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Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings

(i) Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24)

Krakow, Poland, 9 December 2018

The IPU and the Polish Sejm organized a Parliamentary Meeting at the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP24) in Krakow, Poland. The meeting was attended by some 200 delegates from more than 40 countries. The delegates were addressed by some key figures in climate change negotiations and climate science, including Mr. Niklas Hagelberg, Coordinator, Climate Change Programme, UN Environment; Ms. Hafida Lahiouel, Director, Legal Affairs, UNFCCC Secretariat; Dr. Alina Averchenkova, Distinguished Policy Fellow, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment; and Ms. Beata Mazurek, Deputy Speaker of the Polish Sejm. The IPU President, Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, welcomed the delegates and gave the closing remarks.

Participants discussed how to proceed with the implementation of the Paris Agreement by way of ambitious nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and how to create enabling environments for renewable energy investments. They were provided with a comprehensive overview of effective economic instruments in national environmental law and policies, namely, carbon tax, carbon pricing, and fiscal incentives. During the meeting parliamentarians showcased examples of their work on climate change at the national and regional level. In this context, the participants welcomed the presentation of the *Law and Climate Change Toolkit*, a global online resource developed to help countries put in place the legal frameworks necessary for the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

The meeting ended with the adoption of the outcome document that gave guidelines on the future actions of parliamentarians on climate change. The outcome document, amongst others, states the necessity to develop tools and support programmes for the most vulnerable regions, calls for the development and implementation of modern technologies, including, in particular, material and energy-saving technologies, and stresses that effective and efficient adaptation is in the interest of all countries. It further emphasizes the role of parliamentarians in legislating and creating economic, environmental and social policies, which are important for creating a formal and legal framework enabling the creation of a low-emission and low greenhouse gas emission economy.



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PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP24)

9 December 2018

Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Polish Sejm

Outcome Document

We, parliamentarians from around the world associated with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), gathered at the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 24th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Katowice, Poland, on 9 December 2018. We express the hope that the ongoing negotiations will lead to the swift and effective adoption of solutions enabling the practical implementation of the Paris Agreement, which will contribute to the achievement of the short-term and long-term goals of the UNFCCC.

Climate change is one of the most complex environmental, social and economic problems the world is currently facing. It has the potential to become a threat to global development, prosperity and international peace in the years to come. The consequences of climate change are already putting pressure on many communities in various parts of the world. We note with concern the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather phenomena, such as droughts, heat waves, hurricanes, abnormal precipitation, floods, storms and tsunamis. At the same time, we call for measures to monitor and report the impact of climate change on the environment, including forests, the oceans and the marine environment, so as to ensure the best possible protection of ecosystems that are key to ecological sustainability on a global scale.

The efforts made so far to halt global warming have not been sufficiently effective. Despite the adoption of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, global annual greenhouse gas emissions have increased by about 50 per cent over the last two decades. We believe that it is urgent to curb and reverse this trend. Without rapid mitigation action, it will be difficult to achieve the goals set out in the Paris Agreement.

We recognize that the scientific knowledge gathered by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the causes, rate and possible impacts of climate change provides a basis for rapid and resolute action to keep global temperature increases within safe limits. In line with the objective set out in the Paris Agreement and, taking into account the urgency conveyed by the latest IPCC report of October 2018, we stress that the global temperature rise this century must be kept well below 2°C above pre-industrialization levels, while pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C. To this end, global greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced and neutralized.

Despite technological progress, today the world still faces the challenge of satisfying basic needs. Millions of people live without secure access to water, food, energy and education. One of the major challenges is combating poverty and providing everyone with the opportunity that sustainable development brings. The Paris Agreement is a chance for peaceful, transformative and balanced development around the globe in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its full implementation is a shared responsibility of all States while taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities under different national circumstances.

Bearing in mind that the essence of the Paris Agreement is the voluntary reduction of greenhouse gas emissions both in the short and long term, this objective cannot be achieved unless all signatories to the Agreement have adopted and implemented ambitious commitments on national greenhouse gas emission reduction programmes based on the principles of equity and differentiation. Such programmes should be periodically reviewed to ensure that they are up to date and in line with current scientific knowledge.

The implementation of the Paris Agreement should ensure the low-emission and low greenhouse gas emission development of climate-resilient economies in all countries, as well as the provision of support to developing countries to help them move towards the attainment of this goal. In line with the Agreement, climate action should take account of the relationship between all elements of the climate system - the atmosphere, the geosphere, the hydrosphere and the biosphere - contributing to secure, sustainable energy supply for households and economic sectors, combating poverty, access to drinking water, eradicating hunger and achieving the 2030 SDGs.

The Paris Agreement does not set standards regarding the national commitments of each signatory. Each Party has the leeway to declare any target (including emission reductions, peak emissions, adaptation to climate change or absorption of greenhouse gases by forests) for freely chosen periods of time. It is therefore necessary to implement a system that ensures transparency and comparability of the declared contributions, monitoring of emissions and verification of the measures taken. The process of fine-tuning the details of this system (the so-called *Paris rulebook*) should be completed at the COP24 summit in Katowice. The facilitative dialogue, known as the Talanoa Dialogue in 2018, which will take place at COP24, will help the Parties to prepare for and implement their national commitments (Nationally Determined Contributions).

We emphasize that energy and economic policies must be consistent with the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Increasing efficiency and reducing energy consumption, as well as developing renewable energy sources, leading to a low-emission and low greenhouse gas emission economy, should be the main strategies for achieving these objectives. Energy transition policies should be cost-effective and affordable, technology-neutral and avoid market distortions. At the same time, it is necessary to develop tools and support programmes for the most vulnerable regions, especially those traditionally involved in the extraction and processing of fossil fuels, along with the development of maritime estuarial low-emission and low greenhouse gas emission renewable energy corridors of growth so as to enable them to undergo economic and social transformation in line with sustainable development.

The development and implementation of modern technologies, including in particular material and energy-saving technologies, is key to reducing emissions and countering climate change. We therefore call for more investment in research and development, more funding for demonstration projects, the development of international scientific cooperation and the creation of mechanisms for the transfer of innovative climate-friendly technologies.

We believe that accelerated climate change will increase exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather events, rising sea levels and the spread of diseases, among others. Adaptation issues should therefore be an important element of climate policy. Effective and efficient adaptation is in the interest of all countries. International cooperation in this field, including cooperation in implementing protection against tsunamis and other disaster prevention measures, can support national action, inter alia, through the exchange of experiences, as well as through financial support to the least developed countries. At the same time, we call for greater efforts to be made to sensitize and raise awareness about the provisions of the Paris Agreement. Education plays a key role in shaping and promoting attitudes and behaviours that enable both industry and public authorities, as well as households, to address the challenges of climate change.

We also emphasize the role of parliamentarians in legislating and creating economic, environmental and social policies, which are important for creating a formal and legal framework enabling the creation of a low-emission and low greenhouse gas emission economy. We recognize that the burden of our generation to convert to low-emission and low greenhouse gas emission economies should be understood as a contribution to future generations, who will suffer the consequences of climate change to a larger extent. We also recognize the importance of both national initiatives and the proactive efforts of municipalities, enterprises, citizens, and other non-governmental actors in achieving a low-emission and low greenhouse gas emission economy. We call for climate protection issues to be the focus of regular attention in national and regional parliaments and for work on these issues to be carried out with the involvement of all political groups and devoid of any political entanglements.