

Regional Seminar on Achieving the SDGs for the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group

Palácio de São Bento (Assembly of the Republic), Lisbon (Portugal)
5-6 June 2019

Concept note

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the principal starting point in attaining a sustainable and better quality environment where citizens can develop and realize their potential fully. The IPU Member Parliaments are committed to improving and furthering mechanisms to reach these goals by leveraging their legislative, oversight, budgetary appropriation, and representation functions. The IPU is supporting these efforts by providing a platform to facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices among parliaments. To this purpose, seminars to promote SDGs implementation have been organized in all regions.

This will be the second seminar for the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group, following a first seminar held in Israel in 2018. It will aim to further define the opportunities and challenges facing parliaments of the Group in implementing the SDGs, with special emphasis on heightening understanding about how parliaments can institutionalize the SDGs, promote convergence between the 2030 Agenda and national action plans and build coherence around the SDGs at the policy level.

Progress on SDG 9-Industry, innovation and infrastructures, is a crucial driver of development and economic growth. Investing in scientific research and promoting innovation and technological progress is an important way to find lasting solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges, therefore facilitating the attainment of many other SDGs. The first regional seminar of the IPU's Twelve Geopolitical Group recognized the need to develop and disseminate creative ideas and solutions that could advance a transformative impact to improve the lives of all. It also stressed the importance of addressing the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups through science and technology and by taking appropriate measures when designing policies and programmes in relation to science, technology and innovation. Building on these outcomes, the seminar will particularly focus on how parliaments can support the promotion of innovation and strengthen collaboration among all relevant stakeholders from the public and private sectors.

Health is a human right, and despite notable progress, many challenges remain to achieve SDG3- Good health and well-being. In all countries, vulnerable and marginalized populations continue to face social and financial barriers to access health care. In addition to being a cause of poverty, health is impacted by poverty and strongly connected to other aspects of sustainable development, including gender equality, climate change and peace and stability. The seminar will provide an overview of key health challenges for countries of the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group, and discuss how innovation and technology can be leveraged to improve health and promote access to health care for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The participants will also be invited to take part in an enriching field visit to have a practical experience of how innovation can help accelerate progress on health and other SDGs.

Format, objectives, and expected outcomes of the seminar

The aim of the seminar is to have the parliaments from the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group share experiences, engage in comprehensive discussions on the said topics and get acquainted with good practices in developing effective parliamentary mechanisms for SDGs implementation.

The seminar will feature two sessions, respectively on SDG9 and SDG3, and will include keynote speeches, expert presentations and interactive discussions.

It is expected that the seminar will conclude with an outcome document outlining key issues discussed and recommendations to parliaments.

Venue and date: Palácio de São Bento (Assembly of the Republic), Lisbon (Portugal), 5-6 June 2019

Draft Agenda: The agenda will be jointly agreed upon by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal.

Participation: The seminar is open to the parliaments of the following countries of the Twelve Plus Group: Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

Languages: The working languages are English, French and Portuguese.