IPU Assembly in Belgrade, Serbia.
- The Sixth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians will take place in 2019.
- The IPU stands ready to support young parliamentarians in establishing youth parliamentary caucuses.

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Join and promote the *Not Too Young To Run* campaign, including on social media (#NotTooYoungToRun).
- Share data and information with the IPU Secretariat on youth in parliament after elections.
- Let the IPU know if support is needed in efforts to enhance youth participation and to support the establishment or good functioning of youth parliamentary caucuses.
- Share data and information on youth in parliament after elections and whenever a change occurs in their membership.
- Share good practices developed in enhancing youth participation.

Objective 7: Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda

1. Overview of activities

The IPU helped co-organize the Arab Regional Parliamentary Forum on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Islamic Development Bank Group (IDB Group).

A Briefing for Parliamentarians on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) was organized jointly with the World Health Organization (WHO) on the sidelines of the 2019 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations. The briefing provided information to parliamentarians on how to engage in the online consultation process in view of the UN High-Level Meeting on UHC in September 2019.

National workshops on climate change were organized for the Parliaments of Zimbabwe (8 March) and Burundi (22 March). The workshops helped the parliaments build their capacity to contribute to the implementation of the Paris Agreement at the national level. The workshops were organized in cooperation with the United National Environment Programme (UN Environment) and the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

An Issue Brief on the green economy was published in March in cooperation with UN Environment.

2. Future activities

- Regional Seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the Parliaments of Asia-Pacific (Mongolia, 27-28 May).
- Interregional Seminar on the SDGs for selected parliaments from developing countries (China, 12-14 June).
- Parliamentary events at the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) (New York, July 2019).
- National workshops on climate change in Zambia and the United Republic of Tanzania (dates TBC).

- Parliamentary event at the World Health Assembly (May 2019).
- Handbook for parliamentarians on women's, children's and adolescents' health (summer 2019).
- Handbook for parliamentarians on nutrition and food security (June 2019).

3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Consider undertaking SDGs self-assessment using the IPU-UNDP toolkit.
- Apply for IPU-UN Environment support to build capacity on climate change.
- Mainstream the SDGs into the work of parliament with regular inclusive debates on national implementation.
- Ensure parliamentary involvement (including of the opposition) in the elaboration of a strategic action plan for achieving the SDGs and Nationally Determined Contributions on climate change.
- Participate in the IPU's seminars and workshops on the SDGs, climate change and health.
- Ascertain if their government has pledged to present a voluntary national review (VNR) to the 2019 HLPF.

Objective 8: Bridge the democracy gap in international relations

The checklist on cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations (joint activities over the past six months) can be found in [Annex I](#).

Cooperation with the United Nations system

This document provides a brief checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system from 15 September 2018 to 15 March 2019.

Democracy and Human Rights

The IPU completed a two-year preparatory process for the Global Compact for Migration with a parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the UN Intergovernmental Conference held in Marrakesh, Morocco, on 10 and 11 December. Organized in cooperation with the Parliament of Morocco, the parliamentary meeting was held in Rabat on 6 and 7 December 2018. It concluded with a political declaration whereby parliamentarians pledged to help implement the Global Compact by promoting fact-based political discourse, devising adequate policies and legislation, exercising parliamentary scrutiny of such policies and legislation, and promoting regional and international dialogue.

On 18 September, the IPU contributed to a side event convened by the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations Office in Geneva in the context of the 39th session of the UN Human Rights Council. The event focused on the impact of corruption on the full enjoyment of human rights at all levels. This provided an opportunity to share with the broader UN community in Geneva the main findings of the recent IPU-UNDP Global Parliamentary Report on Oversight.

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and the IPU continued their project of assistance to the Parliament of Myanmar. The two organizations also continued their collaboration in support of the parliaments of Djibouti, Georgia, and Vanuatu.

In February 2019, the IPU and UNDP began talks on ways to strengthen synergies between the Organization's parliamentary strengthening programmes in the light of UNDP's on-going restructuring. The question of maintaining a focal point for parliaments and the IPU at UNDP New York headquarters was also discussed. As part of this process it was decided that the Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations would need to be assessed through a yearly progress report.

The IPU worked closely with UNDP in 2018 to prepare [metadata that describes the methodology for measuring SDG indicator 16.7.1](#), "Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions". The IPU-UNDP metadata focuses exclusively on national legislatures. At a meeting of the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the SDG Indicators in Stockholm from 5 to 8 November 2018, the assembled representatives of national statistical commissions approved the proposed methodology, reclassified this indicator from Tier III to Tier II status, and agreed to make the IPU custodian of the part of the indicator relating to national legislatures [SDG16.7.1(a)].

On 22 and 23 November 2018, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized with IPU's support the second session of the UN Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law. The Forum was chaired by the IPU Secretary General and was attended by government officials, parliamentarians, civil society representatives and academia. It identified good examples of parliamentary engagement on human rights, existing and potential challenges for parliaments in the area of human rights and ways to address them as well as further avenues for cooperation between the UN and parliaments.

Gender equality

On 25 September 2018, the IPU Secretary General addressed a meeting entitled *Levelling the Law for Women and Girls by 2030*. The meeting was organized by the UN High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, UN Women and Global Citizens. On the 28 September, the IPU Secretary General participated in the meeting *Gender Responsive Assemblies: An agenda for concrete action* hosted by the IPU in collaboration with the International Gender Champions, a UN-related initiative, where the *Gender Responsive Assemblies Toolkit* was launched. The IPU contributed to the design and drafting of the Handbook.

On 8 October 2018, in New York, the IPU participated in a meeting convened by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, the OHCHR, UN Women, and the Permanent Missions of Canada and Switzerland on the theme *Ending violence against women in politics*.

On 19 October 2018, in Geneva, the IPU organized a Workshop on the role of parliamentarians in ensuring implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), focusing on the economic empowerment of women. The event brought together representatives from 15 parliaments from Africa, the Americas, the Arab region and the Pacific, who interacted with international experts, including CEDAW members and a UN Women representative.

On 28 February 2019, the IPU took part in an event organized by UN Women in Lebanon, focusing on the issue of violence against women in politics. The head of IPU's Gender Partnership Programme spoke at the event to present the findings of IPU's research on violence against women in parliament.

On 13 March 2019, the IPU and UN Women organized the regular parliamentary meeting at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. The meeting focused on the main theme of the Commission, namely social protection, public services and infrastructure delivery for women and girls. The results of the meeting were presented to the CSW as an official IPU contribution. In addition, the IPU and various partners organized three side events of the CSW on violence against women, women in decision-making, and women in politics. On 12 March, parliamentarians also took part in the special High Level Event of the President of the General Assembly entitled *Women in Power*.

On 12 March the new IPU-UN Women World Map *Women in Politics: 2019* was released at a press conference at UN Headquarters in New York. The President of the IPU was among the presenters and fielded questions from the UN correspondents.

The IPU pursued its close collaboration with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee). It briefed the CEDAW Committee at its October 2018 and February 2019 sessions on the state of women's political participation and of parliamentary engagement with CEDAW as regards the countries under review. It also held meetings with Committee members as part of the joint CEDAW-IPU Working Group. On 8 March 2019, the IPU and the CEDAW Committee issued a joint statement on the importance of achieving gender parity as a means to fulfil CEDAW and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition, several national activities carried out by the IPU included members of the CEDAW Committee, and aimed to advance national-level implementation of the Convention through the work of parliament. Such national seminars were held in Kenya and Djibouti in November 2018 and in Turkey in December 2018.

The IPU also pursued its programmatic collaboration with UN Women, in particular through joint IPU-UN Women projects of technical support to the parliaments of Turkey and Tanzania, focusing on gender equality and women's political empowerment.

At the regional level, the IPU, the Arab IPU and the Egyptian House of Representatives held a regional seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and gender equality in Egypt in September 2018. Speakers included representatives from UN Women, UNDP and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

Youth empowerment

On 14-15 December 2018, the IPU and the Parliament of Azerbaijan organized the 5th Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Baku on the theme *Promoting sustainability, protecting the interests of future generations*. The Conference explored three subtopics: the role of youth in environmental protection; sustainable consumption and production; and prioritizing youth empowerment. Representatives from the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNDP participated as panellists and actively contributed to the debates. Attended by around 130 young MPs from 43 countries, the Conference was an opportunity for the young MPs to share views and experiences and to reflect together on innovative solutions for the prosperity and well-being of future generations.

International peace and security

On 8 October 2018, the IPU participated in the Mandela Peace Summit—a special event of the UN General Assembly. The IPU Permanent Observer at the UN delivered a speech underscoring the role of parliamentarians in creating the political conditions for peace.

The 2019 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, a joint event of the IPU and the United Nations, was held on 21 and 22 February in New York. Entitled *Emerging challenges to multilateralism: A parliamentary response*, the hearing was designed partly as a contribution to on-going UN reforms, many of which focus particularly on the UN's conflict prevention and peacekeeping mandate. More broadly, the hearing delved into the reasons for growing scepticism in multilateralism and how to address it. The President of the General Assembly, the co-convenor, spoke at the opening and closing sessions along with the President of the IPU. The UN Secretary-General also addressed the parliamentarians in a special segment of the Hearing. Over 200 parliamentarians were in attendance.

From 26 to 28 February the IPU in cooperation with the House of Representatives of Egypt, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) held a Regional Conference for the Middle East and North Africa entitled *The role of parliamentarians in addressing the threat of foreign terrorist fighters and associated challenges*. Attended by high-level delegations from the entire region, the conference generated fruitful discussions on the opportunities and challenges faced by parliaments in countering terrorism and preventing extremism leading to terrorism with a special focus on the threat posed by Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF). This conference was the first in a series of capacity-building activities of the IPU–UN Joint Programme guided by the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG).

Cooperation continued with UNOCT and UNODC towards the implementation of the IPU–UN Joint Programme—supported by a substantial financial contribution from the United Nations—in the area of counter-terrorism (the focus being on addressing the root causes) and the prevention of violent extremism. In order to institutionalize the cooperation between the three institutions, an IPU-UNOCT-UNODC Memorandum of Understanding is expected to be signed by the principals of the three organizations in the coming months.

The IPU, together with the Security Council 1540 Committee and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) pursued consultations with a view to convening a new regional meeting on the implementation of UNSC resolution 1540 targeting parliaments of the Pacific region. This event will aim to raise awareness of the resolution among parliamentarians, encourage an exchange of experiences and facilitate the exchange of good legislative and regulatory practices.

Discussions were held with the Director General of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and the President of the United Nations Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons (the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations) for the IPU to assist in promoting the ratification of both the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Strategies for these promotion campaigns are being discussed.

On 15 October 2018, during the 139th IPU Assembly, the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security organized a panel discussion to raise awareness on the United Nations Secretary-General's new disarmament agenda "Securing our Common Future". The panel featured officials from UNODA, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the President of the Arms Trade Treaty Conference of States Parties. Consultations are under way for follow-up to the panel, in the form of a workshop on the comprehensive approach to arms control and non-proliferation.

Headed by the President of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs, Senator Juan Carlos Romero of Argentina, an IPU delegation participated in the 8th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) on 19 and 20 November 2018 in New York. The Forum's overarching theme was *Commit2Dialogue: Partnerships for Prevention and Sustaining Peace*. The IPU delegation took the opportunity to meet with the new High Representative of UNAOC, Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, a former parliamentarian from Spain. The IPU delivered a statement to the Group of Friends of UNAOC.

Sustainable development

The IPU organized a number of regional seminars on achieving the SDGs for parliaments of the following regions: the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America, Commonwealth of Independent States, the Caribbean, the Twelve Plus geopolitical group and East Asia. These events offered a platform for participants to share experiences, identify challenges as well as opportunities and discuss concrete solutions to achieving the SDGs at the national and regional levels. The seminars saw the participation of various UN representatives—mainly from UNDP, UN Women, UN CEDAW Committee, UN ESCWA, UNESCO, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment)—who participated as panellists in a number of sessions mainly focusing on SDGs implementation, governance, gender equality and education.

From 22 to 24 October, the IPU President and a group of MPs participated in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) World Investment Forum in Geneva. A special side event for parliamentarians was held on the first day of the Forum and provided an opportunity to highlight key questions of SDGs financing. Parliamentarians also participated in a special tripartite dialogue event. The IPU President addressed the opening of the forum and also participated in a Davos-like debate with heads of state, the President of the UN General Assembly, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and high level experts.

The IPU and the Polish Parliament organized a Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 24th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP24) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The meeting was attended by some 200 delegates from more than 50 countries. Delegates examined how to put in place the legal frameworks to implement the Paris Agreement and create enabling environments for climate-related investments. They stressed the importance of regular reviews of national commitments on reducing greenhouse gases to ensure that they are in line with the latest scientific knowledge, as well as the monitoring of emissions, and verification of measures taken by governments.

To support parliaments in the national implementation of the Paris Agreement, the IPU and UN Environment launched a project to build the capacity of parliamentarians to help accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Nationally Determined Contributions. Four parliaments were selected to benefit from this support in 2019, with the first workshop taking place in the Parliament of Zimbabwe on 8 March 2019.

On 27 September 2018, the IPU President addressed the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Non-communicable diseases. Her intervention built on the input of the IPU Advisory Group on Health at a previous hearing in preparation for the high-level meeting. On 22 February 2019, the WHO, with support from the IPU, held a special briefing on universal health coverage (UHC) for parliamentarians attending the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations. The briefing was part of the preparations for a High-level Meeting on UHC, scheduled for 23 September, to which the IPU is invited to contribute pursuant to a General Assembly resolution. The IPU Secretary General addressed the meeting which was attended by 40 members of parliament. In addition, the IPU helped disseminate a survey on universal health coverage to parliamentarians whose results will feed into the negotiations for a political declaration for the forthcoming high-level meeting.

On 24 and 25 January 2019, the IPU helped co-organize with the UN ESCWA, UNDP and the Islamic Development Bank Group, the Arab Regional Parliamentary Forum on the 2030 Agenda. The Forum aimed to raise awareness of parliamentarians' role in the implementation, review and follow-up of the SDGs in the Arab region. The Forum focused on ways of reaching out to a wider net of MPs and on how parliaments in the region can exchange best practices on the 2030 Agenda.

In view of the annual session of the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development, to be held from 16 to 19 July 2019, the IPU and the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) discussed upgrading the parliamentary event at the forum from a side event to a special event. This would help raise the visibility of the event and of the role of parliamentarians in the implementation of the SDGs. The annual survey of parliaments of the 51 countries participating in this year's Voluntary National Review was launched on 20 November 2018 with a deadline of 1 June 2019. The IPU also contributed input to one of the UN reports for the HLPF session, on empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.

On 17 January 2019, the IPU participated as an observer in the first meeting of the reconstituted UN SDG Strategy Hub, which is chaired by the UN Deputy Secretary-General. The Strategy Hub brings together several UN system agencies and departments along with global civil society and private sector actors in an effort to promote the SDGs to the wider public.

The IPU and UNDP continued to support SDG self-assessments in parliaments through the IPU-UNDP SDG Self-Assessment Toolkit. In October, the Parliament of Sri Lanka assessed its capacity for implementing the SDGs and outlined a tailored action plan thanks to the assistance of the IPU and UNDP. During the reporting period the Parliament of Argentina began plans for a workshop using the IPU-UNDP toolkit and the UNDP Regional Hub for Arab States expressed its interest in partnering with the IPU to conduct parliamentary SDG assessments based on the toolkit in Somalia, Tunisia and Jordan.

On 17 and 18 December 2018 the IPU collaborated with UN Viet Nam and the National Assembly of Viet Nam in organizing a national workshop on the SDGs. The conference aimed to build understanding of the SDGs amongst not only the National Assembly members but also Government stakeholders and sub-national elected representatives. This event gave the National Assembly the opportunity to present the translated version of the IPU/UNDP SDGs toolkit.

As a member of the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), the IPU participated in the 16th Committee meeting held in New York on 30 November 2018. It further organized a group of parliamentarians to attend a special meeting on private sector engagement for development cooperation on 17 and 18 January 2019 in Paris. Together with other members of the GPEDC, the IPU began preparations jointly with the UN High-level Political Forum in New York for a Senior Leadership Meeting on development cooperation scheduled for 13 and 14 July.

Work on a new guidance note for parliamentarians on development cooperation continued during this period. The note will be published as a joint IPU-UNDP publication by mid-2019.

An issue brief on the green economy was finalized in close cooperation with UN Environment. *Shades of Green: an introduction to the green economy for parliamentarians* was produced as an IPU publication to help parliamentarians understand the most important elements of the green economy and how they interact with one another. The issue brief will be introduced at the 140th Assembly in Qatar.

On 23 and 24 November 2018, the IPU, in collaboration with the ILO, and with the support of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), organized a regional seminar for parliamentarians in Abuja. The seminar took stock of the implementation of the recommendations of a previous regional seminar held in May 2016 at the same venue. Participants shared good practices and, taking into account challenges they were confronted with during the implementation phase, sought to readjust parliamentary related strategies for targeted actions.

As a member of the SUN Movement Lead Group, the IPU Secretary General participated in the Group's meeting on 26 September 2018 in New York, in which he made a commitment on gender equality and women's and girls' social and economic empowerment. He also participated in the SUN Executive Committee Retreat on 29 January 2019 in Geneva.

On 29 October 2018, the IPU President delivered remarks at the opening ceremony of the Global Parliamentary Summit, organized in Madrid by FAO, the Spanish Parliament, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and the Latin America and the Caribbean Parliamentary Front against Hunger. She underlined the key role of parliaments in addressing nutrition challenges and IPU's engagement with international partners to advance the nutrition agenda.

In the lead-up to the UN General Assembly, the IPU President took part in the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) Accountability Breakfast, held on 23 September 2018 in New York. She highlighted IPU's engagement on gender equality and women's and girls' rights, providing examples of parliamentary actions that resulted in improved sexual and reproductive health outcomes. During the launch of the 2018 report of the Every Woman, Every Child (EWEC) Independent Accountability Panel on 27 September 2018, the IPU Secretary General spoke of the role of parliaments in accountability for women's, children's and adolescents' health. On 28 September 2018, the IPU President took part in the meeting of the High Level Steering Group for *Every Woman, Every Child*, to which she was appointed in July 2018.

From 11 to 13 December, the IPU participated with a delegation of parliamentarians in the Partners' Forum of the PMNCH in New Delhi, including a Parliamentary Conclave chaired by the IPU President and a parallel session on the role of parliamentarians in accountability co-organized with PMNCH, World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. The IPU President also addressed the Forum's 1200 participants during the high-level opening ceremony, stressing the many remaining challenges on women's, children's and adolescents' health, and calling on parliamentarians to play a prominent role in improving health outcomes for vulnerable and marginalized populations.

International trade

The IPU and the European Parliament organized the annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO) held on 6 and 7 December 2018, at WTO Headquarters in Geneva. The Conference was co-Chaired by Ms. Margaret Mensah-Williams, Chairperson of the National Council of Namibia, and Mr. Bernd Lange, Member of the European Parliament and Chairperson of the Committee on International Trade. It focused on the overall theme of the way forward for the WTO. Some 250 participants from 55 national parliaments, regional parliaments and representatives of Permanent Missions in Geneva pleaded in favour of increased effectiveness and legitimacy of the WTO. They called for urgent action to address the ongoing deadlock of the WTO Dispute Settlement Body and to strengthen the multilateral trading system to make it more beneficial to the people. They reiterated their commitment to an equitable international trading system, based on free trade, to encourage global economic growth and sustainable economic development, job creation and to ensuring welfare for all.

Senior-level interaction

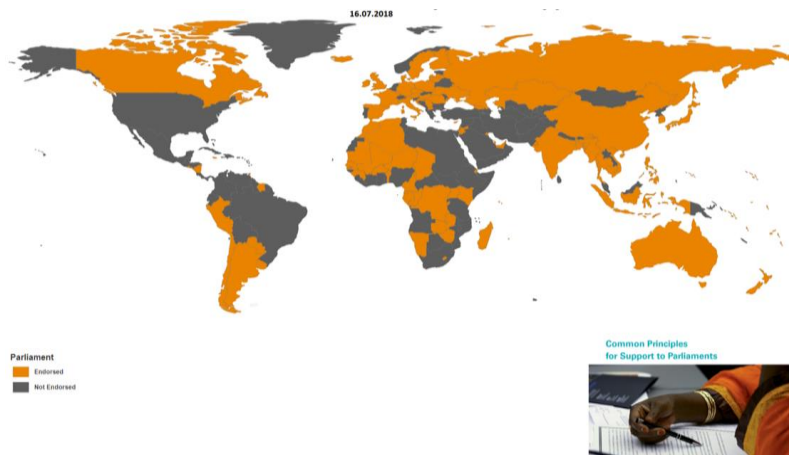
The IPU President participated in the opening of the 73rd General Assembly session the week of 23 September 2018. In this context, she attended the UN Secretary-General luncheon for heads of State and heads of delegations.

The head of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Mr. Michael Møller represented the UN Secretary-General at the first Preparatory Committee for the 5th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament on 8 and 9 February 2019. Senior officials from other UN agencies based in Geneva were also in attendance and contributed to the discussion on the role of the IPU-UN partnership in advancing global commitments and in strengthening multilateralism.

The IPU President and Secretary General met with the UN Secretary-General on 21 February 2019 to review recent initiatives, including preparations for the 5th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, parliamentary support to address major humanitarian crises, joint IPU-UN efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism, and the further strengthening of the UN-IPU partnership. The IPU delegation also included three members of parliament: Speaker Al Mahmoud of Qatar, the host of the 140th IPU Assembly; Ms. Susan Kihika of Kenya, Chair of the IPU Bureau of Women MPs; and Ms. Safa Al-Hashem of Kuwait, Vice President of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs; as well as the IPU Permanent Observer at the United Nations and the Director for Member Parliaments and External Relations. The UN delegation included the Deputy Secretary-General, as well as officials of the UNSG's Executive Office and the Department of Political Affairs.

During this reporting period, the IPU President and the IPU Secretary General held a number of bilateral meetings with senior UN officials, including the UN Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Commissioner General, to discuss ways to enhance cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations.

I. Parliaments that have endorsed the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments



II. Countries that currently have cases before the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians that have been examined at least once:

- **Africa:** Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda;
- **Americas:** Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of);
- **Asia:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand;
- **Europe:** Belarus, Russian Federation, Turkey;
- **Middle East and North Africa:** Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Palestine, Yemen.

III. Countries whose national reports will be reviewed at the next sessions of the CEDAW Committee (July and October 2019):

July 2019 session: Austria, Bahrain, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guyana, Mozambique, Qatar

October 2019 session: Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Pakistan, Seychelles

IV. Countries to be reviewed by the UN Human Rights Council under its Universal Periodic Review (May and November 2019)

May 2019 session: Albania, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Norway, Portugal, Qatar

November 2019 session: Angola, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, El Salvador, Gambia, Fiji, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, San Marino, Slovenia

V. Countries due to report to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (July 2019)

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Eritrea, Fiji, France, Ghana, Guatemala, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nauru, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, and Vanuatu.