



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# Annual Report 2018/19



# What is the IPU?

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the global organization of parliaments. It was founded in 1889 as the first multilateral political organization in the world, encouraging cooperation and dialogue between all nations.

Today, the IPU comprises 178 national member parliaments and 12 regional parliamentary bodies.

It promotes democracy, helps parliaments become stronger, younger, gender-balanced, and more diverse. It also defends the human rights of parliamentarians through a dedicated committee made up of MPs from around the world.

Twice a year, the IPU convenes over 1,500 delegates and MPs in a world assembly, bringing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and the implementation of the 2030 global goals.

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# 130 years old and never stronger



IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong  
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This year, as the world commemorates a centenary of multilateralism since the founding of the League of Nations, we as the world's parliaments celebrate an even older anniversary: that of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the very first political multilateral organization. From a handful of MPs in 1889 to 178 national parliaments as Members and 12 Associate Members today, the IPU moves closer every year to universal membership. As the Organization enters its 130<sup>th</sup> year, and despite its venerable age, the IPU has never been stronger, more vigorous and more relevant.

In 2018, this was borne out by a series of record figures: 122 endorsements of the IPU's Common Principles for Support to Parliaments; over 30 inter-parliamentary meetings across the globe; over 170,000 visitors to the IPU website; close to 50 publications in a dozen languages; some 450 MPs attending IPU regional SDGs seminars; and women accounting for 33 per cent of MPs attending the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Geneva, one of the highest such percentages ever recorded.

But other, more alarming figures were also recorded. The Organization finished the year with over 550 allegations of violations of MP's human rights under review by the IPU's Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians – the most ever recorded. And in the area of women's rights, according to a ground-breaking report co-published with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 85 per cent of women in European parliaments have suffered some form of gender-based harassment or violence.

In strategic terms, this 2018 report indicates progress towards the eight objectives of the IPU's 2017-2021 Strategy, aimed at promoting strong democratic parliaments that serve the people. Concrete examples of the IPU's impact are provided for each objective.

The IPU's number one priority, as reflected by the first of these objectives, is to help build the **strong, representative parliaments** we consider essential for democracy and development. In 2018, the IPU supported parliaments across the world, from Afghanistan to Zambia, in areas ranging from legislative drafting to strategic planning. We also encouraged them to harness the power of new technologies through the newly created IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament.

As one of the leading organizations for the **empowerment of women**, as reflected in its second strategic objective, the IPU continues to push for gender equality in parliaments. It advocates a wide range of measures to that end, from gender quotas to baby feeding rooms in parliament. And while still limited, we are also seeing progress in the share of parliamentary seats occupied by women around the world (now 24 per cent), accompanied by significant changes over the past decade in the top-ten ranking of countries for this indicator.

In 2018, in line with its third objective, to **protect and promote human rights**, the IPU championed hundreds of persecuted parliamentarians around the world through its Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. The year was also marked by a particularly welcome development: the closure of many long-standing cases, including that of Anwar Ibrahim, former deputy prime minister of Malaysia, who was finally released from prison. In the Maldives, by means of a mission to the country in February 2018, and constant subsequent pressure, the IPU also contributed to the recent reinstatement of 12 MPs wrongly deprived of their mandates.

As an organization historically rooted in **peace-building**, the IPU brought Objective 4 sharply into focus in 2018, when senior parliamentarians from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea shook hands on the sidelines of the 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, the first bilateral parliamentary meeting between the two countries in the context of the IPU.

Such **inter-parliamentary dialogue** is epitomized more broadly, consistent with Objective 5, by our biannual Assemblies. In 2018, the two statutory IPU Assemblies concluded with substantive outcomes aimed at enhancing peace, democracy and sustainable development. As part of a new exercise, dozens of Member Parliaments reported on actions pursuant to IPU Assembly resolutions or outcomes, including those of Ecuador (new specialized parliamentary groups focusing on the implementation of global goals); the Czech Republic (a new parental leave policy in parliament); the Republic of Armenia (amendments to the Electoral Code to increase the number of women in parliament); and Egypt (an amendment to the law on the protection of antiquities).

Young people are the future of any democracy, which makes the IPU’s sixth objective, to encourage better representation of **young people in parliament**, so important. In 2018, according to the second IPU biannual report on Youth Participation in National Parliaments, which monitors progress in this area, only two per cent of the world’s MPs are under 45. This is a slight increase from two years previously but remains miniscule relative to the population represented (considering that 50 per cent of the world’s population is now under 30).

With only eleven years left to fully implement the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, the IPU’s seventh objective – mobilizing parliaments around this global agenda – is becoming increasingly urgent. In 2018, the IPU helped to strengthen their contribution through seminars, self-assessment exercises and a host of other activities.

The IPU’s eighth strategic objective is to **translate international commitments into national realities** through parliamentary action. The IPU facilitates the process through its strategic partnership with the United Nations. Working arrangements between the two organizations, and with parliaments, are defined in a biannual resolution, as most recently adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2018. The same resolution also created the International Day of Parliamentarism, on 30 June, the anniversary of the IPU’s founding.

When 30 June comes around this year, and as we celebrate our 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary and look back on our rich history and key achievements, let us also look forward, at the ways in which this Organization can continue empowering parliaments, and parliamentarians, for the next 130 years.



Martin Chungong  
Secretary General



## OBJECTIVE 1

# Build strong, democratic parliaments

Building strong, democratic parliaments is essential for democracy and development. In pursuing this primary strategic objective, the IPU establishes common standards and guidelines and helps parliaments take control of their institutional development. As part of its work in 2018, the IPU provided training and support for parliaments in 10 countries in areas ranging from legislative drafting to strategic planning. It also launched a new Centre for Innovation in Parliament to support parliaments in their digital transformation; rolled out New Parline, a fully revised version of the IPU's reference database on national parliaments; and received custodianship of the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator for women and young people in decision-making positions in parliament.





## Placing parliaments in the driving seat of reform

The ten IPU [Common Principles for Support to Parliament](#), adopted by the IPU's Governing Council in October 2014 to help parliaments develop into stronger and better institutions, have now been endorsed by 122 parliaments and partner organizations, including six new endorsements in 2018. The Common Principles were applied systematically in all IPU activities throughout the year.

For the IPU, organizational self-development lies at the heart of the Common Principles, with parliaments ultimately responsible for their own development and for measures to strengthen and transform their own capacities. To help them do so, the IPU convened a roundtable of experts from a representative sample of 20 parliaments in March 2018. The results of the roundtable will be published in 2019 in the form of a guide.

The IPU also continued its support for parliamentary self-assessment, with exercises during the year in Djibouti, Georgia and Zambia. The self-assessments facilitated by the IPU help parliaments prioritize their development requirements based on analyses of their social and political contexts.

The self-assessment exercises in **Djibouti** informed the National Assembly's first strategic plan, which sets out priorities and a vision for the future. In January 2018, the legis-

lature amended its electoral law, requiring at least 25 per cent of parliamentary seats to be held by women. The amendment followed a self-assessment of the National Assembly's gender sensitivity carried out with IPU support. In **Georgia**, the self-assessment took place within the wider programme of the Open Government Partnership and the Parliament's Open Government Action Plan. As a first step in its self-assessment, the **Zambia** Parliament and the IPU trained MPs and staff as facilitators for the next steps of the exercise.

*"The training constituted a space for reflection that reinforced my opinion that the exercise is achievable, valuable and doable, even with limited resources."*

Participant from a self-assessment exercise in Zambia

## Strengthening parliaments in their core functions

Throughout the year, the IPU supported many parliaments in fulfilling core constitutional functions, such as holding governments to account, representing constituents and passing legislation.

Training in **Chad** and **Pakistan** helped MPs and staff better understand their legislative drafting and scrutiny roles.

In Myanmar and Zambia, the IPU supported training on parliament's oversight role. As a result, in 2018, a **Myanmar** parliamentary committee held a public inquiry, a first for this fledgling parliament. In **Zambia**

the IPU organized an interactive workshop with both government and opposition members on how to work together to support national development.

*"The workshop will lead to a positive change in the way we work. I will apply these new skills to the amendment of the Finance Act, currently underway."*

MP Chad – legislative drafting training

## Better use of ICT for improved parliamentary processes

IPU data clearly demonstrates how parliaments can harness information and communication technologies (ICT) to better fulfil their core mandates. However, limited in-house skills and access to expertise are creating a digital divide between developed and developing countries.

South African Parliament. © AFP/Pool/  
Mike Hutchings

To address it, the IPU provided ICT support in 2018 to the parliaments of Myanmar, Vanuatu and Tuvalu. In **Myanmar** it helped develop a parliamentary intranet and related ICT policies.

The IPU also facilitated peer-to-peer learning and sharing between the parliaments of New Zealand, Vanuatu and Tuvalu. The **Tuvalu** parliament now has an ICT action plan, and its counterpart in **Vanuatu**, has a new data storage system, allowing it to digitalize all parliamentary documents.

## Parliament's power to hold government to account

Oversight is a core function of parliament and a vital part of the checks and balances in any healthy democracy. In 2018, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the IPU published its second [Global Parliamentary Report](#), shining the spotlight on oversight. The report was published in Arabic, English, French and Spanish and translated by partners into three more languages: Georgian, Portuguese and Serbian, a gauge of its usefulness. It was also the third most downloaded IPU publication in 2018.

This report makes 28 recommendations to help parliaments enhance their oversight and accountability roles. A new self-assessment toolkit is being developed with input from parliamentarians and Secretaries General, received during an interactive session jointly held with the ASGP, at the October 2018 IPU Assembly. It is now being piloted with the parliament of Zambia.

## What if parliamentary oversight did not exist?

On 15 September, the IPU celebrated the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of its [Universal Declaration on Democracy](#) and the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Day of Democracy. The date was an opportunity to reaffirm the IPU's shared commitment to protect and promote democracy and to review the state of democracy around the world. Dozens of parliaments held events highlighting the importance of oversight, the theme of these celebrations for 2018.

## International Day of Parliamentarism

As a sister day to International Day of Democracy, the United Nations General Assembly announced the creation of the [International Day of Parliamentarism](#), to be observed on June 30, which was also the date of the IPU's founding, in 1889. The day is an opportunity to celebrate parliaments as the cornerstone of democracy and as institutions dedicated to improving the lives of the people they represent.

## New Parline – one-stop shop for data on the world's parliaments

New Parline, launched in 2018, is an improved version of the IPU's database on national parliaments. The IPU has been collecting data on the structure and working methods of parliaments for decades, including information on women's representation in parliament since 1945. New Parline pools all of this data on one platform, creating a one-stop shop for information about national parliaments, showing trends over time and allowing comparisons across countries and regions.

New Parline is the leading source of data on the world's parliaments, for use by parliaments as well as researchers, students and the media.

### Impact of the IPU: SDG 16

The IPU's work to strengthen parliaments contributes directly to SDG targets 16.6 (effective, accountable and transparent institutions) and 16.7 (responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making). Recognizing this, the United Nations entrusted the IPU with custodianship of one of the global indicators for target 16.7. Indicator 16.7.1(a) monitors the proportion of decision-making positions in national parliaments by age and sex, allowing progress by different parliaments to be tracked over time. This builds on the IPU's long track record of collecting data on women and youth in parliament.

## Centre for Innovation in Parliament

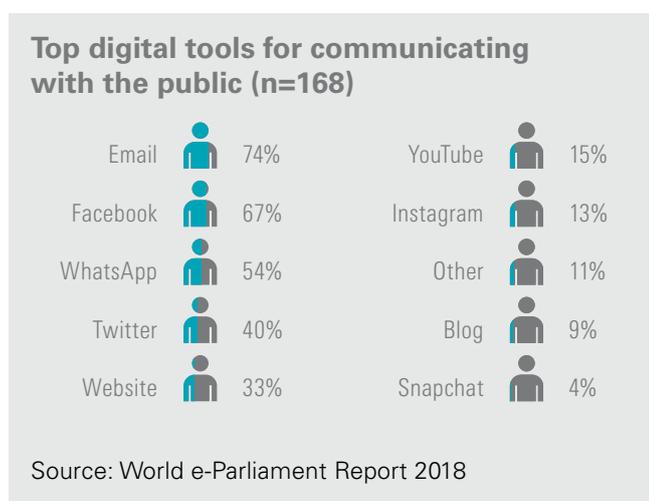
In December 2018, the IPU launched the Centre for Innovation in Parliament as a partnership between the IPU and parliaments to support parliamentary innovation through improved use of digital tools. The Centre provides a platform for parliaments to develop and share good practices in digital implementation strategies and practical methods for building capacity. Core supporters of the Centre are the parliaments of Brazil, Chile, Portugal, Zambia and the European Parliament.

Key activities of the Centre are distributed to regional and thematic hubs, located within host parliaments. These hubs bring together parliaments to address a range of issues of common interest. The first set of hubs will focus on ICT governance, access to parliamentary documents in open data formats, Southern Africa and Latin America. All parliaments will be invited to participate in the work of the Centre and its hubs.

## World e-Parliament Report and Conference

Based on surveys of 114 parliaments and 168 members of parliament, the biennial [World e-Parliament Report](#) confirmed that digital technologies are now firmly embedded in most parliaments, with clearly identified governance and technology practices. It also showed that the use of instant messaging has seen a significant increase alongside social media.

Survey results indicate that the vast majority of MPs, regardless of their age, are “connected” via a smart phone or tablet. Surveyed MPs report using a wide range of social media platforms, with email remaining the most widely used communication tool. MPs are more likely to create their own content for social media than for their web sites or blogs, where staff plays a greater role.



The 2018 World e-Parliament Conference focused on how technology supports innovation in parliamentary processes by acting as a catalyst for modernization, culture change, greater transparency and more effective representation. With 250 participants from 60 parliaments, the conference allowed participants to share innovative ways to sustain democracies and parliaments in the future. The vibrant parliamentary showcases and “unconference” sessions demonstrated the breadth and depth of digital initiatives in parliament.

## ►► The year ahead

Major projects to continue strengthening parliaments in 2019 include developing the following new products:

### **International standards for democratic parliaments**

Unifying and reinforcing all IPU developed standards, accompanied by guidelines and other tools to help parliaments meet them.

### **Indicators for democratic parliaments**

Providing a relevant, reliable and comprehensive tool for use by parliaments in assessing their overall capacity and performance relative to IPU standards and objectives, as well as their progress towards SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7.

### **Parliamentary oversight: A self-assessment toolkit**

Assisting parliaments in strengthening their oversight role and power to hold governments to account, based on recommendations in the Global Parliamentary Report.

### **Centre for Innovation in Parliament**

Helping parliaments share knowledge and experiences using digital technologies and tools, including the launch of an **Innovation tracker**, a quarterly electronic publication, and a new **Social media guide**.

### **Guide to the Common Principles for Support to Parliament:**

launch of a guide for parliamentary self-development.



## OBJECTIVE 2

# Advance gender equality and respect for women's rights

The IPU is one of the leading organizations for the empowerment of women, as reflected in this second strategic objective. According to IPU data, only 24 per cent of parliamentarians were women in 2018, a small increase compared to 2017. One of the barriers that discourage women from running for office is gender-based violence. In 2018, a new IPU study, in partnership with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), showed alarming levels of sexism, abuse and violence against women in parliaments across Europe. This regional study confirmed key findings of a global IPU study carried out in 2016.





## From data to action

The IPU remains the main global source of data on women in parliament, often cited in the media and used to inform policies that encourage women's participation in politics. [New Parline](#), the IPU's open data platform on parliaments, provides a wide range of data on women in politics and is a unique source of historical data on women in national parliaments since 1945.

The IPU also has a long track record of supporting parliamentary action to enhance women's participation. In 2018, for example, the IPU and the Parliament of **Benin** organized a conference to promote awareness and dialogue between political and civil society stakeholders. With women accounting for only 7.2 per cent of the parliament's membership, and with a view to elections in 2019, the country has given high priority to legal reform to improve the representation of women in parliament.

*"As a member of the IPU, our parliament cannot afford to have such low participation of women."*

In **Mauritania**, on the eve of parliamentary elections in September 2018, the IPU helped the Network of Mauritanian Women Parliamentarians (REFPAM) organize local debates across the country. At public meetings broadcast on national media, women parliamentarians discussed with local communities the value of greater participation by women MPs in Parliament and encouraged women to go to the polls. Few political parties, however, ran women candidates for winnable positions, and women's political participation declined overall compared to the 2013 election. Much, it is clear, still remains to be done.

Following the IPU's support in 2017 for information "caravans" organized across the country to promote women's rights, the REFPAM developed a support fund and produced a video to raise awareness about women's needs in rural areas.

In 2018, the IPU continued supporting women's parliamentary caucuses in Mauritania and **Tanzania** and newly elected women parliamentarians in **Turkey**. In Tanzania, the IPU helped to develop a mentorship programme for women MPs. In Turkey, following elections in 2018, the IPU organized a training workshop for newly elected women MPs on gender equality and women's rights.

## Using the IPU's tools to make parliaments more gender-sensitive

This year, Georgia, Namibia and the United Kingdom used the IPU's self-assessment toolkit to measure the gender sensitivity of their parliaments ([Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments](#)).

The self-assessment in **Georgia** led to debate on changes needed to the legal framework to increase women's participation and prevent sexual harassment in parliament.

In **Namibia**, the self-assessment revealed positive developments, such as the prominent role of women in senior positions in parliament, as well as areas for improvement, such as limited gender perspectives on the working environment and budget; the underrepresentation of women in the upper house and the need to strengthen the women's parliamentary caucus in the lower house.

In the **United Kingdom**, a gender-sensitivity audit of Parliament facilitated by the IPU reported steady progress but also warned against growing online and physical threats to women candidates. It called for concrete measures to stop the bullying and harassment of staff, as revealed by the Dame Laura Cox report in October 2018.

Adrien Houngbédji  
Speaker of Parliament, Benin

Demonstration in Chile during International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. © AFP/Martin Bernetti

Following a self-assessment of gender-sensitivity in 2016, the Parliament of **Kenya** reported on subsequent steps taken, including the creation of a gender focal point at the level of senior management, the development of an anti-harassment policy and appointment of the lower house's first woman deputy clerk.

## Stepping up the fight against inequalities and discrimination

In **Kenya**, male and female MPs came together in a seminar organized by the IPU to discuss the latest review of the country by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). They focused on the persistent failure to adopt legislation securing at least a third of seats in parliament for women, as required by the 2010 Constitution. Additional areas of concern included sexual and reproductive

*“This seminar, where experiences were shared from Ghana, Italy and Uganda, served as an eye-opener of how much parliament and its members can and should do to oversee government action in the area of gender equality.”*

Male participant in a seminar in Kenya

### Case study

#### Leading by example: gender mainstreaming at the IPU

The IPU Secretary General recently joined the Global Advisory Board of the International Gender Champions network (IGC), an organization that promotes gender equality in international relations. The IPU is also one of the chairs of the IGC Impact Group on Representation, alongside the Swedish Permanent Mission to the United Nations Office in Geneva and one of the network's founding organizations, Women@TheTable.

In 2018, the IPU and the IGC Impact Group led the development of a toolkit for “gender-responsive assemblies” based on existing and recommended best practices. Gender-responsive assemblies are those that advance equality in participation and decision-making; that promote an environment that is inclusive, harassment-free and family-friendly; and that advance gender equality through their deliberations and resolutions.

The IPU will continue its gender-mainstreaming efforts in 2019. The IPU Gender Partnership Group, composed of members of the IPU's Executive Committee and tasked with monitoring gender equality, will design a code of conduct for IPU Assemblies. The code will strengthen existing sanctions for delegations that are not gender-balanced while giving more visibility to those that are, as an incentive.

health and the inability to curb maternal mortality under the current legal framework and policies. The IPU will continue to support the Parliament of Kenya in its efforts to align the country's programmes and legal framework with CEDAW.

A CEDAW seminar was also organized as part of the IPU's 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly. It focused on women's economic empowerment and brought together men and women parliamentarians from 15 countries in Africa, the Americas, the Arab region and the Pacific. Participants discussed obstacles to effective implementation of legislation in the areas of inheritance and land ownership, and how to ensure better access to education for girls.

At a seminar on SDGs and gender equality, organized in Alexandria (Egypt), men and women MPs from the Middle East and North Africa discussed gender equality and parity in Arab parliaments; how to implement the CEDAW into national legislation and policies; and measures to end violence against women.

At IPU parliamentary meetings and events organized on the occasion of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), 140 MPs from all around the globe debated how parliaments could encourage more rural women and girls to participate in decision-making and how legislation can help empower them. They also explored strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change on women and girls living in rural areas.

### ►► The year ahead

In 2019, the IPU's activities include production of its annual report on women in parliament, based on the previous year's elections; its biennial map of women in politics; and guidelines on how to keep parliaments free from harassment and gender-based violence.

The IPU will continue supporting national parliaments, as in **Benin, Botswana, Colombia, Djibouti, Mali** and **Turkey**, in their efforts to increase the participation of women through seminars, audits and self-assessments.

## Impact of the IPU

### Sexism, harassment and violence against women

In 2018, the IPU published the first in a series of [regional studies on violence against women in parliament](#), in partnership with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The findings revealed that 85 per cent of women MPs in Europe have suffered from psychological violence in parliament; that women MPs under 40 are more likely to be harassed; that female parliamentary staff endure more sexual violence than female MPs; and that most parliaments lack mechanisms enabling women to speak out.

The IPU/PACE study was based on extensive interviews with 123 women from 45 European countries. Of the sample, 81 of the women were MPs and 42 were members of parliamentary staff.

Over 85 per cent of those respondents said they had experienced psychological violence; over 47 per cent had received threats of death, rape or beatings during their parliamentary term, and 68 per cent had been subjected to sexist remarks. Twenty-five per cent of the women parliamentarians interviewed had been the targets of sexual harassment by male parliamentary colleagues, from their own as well as opposing parties. Social media was identified as the main channel for threats, with 58 per cent of the respondents having been targeted for online sexist attacks on social networks. Young women MPs and women active in the fight against gender inequality and violence against women were often singled out for attack.

The study also showed an alarming rate of harassment and bullying against female parliamentary staff in Europe, some 41 per cent of the parliamentary staff interviewed having been sexually harassed at work. In 69 per cent of the cases, the perpetrators were identified as male MPs.

The study followed up on and confirmed the results of the IPU's landmark 2016 study, which had revealed widespread gender-based harassment in parliaments worldwide. Following the 2016 study, the IPU also contributed to a report on online violence against women and girls presented by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women at the 38<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, in June 2018.

The UN CEDAW Committee members now cite the IPU's study in their concluding observations to States recommending action on violence against women in politics.

Some countries (New Zealand and Ireland) are doing their own research, based on the IPU's methodology, to fight gender-based violence in their parliaments. The IPU has also received requests for information to conduct investigations in the parliaments of Switzerland and Japan.

PACE President Liliane Maury Pasquier and IPU President Gabriela Cuevas at the launch of the IPU/PACE study. © IPU/Pierre Albouy





## OBJECTIVE 3

# Protect and promote human rights

Objective 3 reflects the IPU's unique position as a champion for the increasing number of parliamentarians around the world who face abuse, mistreatment or even death for simply doing their jobs. In 2018, the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians processed a record number of cases of MPs in danger but also resolved many long-standing cases. These included the case of Anwar Ibrahim, former deputy prime minister of Malaysia, who was finally released from prison. There were also promising examples of national parliamentary engagement on human rights in 2018, and stronger synergies between the UN Human Rights Council (UNHCR) and parliaments thanks to IPU interventions.





## Record number of human rights abuses against MPs in 2018

Every year parliamentarians around the world face reprisals for raising their voices on behalf of their constituencies. The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians processed 564 cases in 2018, the most since its establishment 40 years ago and almost double the figure from five years ago.

In the face of increasing authoritarianism in some countries, those who speak out against human rights abuses are increasingly the victims of such abuses themselves. In the line of fire, along with journalists and representatives of civil society, are parliamentarians who exercise their right to free speech to hold those in power to account. Attacks on parliamentarians have ramifications that go well beyond the individuals concerned, as they threaten the foundations of democracy itself. Defending MPs is therefore critical to ensuring the proper functioning of parliament and democracy.

*“A violation of the human rights of parliamentarians is a clear threat to democracy. As parliamentarians we have to defend liberties, freedom, and human rights for all people. That is why a violation of the human rights of MPs is a clear signal that something isn’t working in a democratic country. Parliamentarians need to be able to fulfil their mandates unhindered to represent properly the people who elected them.”*

Gabriela Cuevas Barron  
IPU President

In 2018, the Committee became increasingly concerned about the situation of opposition MPs in **Cambodia, Turkey** and **Venezuela**. Missions to those countries were requested but could not take place, owing largely to the denial of necessary authorizations by national authorities. Likewise, requests to visit **Belarus, the Philippines** and **Niger** were either rejected or remained unanswered.

The Committee adopted more decisions in 2018 than in 2017, with 56 new decisions concerning 431 parliamentarians and representing 76 per cent of the total number of cases before the Committee. The number of hearings with parliamentary delegations and complainants during IPU Assemblies also increased to 20.

The Committee continued to strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations, regional organizations and civil society. It maintained regular contact with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, several United Nations Special Rapporteurs (Cambodia, Eritrea), as well as relevant UN agencies and peacekeeping missions. It also intervened as a third party in a case regarding Turkey before the European Court of Human Rights and worked closely on several occasions with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights.

Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, a former case examined by the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. © AFP/Ahmed Shurau

### Impact of the IPU

In 2018, the Committee reached satisfactory settlements for 15 current and former parliamentarians. Notable among these was the release from prison of Anwar Ibrahim, former deputy Prime Minister of **Malaysia**, enabling him to return to parliamentary life. This outcome followed years of lobbying for his release, after IPU observers questioned the fairness of his trial in 2010. The Committee also closed the cases of 12 other Malaysian MPs after charges against them under the Peaceful Assembly Act were dropped. In **Colombia**, the long-standing case of Piedad Cordoba was closed after the disbarments in 2010 preventing her from holding public office were finally revoked.

Significant progress was also made in several other cases. An IPU mission to the **Maldives** in February 2018, when the country was under a state of emergency, produced a critical report about the plight of a number of parliamentarians. Since September 2018, the report’s recommendations have been largely followed, including the reinstatement of 12 MPs whose mandate had been wrongly revoked. The Committee has also closely followed the case of newly elected President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. In another positive development, the Parliament repealed a 2016 law that had re-criminalized defamation in the Maldives. Introducing large fines and jail sentences for journalists and MPs found guilty of slander, the law was considered by many as unduly restrictive of the right to freedom of expression.

In **Zambia**, after the Committee closed its cases on file for the country, the IPU helped the Zambian Parliament with its ongoing review of the Public Order Act, to bring it fully into line with international human rights standards.

# Violations of the human rights of MPs – 2018

Cases examined by the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

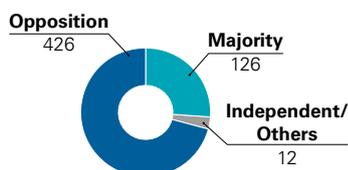
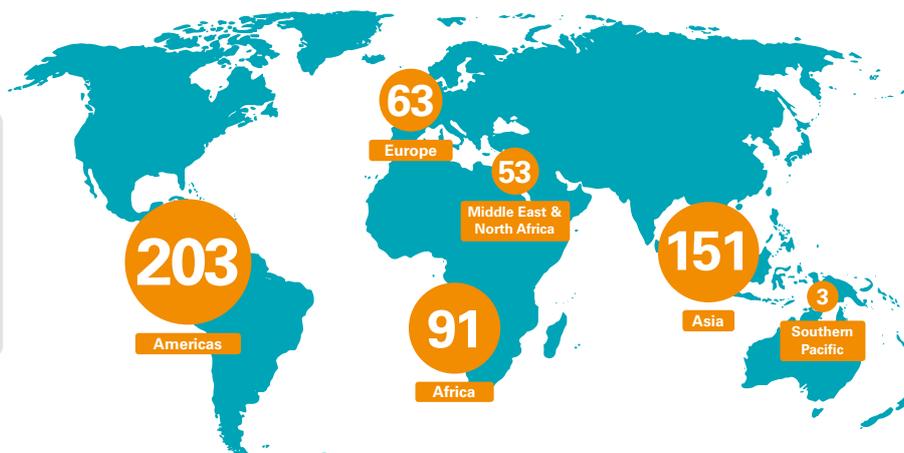


Inter-Parliamentary Union  
for democracies, for everyone.

**564** MPs  
in **43** countries

## Most common violations

- 1 Undue suspension and loss of parliamentary mandate
- 2 Lack of fair trial and other unfair proceedings
- 3 Violation of freedom of expression
- 4 Torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence



The IPU's Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians is a unique source of protection and redress for MPs killed, attacked, intimidated or jailed for their political views or differences.

If MPs cannot do their job safely or without fear, they cannot ensure parliament does its job of protecting the human rights and

political freedoms of society as a whole. Without respect for fundamental human rights such as freedom of thought and expression, the right to life, liberty, equality and the right to take part in government—there can be no democracy.

**The IPU works with parliaments to ensure they deliver on their human rights responsibilities.**



[www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)  
[www.ipu.org/our-work/human-rights](http://www.ipu.org/our-work/human-rights)  
[postbox@ipu.org](mailto:postbox@ipu.org)

## Parliaments standing up for human rights

Throughout 2018, the IPU encouraged parliaments to become involved in the work of the UN Human Rights Council, its Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and key UN bodies overseeing the implementation of human rights treaties.

The IPU cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to produce a substantive report for the UN Human Rights Council on the role of parliaments in the promotion and protection of human rights. The report was presented to the Council in June. The IPU, in cooperation with OHCHR, also brought together members of parliamentary human rights committees for a one-day workshop to share good practices and discuss ways to improve the impact and effectiveness of their work.

The IPU Secretary General was appointed by the President of the UN Human Rights Council to chair the second session of the UN Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, held in Geneva in November. The session focused exclusively on the role of parliaments in promoting and protecting human rights and the rule of law. Over 60 members of parliament, along with representatives of States, UN agencies, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations, participated in the meeting.

*“Only democracy offers a platform for dissenting views to be expressed. This not only provides an outlet to “let off steam” and hence reduce the risk of violent conflict; it also safeguards everyone’s right to freedom of expression.”*

**Martin Chungong**

IPU SG and Chairperson of the second session of the UN Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law

### Case study

#### Examples of recent impact produced by parliamentary human rights committee

**Burkina Faso** abolished the death penalty in June 2018 in line with the UPR recommendation of May 2018. The parliamentary human rights committee played an instrumental part in gaining public support for the decision, in particular by talking to religious groups and their leaders.

**UK:** The Parliament’s Joint Committee on Human Rights played a key role in calling attention to, and holding the Government to account for, its handling of the “Windrush scandal”. The Committee was also instrumental in pressuring the Government to ratify the Istanbul Convention on violence against women.

## Standing up for children's rights

The IPU continued in 2018 to engage with parliaments on the protection of children's rights, particularly in the fight against child trafficking and labour. At a national seminar in Burkina Faso in March, parliamentarians committed to taking concrete action, including steps to create awareness about child labour at gold mining sites and adopt robust laws against the traffickers. At a regional seminar in Nigeria in November, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) parliamentarians and the ECOWAS Commission on Social Affairs and Gender decided to meet regularly to coordinate action against child trafficking and labour. Parliamentarians recommended that a joint legal framework be developed to combat child trafficking and labour in the region.

## Standing up for refugees

2018 saw significant attention paid to the situation of refugees around the world. As part of a continuing partnership, the IPU and UNHCR jointly published a [handbook for parliamentarians on refugee protection and state asylum systems](#), launched on the occasion of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The handbook was in line with the Assembly's general theme on migration and refugees. A workshop held for MPs during the Assembly provided concrete examples of parliamentary action to better manage refugee crises.

The IPU also continued to mobilize the parliamentary community in favour of stateless refugees. Statelessness, or the absence of a nationality, affects some 10 million people globally, denying them such basic rights as access to education or health care. And yet the solution to this problem is relatively simple, through changes in national law and practice. This was reflected in another new [handbook](#) for MPs, also produced jointly by the IPU and UNHCR, on good practices in nationality laws for the prevention and reduction of statelessness.

## Supporting free speech

At the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in October, the IPU launched a new handbook entitled [Freedom of expression for parliaments and their members: Importance and scope of protection](#). The handbook addresses the specific protection parliamentarians need to do their work without fear of reprisals. It also looks at how parliamentarians can create a legislative framework that protects everyone's freedom of expression, in line with international standards.

## 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

At its 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the IPU celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by organizing an exhibit and panel discussion; adopting a public statement by MPs reaffirming their commitment to the Universal Declaration and its underlying ideals and principles; and identifying concrete actions to make the full enjoyment of human rights a reality for everyone.

*"Over the last 70 years, human beings haven't changed: we all wish to be treated with dignity and to live in secure, peaceful and prosperous communities, where we can play our part in their governance. That is why the Declaration still speaks so powerfully to us and remains a contemporary benchmark: everyone wants to benefit from the rights set out in it – and wants others to enjoy those rights too."*

Ann Clwyd

Member of the UK House of Commons, charged with preparing the draft statement for the anniversary of the Universal Declaration

## ►► The year ahead

In 2019, the IPU will continue to defend, and mobilize the parliamentary community to support parliamentarians whose human rights have been threatened. It will also focus on capacity-building activities to make parliaments and their human rights committees better guardians of human rights, starting with the design of a human rights self-assessment toolkit for parliaments. The IPU will work with key UN human rights treaty bodies, taking an approach to cooperation similar to that existing between the IPU, national parliaments, and the UN CEDAW Committee.

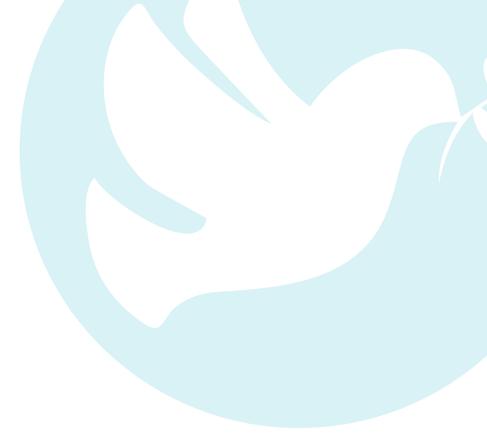


## OBJECTIVE 4

# Contribute to peace-building, conflict prevention and security

As an organization dedicated to peace since its inception, the IPU's DNA is contained in Objective 4. With climate change, water shortages, population displacement, arms proliferation and terrorism having an increasing impact on peace and security, parliaments have a crucial role to play in finding national solutions to global problems. In 2018, IPU Member Parliaments adopted unanimously a resolution on sustaining peace, emphasizing that peace and security are not only political issues defined by the absence of violence and war but also the freedom from fear. Nearly 130 years after its foundation, the IPU continues to offer a discreet forum for dialogue and peace-building, as epitomized in 2018 by IPU-hosted talks between the two Koreas.





## Parliaments can significantly contribute to sustaining peace

As a partner of the annual Geneva Peace Week initiative, the IPU co-hosted two events during the 2018 celebrations. The first event, “Vital Voices and Partnerships in Sustaining Peace”, showcased different approaches to empowering local and marginalized voices in the peacebuilding process. It demonstrated how Parliaments can be the driving force for ensuring an inclusive forum for dialogue.

At the second event, “InterFaith Dialogue for Conflict Prevention and Resolution”, a diverse representation of religious leaders and parliamentarians discussed how interfaith dialogue can complement secular peacemaking. The event reinforced the Saint Petersburg declaration on promoting cultural pluralism and peace through interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue, endorsed by the 137<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in 2017.

During the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the IPU continued to promote UN Security Council resolution 1325 by organizing a panel discussion on combating sexual violence in UN peacekeeping operations. Inspired by the award of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize to Dr. Denis Mukwege, a Congolese doctor who treats victims of wartime rape, the panel discussed the use of rape as a tool of war in contemporary conflicts as well as the disturbing pattern of abuses by peacekeepers and aid workers in the field. Participants called for a roadmap for action, including parliamentary briefings on peace operations and regular assessments of national legislation on sex crimes committed by citizens while in the service of UN peace operations.

The IPU continued to receive requests for assistance from parliaments in crisis, including those of **Burundi**, the **Central African Republic** and **Madagascar**, and made several recommendations to assist them in their reconciliation role. Support included recommendations on topics ranging from the establishments of roadmaps for the effective implementation of peace to the organization of parliamentary hearings on peace.

The 2018 meeting of the Committee on Middle East Questions came at a time of heightened tensions in the region. Committee members heard the positions of both Israeli and Palestinian MPs on the United States’ decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem. The Committee also discussed the Nation-State Bill passed by the Israeli Knesset in July 2018 and the United States’ decision in August 2018 to end funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). The Committee concluded that it was crucial to visit the region in 2019.

Inter-Korean project to reconnect roads and railways across the border. © Nurphoto/Seung-II Ryu

## Impact of the IPU

### The role of parliamentary diplomacy in reducing tensions and resolving conflict

The IPU made news in March 2018 when senior politicians from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea shook hands on the sidelines of the 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, in Geneva. IPU involvement in the Korean peace process dates back to Secretary General Martin Chungong’s visit to both countries in 2015, when he met with delegations from each country but at separate meetings, with no contact between the two. By keeping the lines of communication open for the next three years the IPU was able to facilitate this first bilateral meeting in 2018.

During the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus met with members of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus and representatives of the Turkish-Cypriot political parties. The parties expressed their readiness to pursue dialogue and stressed the need to recommence negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations. They underlined the benefits for all Cypriots of a functional and viable solution to the Cyprus problem, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the values and principles of the European Union.

Despite the civil war in Yemen, a unified delegation participated in the 138<sup>th</sup> and 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assemblies, representing both the Sana’a and the Aden factions of parliament.



Bilateral meeting between North and South Korean delegates and IPU Secretary General. ©IPU/A. Kuluki

## Science for peace

Partly thanks to the Committee's work, the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly focused on science and technology as an enabler for dialogue and peace. The Assembly unanimously adopted an outcome document highlighting the responsibilities of parliamentarians in fostering an environment where science, technology and innovation contribute to peace, development and human well-being. At the Assembly, the IPU organized a Knowledge Fair with the Committee's main partners in the "Science for Peace Schools" initiative, which aims to build bridges between MPs and members of the scientific community. A panel discussion on the same theme led to a unanimous recommendation for the IPU to establish a body on science and education as a more regular part of its work, particularly during the Assemblies.

*"We rely on science and technology to gain data concerning the world, individuals, and above all the dynamics that govern society in their internal relations and with the environment. On the other hand, politics, in its highest sense, offers a vision of the world based on the evaluation of those data."*

**Pier Ferdinando Casini**  
Honorary IPU President

## Ensuring implementation of international commitments and treaties

Through its Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, the IPU continued in 2018 to explore parliamentary strategies for comprehensive disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. In order to increase parliamentarians' awareness of the new UN disarmament agenda, "Securing our Common Future," launched in May 2018 by the UN Secretary-General, the Committee organized a panel discussion during the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. Representatives from the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) presented the three main pillars of the agenda. In the ensuing discussions, parliamentarians called for more human-centred disarmament agendas, as well as policies to reallocate arms budgets to areas such as education or climate change.

Over the course of 2018, discussions took place with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) on the possibility of IPU's help in securing the signatures and ratifications still needed for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 1996.

*“We call on parliaments to push for legislation to reduce funding to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives. Because, it is unacceptable that countries are spending billions of US Dollars to build their weapons and military instead of fighting the increasing global poverty, inequality and injustices.”*

S. Mohai  
MP South Africa

## ▶▶ The year ahead

In 2019, the Joint Programme will organize a global parliamentary summit in cooperation with the United Nations as well as a number of regional and national capacity-building workshops. It will also put in place a global parliamentary network, a web-based platform and a mobile application.

## The role of parliaments in countering terrorism

In the past two decades, terrorism has become a growing concern for the global parliamentary community. The IPU-UN Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Extreme Violence is an IPU Member-led plan of action based on the 12 IPU Assembly resolutions adopted on counter-terrorism since 1996. The Joint Programme supports the parliamentary action and legislative work necessary to carry out IPU and United Nations resolutions and strategies on terrorism and violent extremism; implement international counter-terrorism instruments and obligations; fill gaps in the implementation of international legal and other instruments against terrorism; and provide parliaments with the necessary tools and capacity.

In 2018, the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG), which oversees the Joint Programme, defined its working modalities and approved its activities and budget. At the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, the governing bodies endorsed the Joint Programme and enlarged HLAG’s composition to 21 Member Parliaments, nominated by their respective geopolitical groups on the basis of expertise and two ex officio members (President of the Forum of Women MPs and President of the Forum of Young MPs). Additionally, the three partner institutions – the IPU, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) – will formalize their cooperation through a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding, to be signed in 2019.

The HLAG also organized a panel discussion for the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly on the role of parliaments in combating terrorism and violent extremism. The testimony of Ms. F. Bunu, a 19 year-old girl abducted by Boko Haram, and of Mr. I. Buba, founder of the Youth Coalition Against Terrorism, gave human faces to the trauma that terrorism can cause. Both Ms. Bunu and Mr. Buba appealed to the parliamentarians to take action and ensure that the socio-economic rights of all would be guaranteed.



## OBJECTIVE 5

# Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation

The fifth objective of the IPU's Strategy 2017–2021 is to promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, consistent with one of the Organization's founding principles. IPU Assemblies provide a unique opportunity for the global parliamentary community to come together, exchange good practices and identify avenues for action. In 2018, the two statutory IPU Assemblies concluded with substantive outcomes aimed at enhancing peace, democracy and sustainable development. The IPU established a new reporting exercise to follow up effectively on those outcomes and to monitor and encourage the implementation of resolutions and other decisions taken at IPU meetings. The Organization also provided a platform in 2018 for dialogue between the parliamentary delegations of the two Koreas and for parliamentarians from countries in political crisis (Burundi, Cambodia, Maldives, Venezuela and Yemen, in particular).





## Facilitating international parliamentary dialogue

### 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly

The 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, the first of two Assemblies in 2018, was held in March, in Geneva, with the representatives of 148 national parliaments, eight regional parliamentary bodies (Associate Members), and 31 Permanent Observers. Almost 100 Speakers and Deputy Speakers of parliament participated. In the course of the Assembly, parliamentary delegations organized more than 150 bilateral meetings, which are less restrained by protocol than meetings between ministers or Heads of State. These bilateral meetings thus allow MPs to talk more freely with colleagues from other parliaments to resolve any differences. Meetings were also held by the six geopolitical groups active within the IPU as well as other political groupings, such as the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC), Socialist International, and the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum.

The Assembly's General Debate was focused on helping to articulate a parliamentary contribution to two Global Compacts, for migration and refugee protection, with participants including the heads of the key UN agencies involved. Also contributing were more than 120 legislators from 111 Member Parliaments, including 42 Presiding Officers, as well as representatives of five partner organizations. Many of the good practices and recommendations that emerged during the debate were reflected in the outcome document.

### 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly

The second Assembly of the year, in October, also took place in Geneva, with the participation of 145 national parliaments. Over 100 of the attending delegations were led by a Speaker or Deputy Speaker of parliament. Women accounted for 33 per cent of all MPs in attendance, one of the highest such percentages recorded to date. Young MPs under 45 accounted for 19 per cent of the parliamentarians at this Assembly, the first time this statistic has been recorded. Nearly 200 bilateral meetings took place.

At the opening of the Assembly, Ms. F. Gianotti, Director General of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), presented the work of her Organization, the largest particle physics laboratory in the world. The Assembly also heard from special guest Mr. H. Rogers, founder and CEO of the Blue Planet Foundation in Hawaii. Mr. H. Rogers called on parliamentarians to join the struggle to ensure a sustainable and healthy planet for future generations.

*"The event that has brought us together during these several days is a privileged moment of encounters, constructive dialogue and fruitful exchanges on pressing issues of concern to the IPU in general and our populations in particular. By making the IPU an instrument in the service of peace, development and democracy, we truly partake in the dynamics of promoting a more convivial and harmonious world."*

Moussa Timbine  
First Vice-President of the National Assembly, Mali

During the three days of General Debate, statements were made by 126 delegates from 107 Member Parliaments, including 38 Presiding Officers, as well as delegates from nine partner organizations. For the first time, the General Debate featured a segment for young parliamentarians as an effort to include a youth perspective more systematically in IPU deliberations.

A Knowledge Fair, linked to the overall theme of science, technology and innovation, featured exhibitions from CERN, the Raspberry Pi Foundation, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Geneva Water Hub and Waterlex.

### Outcomes and decisions

Both of the Assemblies in 2018 adopted resolutions on emergency items to address situations causing international concern and requiring urgent action by the international parliamentary community.

MPs attending October 2018 IPU Assembly. © IPU/Pierre Albouy

The agenda of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly included an emergency item on the consequences of the United States' decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem. The resolution adopted on this item reinforced the need to strictly abide by resolutions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly and other international covenants dealing with the legal status of Jerusalem. It also called for the peace process to be relaunched through a multi-lateral initiative for a two-State solution based on 1967 borders.

The 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly adopted an emergency resolution proposed jointly by the **Seychelles, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and Micronesia (Federated States of)**, entitled Climate change – Let us not cross the line. in light of the publication of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), with catastrophic climate change threatening to hit many parts of the world in just over a decade, 149 national parliaments adopted the emergency resolution calling for decisive action. According to the IPCC report, limiting global warming to 1.5°C requires urgent and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society.

Other resolutions from the Assemblies included:

- Sustaining peace as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development
- Engaging the private sector in implementing the SDGs, especially on renewable energy
- Strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation on migration and migration governance in view of the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

## Ensuring effective follow-up to IPU resolutions

At the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly, in October 2018, IPU Member Parliaments reported on measures taken in their countries as a result of IPU activity.

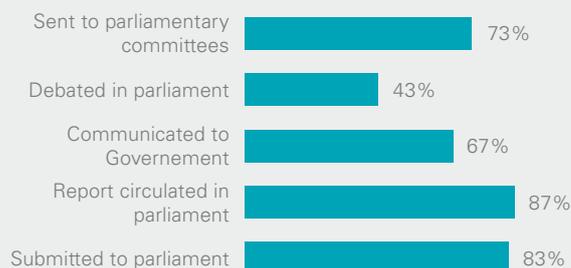
IPU resolutions and decisions on international matters are designed to help Member Parliaments translate them into concrete action and national legislation when they return home.

The reporting exercise is rotational, with all 178 IPU Member Parliaments required to submit reports every four years. For the 2018 round, close to 70 per cent of the Members invited to report sent examples of actions taken following IPU meetings. This percentage represents an increase in such reporting compared to 2017 (63%) and prior years (between 30% and 40%). The IPU's objective is to reach 100 per cent.

Among other findings, the reporting exercise showed that 61 per cent of the Members invited to report had followed up on IPU activities in the last two years and that 54 per cent had put in place new legislation influenced by IPU meetings held the previous two years.

## Infographic – Results of the reporting exercise 2018

### Outcomes of the 137<sup>th</sup> Assembly



### Parliamentary action influenced by the IPU in the past two years



## Impact of the IPU

Influenced by the outcomes of IPU Assemblies and specialized meetings, a number of Member Parliaments reported implementation of the following examples of good practice: the establishment of specialized parliamentary groups focusing on SDGs implementation (**Ecuador**), the adoption of a new parental leave policy (**Czech Republic**), the preparation of amendments to the Electoral Code with a view to increasing the number of women in Parliament (**Armenia**), field missions to refugee camps in Bangladesh and high-level discussions to address the humanitarian crisis facing the Rohingya (**Indonesia**), amendment of the law on the protection of antiquities in line with the relevant IPU resolution (**Egypt**), and the establishment of a formal mechanism to ensure national follow-up to IPU decisions (**Zambia**).

## Strengthening cooperation with other parliamentary organizations

As new parliamentary organizations continue to appear, with the inherent risk of duplication, the IPU remains the only global organization of parliaments, positioning it best to federate efforts and ensure consistency in worldwide parliamentary cooperation.

IPU Associate Members, parliamentary organizations and partner organizations were invited to attend and speak at all IPU meetings in 2018. Five specialized events were jointly organized by the IPU and the European Parliament, the Parliament of the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS), the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), PARLATINO and the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union.

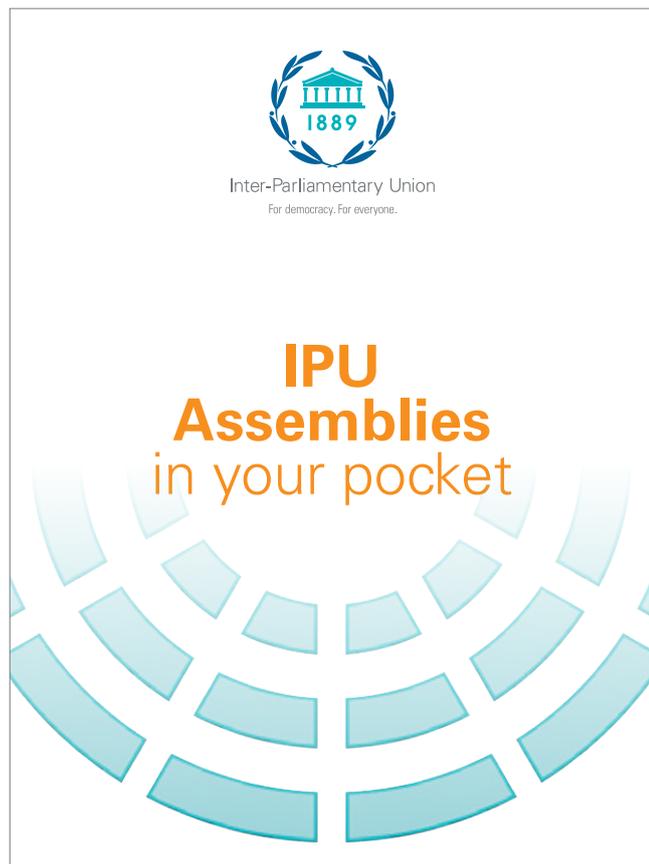
## Towards universal membership

In 2018 the IPU continued to find innovative ways to reach out to non-members, with the ultimate aim of universal membership. For example, in November 2018, the National Assembly of Suriname and the IPU jointly organized a regional seminar for parliaments of the Caribbean, a region where the Organization's presence is still relatively limited. The event gathered delegations from Barbados (non-Member), **Cuba**, Dominica (non-Member), **Guyana**, Jamaica (non-Member), **St. Lucia**, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (non-Member) and **Suriname**, as well as observer delegations from **Aruba** and **Curaçao**. It clearly signalled the importance assigned by the Organization to the parliaments of small island States and the unique platform the IPU can provide them for regional and global parliamentary cooperation.

*IPU Assemblies in your pocket* is a new product that explains how IPU assemblies work and the opportunities they present to delegates, whether they are parliamentarians or parliamentary staff. Available in English and French at this [address](#).

## ►► The year ahead

With two statutory Assemblies – to be held in Doha, **Qatar** (April) and Belgrade, **Serbia** (October) – 2019 will be a busy year for the IPU. The Organization will seek to further enhance the participation of women and young parliamentarians in national delegations that are both politically-balanced and representative of the diversity in their parliaments. Preparations will also begin for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2020, with two meetings of the high-level Preparatory Committee scheduled during 2019.





## OBJECTIVE 6

# Promote youth empowerment

Young people are the future of any democracy, which makes the IPU's sixth objective so important. They engage in pro-democracy movements, mobilize to support or change policies and bring new ideas to today's problems. But is democracy sufficiently open to young people? Are electoral systems conducive to the election of young men and women? Are political parties giving enough opportunities to their young members? In 2018 the IPU continued to monitor and strengthen youth participation in parliaments and published the second IPU biannual [report on youth participation in national parliaments](#), confirming the role of IPU data as an authoritative resource on the subject.





## A global community of young parliamentarians

The engine of IPU's work on youth issues is the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians, a youth-led statutory body dedicated to enhancing the role of young people in the IPU and parliaments more generally and to providing a youth perspective to the Organization's work. The Forum held interactive discussions in March and October 2018. In addition to reporting on country progress in empowering youth, the Forum's discussions led to the integration of youth perspectives into IPU Resolutions adopted by the Assembly. The Forum's ground-breaking work in pushing for greater representation of young people at IPU Assemblies also paid dividends in 2018, with their proposals to enhance youth participation approved by the Governing Council in March 2018 (see case study box on page 28). This resulted in amendments to the IPU Statutes offering new incentives for parliaments to appoint young MPs as Assembly delegates. The aim is an overall minimum proportion of 25 per cent young MPs in future IPU Assemblies. As the first statutory provisions of their kind for any international organization, they are a clear signal of the IPU's commitment to continue "walking the talk" in opening politics to young people.

In December 2018, in partnership with the National Assembly of **Azerbaijan**, the IPU hosted the Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, in Baku. The Conference brought together more than 130 young parliamentarians from 44 countries as well as international stakeholders, leading academics, civil society organizations, and youth activists. The Conference focused on innovative strategies to better integrate the rights and interests of future generations in today's decision making. Addressing environmental protection, sustainable consumption and production, and the future of education and work, young parliamentarians rallied around a bold set of commitments to better prepare their parliaments to think "seven generations ahead" in law- and decision-making.

The IPU also facilitated the participation of young MPs in major international deliberations. A vibrant delegation from the IPU's Forum of Young Parliamentarians participated in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Global Youth Forum in January 2018 on the role of youth in building sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities. The Forum helped affirm young parliamentarians as key players in the international youth movement, while also exposing them to a wide range of global leaders and perspectives.

*"The global problems we all face are grave, and solving them requires courage, cooperation, and innovative solutions. We, young MPs, boldly assert that we are up to this task. However, to make a difference we need to have a seat at the decision-making table... We endorse the targets for youth representation so that by 2035, 15 per cent of MPs are under 30 years of age, 35 per cent under 40, and 45 per cent under 45."*

Outcome document, Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians (Azerbaijan)

## A global observatory of youth participation

In 2018, the IPU continued serving as a worldwide hub for monitoring youth participation in parliament and recommending ways to enhance it. Based on surveys data of over 200 parliamentary chambers in 150 countries, the 2018 IPU Report on youth participation in national parliaments revealed that only 2.2 per cent of parliamentarians are younger than 30, a small increase compared to 2016 (1.9%) . The report advocates steps parliaments can take to encourage greater participation by young people, including youth quotas and alignment of the minimum age to run for office with the minimum age to vote.

IPU data on youth participation in parliaments in 2018 was also made available publicly through the Organization's open data platform, New Parline. Together with the 2018 Report on youth participation in national parliaments, this open-source data has become an international reference for parliaments, the media, academics, international organizations and civil society in promoting youth participation. It is also used as one of the official reference sources in monitoring progress for SDG indicators 5.5.1 and 16.7.1 .

Young people demonstrating in Spain.  
© Nurphoto/Artur Widak

## New youth targets

Through its research, the IPU has also advanced the global youth movement by leading the identification of an internationally recognized target for youth representation in parliaments. Following consultations with young parliamentarians, international stakeholders, and academics, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians identified three youth targets based on the proportion of young people in the population.

By 2035, the Forum calls for parliaments to achieve the following minimum proportions:

- 15 per cent MPs under 30 years of age;
- 35 per cent MPs under 40; and
- 45 per cent MPs under 45.

Each target also includes a gender parity provision of 50 per cent women and 50 per cent men, with countries adopting their own strategies to reach these thresholds according to national circumstances.

### Case study

#### Aiming for 25 per cent young MPs at IPU Assemblies

To promote youth participation in IPU Assemblies, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians proposed amendments to the IPU's Statutes and Rules providing that each parliamentary delegation taking part in an Assembly should include at least one young man or one young woman member with the aim of achieving 25 per cent youth membership. The new provision was adopted by the IPU governing bodies in October 2018 and is now part of the IPU Statutes and Rules. To attain the 25 per cent objective, the Forum proposed an incentive system in the Statutes and Rules whereby:

"A Member Parliament may register one additional delegate if at least one young parliamentarian is part of the delegation, on condition that the delegation is composed of both sexes."

"Two representatives of each delegation may speak during the General Debate. They shall share speaking time as they deem fit. An additional MP from each delegation may address the General Debate, provided he/she is a young parliamentarian."

## Impact of the IPU

The IPU is a committed partner of the global *Not Too Young to Run* campaign, whose aim is to lower the ages of eligibility to run for political office. Its engagement with the Parliament of **Nigeria** and support for its national campaign in this area contributed to passage, in May 2018, of constitutional amendments to lower the ages of eligibility to run for President, the House of Representatives and the State Houses of Assembly.

Nigeria's national chapter of the IPU's Forum of Young Parliamentarians was established in 2016. In 2017, with IPU support, the Nigerian Forum brought together young MPs from throughout Africa to share relevant experience and consider action to enhance youth participation in their respective countries. In 2018, the Nigerian Forum of Young MPs was thus able to advise and support young MPs in **Ghana** in creating a Ghanaian network of young MPs.

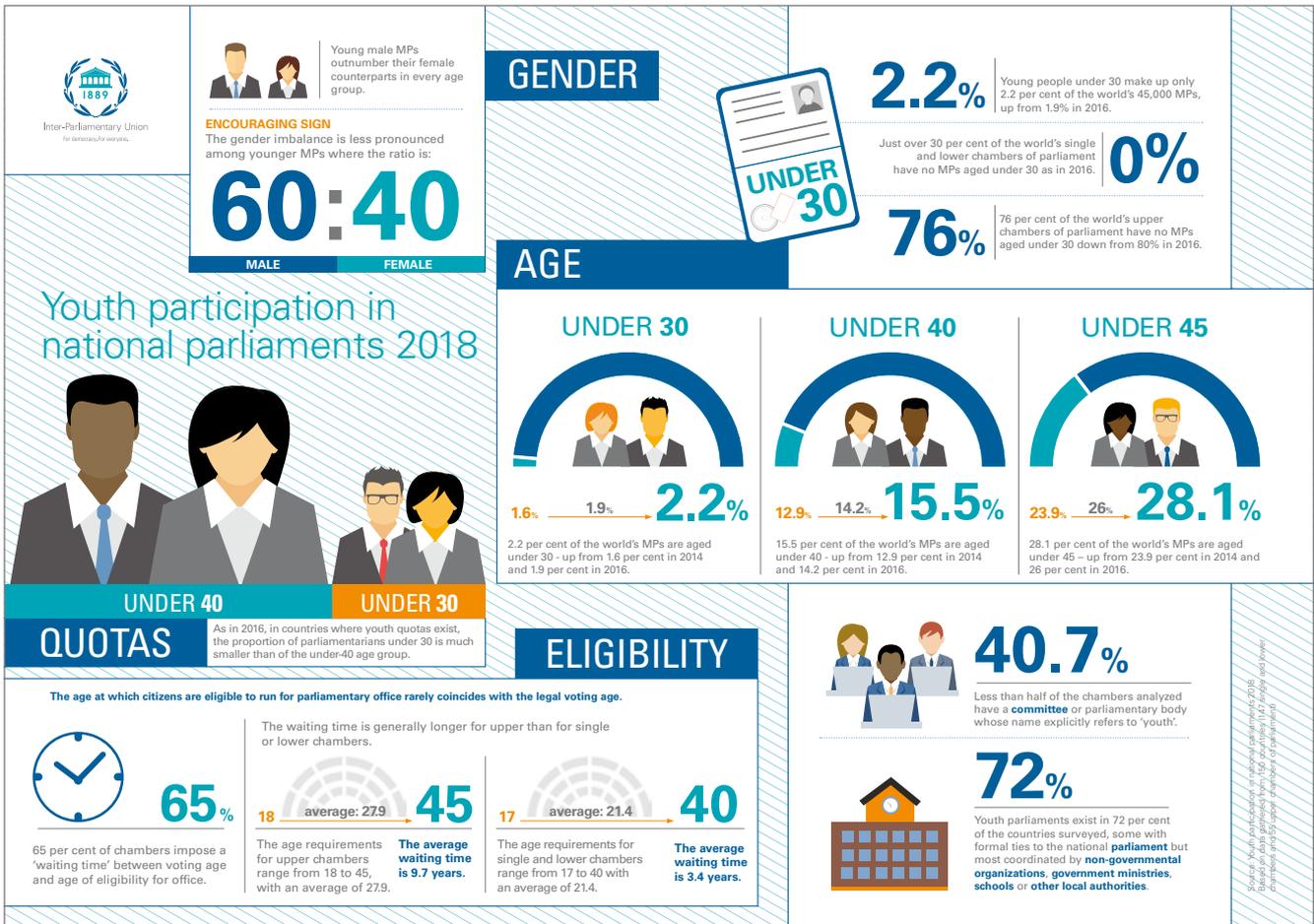
### ►► The year ahead

In addition to the annual Forum of Young Parliamentarians and the Global Conference, work in 2019 will focus on raising the visibility of youth participation in parliaments and mobilizing political will behind it.

To firmly set the foundations for youth empowerment, the IPU collects evidence of youth participation, provides a platform for a diverse network of young parliamentarians from around the world and helps parliaments find the right strategies to address youth underrepresentation and better include youth perspectives in policies and legislation.

A global campaign will be launched to raise awareness about youth participation in politics and to build commitment and spur action to increase it.

The IPU will also work with parliaments at the national level to support initiatives for enhancing youth participation, such as youth caucuses and leadership training for young parliamentarians.





## **OBJECTIVE 7**

# **Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda**

With only eleven years left to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the IPU's seventh objective takes on even greater urgency. Their legislative, oversight, budget and representative responsibilities give parliaments a key role in driving change toward the 2030 global development agenda. In 2018, the IPU worked to strengthen the contribution of parliaments to achievement of the SDGs for their countries and people.





## SDGs as a vehicle for regional parliamentary cooperation

Throughout the year, more than 400 parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from over 50 countries were mobilized around the SDGs through the IPU's dedicated regional seminars. A regional seminar on climate change was organized for the first time for the parliaments of the Caribbean, one of the regions most affected by global warming. The promotion of inter-regional parliamentary exchanges also continued with the third seminar for Asian and African parliaments hosted by the National People's Congress of **China**.

Striking a careful balance between theory and practice, IPU seminars enable parliamentarians to engage in exchanges with their peers, acquire up-to-date information, and explore opportunities for cooperation between different political groups. Each seminar results in a number of tangible, forward-looking recommendations to reinforce parliamentary work on sustainable development.

The strong participation in these seminars in 2018 clearly reflects growing interest among parliamentarians in advancing SDGs implementation by integrating them into their work. The importance of this engagement was personally reinforced by the IPU President at a number of regional seminars. Every year, as interest in these seminars grows, more MPs are becoming sensitized to the global development agenda. These events also show MPs that the SDGs are not an abstract agenda detached from everyday reality but are aligned with the national development objectives of all countries.

*"The IPU/UNDP SDG self-assessment toolkit is a very important tool for parliaments and parliamentarians as it helps us come up with a roadmap on how we can achieve the SDGs and what contribution we can make in parliaments."*

**Thilanga Sumathipala**  
Chairperson of the Parliamentary Select  
Committee on the SDGs, Sri Lanka

Dried inland Lake Chilwa's Chisi Island  
harbour in Malawi. © AFP/Amos Gumulira

## Impact of the IPU

### Assisting parliaments to deliver on the SDGs

The IPU provides assistance to parliaments wishing to assess their readiness to deliver on the SDGs by means of an [IPU/UNDP self-assessment toolkit](#). In 2018 the Parliaments of Mali, Georgia, Sri Lanka and Chad undertook such self-assessment exercises, mobilizing some 450 parliamentarians and staff. This marks a big increase in participation compared to 2017, when only 155 MPs attended equivalent exercises.

In **Mali**, the assessment helped parliament identify priorities for short- and medium-term operational strategies. Action points included the creation of a strategy to strengthen communication between the SDGs committee and selected SDGs focal points of other committees, as well as field missions every six months to assess the impact of SDGs implementation.

The self-assessment in **Georgia** helped the country's parliament elaborate key actions to better coordinate and mainstream the SDGs into parliamentary committees and the budget process. The priorities identified include the introduction of regular plenary debates on SDGs implementation and a formal mechanism to monitor the government's annual report on the subject. The parliament also commissioned an expert to support the development of a multi-year action plan.

The Parliament of **Sri Lanka** produced a 27-point action plan for achievement of the country's SDGs priorities. The plan calls for updated committee guidelines for the monitoring of SDGs implementation and establishment of a budget office to assist MPs with SDGs financing issues. MPs agreed that the importance and comprehensiveness of the SDGs made it essential to collaborate across party lines.

An action plan produced by parliamentarians in **Chad** included the establishment of a multidisciplinary unit for legislative evaluation as well as better identification of vulnerable groups.

## Strengthening parliamentary engagement on health

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a holistic view of health, with universal health coverage (UHC) at its centre. In 2018, the IPU continued promoting stronger parliamentary engagement in this area, focusing on the links between global, regional and national governance levels that will be key to ensuring implementation of, and accountability for, health strategies and policies.

The IPU and WHO jointly organized a technical briefing at the 71<sup>st</sup> World Health Assembly enabling parliamentarians to share best practices on UHC and global health security, with emphasis on equity and quality of access to health care. The increased focus on UHC has helped renew the engagement of IPU Members on health, as demonstrated by a resolution on achieving UHC at the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. The IPU and WHO began development of a work plan to operationalize their Memorandum of Understanding, outlining areas for joint action to promote parliamentary commitment to better health-care delivery.

Despite the progress achieved in the MDG era, many women, children and adolescents worldwide still face persistent challenges in accessing health services. High-level political engagement, such as IPU President Gabriela Cuevas Barron's membership of the High-Level Steering Group for Every Woman Every Child, has given greater visibility to parliamentary engagement on women's, children's and adolescents' health (WCAH). A delegation of parliamentarians led by the IPU President also participated in the 2018 Partners' Forum of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH). During a parliamentary conclave dedicated to the topic, MPs identified key challenges in accelerating progress on WCAH, including the need for countries to domesticate international and regional instruments and the limited enforcement of legislation on the ground.



IPU President surrounded by participants at the PMNCH conclave in New Delhi, India. © IPU/Miriam Sangiorgio

The IPU also focused in 2018 on child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) as a practice linked to deep-rooted gender inequalities and detrimental to the physical and psychological health of children and adolescents. The IPU organized an inception seminar on CEFM in **Zambia**, bringing together both women and men MPs on an issue usually only dealt with by female parliamentarians. As a result, the Parliament of Zambia committed to establishing a focus group to move this agenda forward and engage members of government, civil society and traditional leaders. The IPU also worked with WHO on a study on CEFM legislation in 24 African countries to identify good practices as well as barriers to implementing laws against CEFM in the region.

The IPU Advisory Group on Health visited **Rwanda** to learn what the country's parliament had been doing on reproductive health and to document good practices. The visit resulted in a number of recommendations to help the parliament further strengthen its engagement on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Recognizing that decent nutrition underpins good health, the IPU has renewed its engagement on that front, as reflected by IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong's membership of the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Lead Group. In 2018, he urged parliaments to make nutrition a political priority and to commit to gender equality and to women's and girls' social and economic empowerment. The SUN Movement and its partners have so far engaged with the parliaments of 32 countries to advance these causes.

The IPU began work with partners on two new handbooks during the year: one on women's, children's and adolescents' health and the other on nutrition. These handbooks identify key issues and concrete actions that parliamentarians can consider to create an enabling environment and advance progress.

## Facilitating the contribution of parliaments to key global development issues

On the occasion of the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24), the IPU and the Polish Parliament organized a Parliamentary Meeting that was attended by some 200 delegates from more than 50 countries. The delegates examined how legal frameworks can be put in place to implement the Paris Agreement and create enabling environments for climate-related investments. Participants stressed the importance of regularly monitoring emissions, verifying measures taken by governments and reviewing national commitments to greenhouse gas reduction, to keep them in line with the latest scientific knowledge.

To support parliaments in national implementation of the Paris Agreement, the IPU and UN Environment launched a project to build the capacity of parliamentarians to help accelerate implementation of the Paris Agreement and its Nationally Determined Contributions. Four parliaments were selected to benefit from this support in 2019.

The IPU organized multiple activities during the 2018 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in July. An event for parliamentarians participating in the HLPF gave them an opportunity to discuss the main theme of the session, and there was also a workshop on the IPU/UNDP SDG Self-Assessment Toolkit. In the lead-up to the HLPF, the IPU carried out a survey on parliamentary contributions to the preparation of Voluntary National Reports (VNRs). It found that only 15 of the 47 parliaments surveyed had contributed to the VNRs. Building capacity in parliaments for SDGs implementation and monitoring was identified as a key priority for all countries.

A survey on “Institutionalization of the SDGs in the work of parliaments” was conducted among all parliaments to help the IPU document and publicize how they organize their SDGs-related work.

The IPU continued to contribute to development cooperation as a key enabler of sustainable development. As the representative of parliaments on the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), the IPU helped advance a joint work programme of activities that included a number of country case studies and specialized meetings. Among other activities during the year, work began on an IPU/UNDP guidance note for MPs on development cooperation; assistance was provided in setting up a Business Leaders Caucus to advise on the leveraging of private sector resources for the SDGs; and a robust parliamentary contribution was made to the GPEDC workshop on private sector engagement through development cooperation (Paris, September 2018). The IPU also participated in designing and preparing for the 2019 Monitoring Round of the GPEDC, to assess progress in implementing development cooperation commitments, including several that relate directly to the role of parliaments (e.g., aid on budget that is subject to parliamentary oversight; tied aid, mutual accountability).

## ►► The year ahead

Time is running out for implementation of the SDGs. It is therefore imperative that parliaments intensify efforts to set up effective institutional arrangements and mainstream the goals into their functions. Building on its ongoing work, the IPU will continue helping parliaments do this by providing a regional platform for them to take action, exchange good practices and translate the SDGs into national plans and strategies. To encourage national parliamentary action on the SDGs, the IPU will continue to promote the use of its SDG self-assessment toolkit.

With regard to specific development goals and targets, the IPU will intensify action in the areas of health and climate change. Lack of progress in these areas mostly affects marginalized and vulnerable populations, with entrenched inequalities making them the first to suffer from disease and natural disasters. Through transformative policies, parliaments can address the root causes of inequality to build healthier, more climate-resilient societies.

### Case study

The Vietnamese Parliament launched a local language version of the IPU/UNDP self-assessment toolkit at a dedicated event in December, led by the Speaker and attended by Secretary General Martin Chungong. The translation of the toolkit demonstrates the commitment of the National Assembly of **Viet Nam** to strengthening its engagement with the SDGs. The toolkit is currently available in eleven languages.



## OBJECTIVE 8

# Bridge the democracy gap in international relations

The eighth objective of the IPU's Strategy 2017–2021 is parliamentary action to ensure that international commitments become national realities. The IPU plays a key facilitating role in this regard, particularly through its strategic partnership with the UN. In 2018, the UN General Assembly adopted the latest biannual resolution defining how the IPU, parliaments and the UN will work together. The whole process leading up to the adoption of a Global Compact for Migration was a good example of the need to actively engage parliamentarians in major UN deliberations.





## Closer engagement with the UN

In May, the UN General Assembly adopted the latest resolution on Interaction between the UN, national parliaments and the IPU. Sponsored by over 90 Member States and adopted by consensus, the resolution sends a strong political signal that greater parliamentary scrutiny and engagement of the world's parliamentarians in UN processes are key to making global decision-making more transparent and inclusive.

Building on past resolutions for IPU-UN cooperation, and with added impetus from IPU President Gabriela Cuevas Barron, the resolution also established a new International Day of Parliamentarism, on 30 June, the anniversary of the IPU's creation. The resolution reiterated the need for the IPU and the UN to work closely together in mobilizing parliamentarians to implement the SDGs.

As the main global mechanism for assessing progress toward the SDGs, the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is a good opportunity for the IPU to facilitate engagement between the UN and MPs. At the 2018 HLPF session, in July, the IPU hosted a number of meetings, including a side event on SDG 12, sustainable consumption and production patterns, attended by close to 100 parliamentarians, and a joint IPU and UNDP workshop to help parliaments institutionalize the SDGs.

The IPU also organized the first comprehensive IPU-UN working-level meeting to create stronger operational-level ties between the IPU and multiple UN agencies.

*“As a former parliamentarian, I have felt, firsthand, the responsibility of representing people and trying to advance their aspirations. Through laws and spending decisions, parliaments can contribute significantly to achieving the SDGs—our blueprint for peaceful, resilient societies on a healthy planet. As we mark this new International Day, I express my support for members of parliaments worldwide, as they strive to deliver for the people they serve.”*

António Guterres  
UN Secretary-General

## Parliamentary contribution to global migration governance

The annual parliamentary hearing at the United Nations is a joint IPU-UN flagship event, enabling parliamentarians to contribute to key global issues. In February 2018, the hearing focused on migration, with the theme Towards a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration: A parliamentary perspective. The meeting allowed MPs to influence the negotiations of the landmark Global Compact for Migration. With over 258 million migrants around the world – a number that is expected to grow significantly in the future due to population growth, increasing connectivity and climate change – the Global Compact is a framework that covers all the governance dimensions of international migration. Together with a separate Global Compact for Refugees, it maps out the practical arrangements needed globally and nationally to ensure that migration is properly managed, keeping a balance between the human rights of migrants and refugees and those of sovereign States.

### Impact of the IPU

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration provides a concrete illustration of IPU advocacy and impact at the United Nations in 2018. Drawing from its various reports, declarations and resolutions on migration in the course of the year, the IPU presented a set of recommendations to UN negotiators on various aspects of migration policy. Many of these recommendations – including the need for evidence-based migration policies, the obligation of States to provide migrants with proper identification papers, and a focus on the drivers of migration – were reflected in the final text. Most importantly, the Global Compact acknowledges the specific role of parliaments in supporting its implementation in each country.

Migrants rescued in Malaga, Spain.  
© Nurphoto/Guillaume Pinon

Over 200 parliamentarians and panellists, including the President of the General Assembly and the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for International Migration, participated in the hearing. The hearing report was circulated to all UN Member States and helped inform other IPU deliberations on migration in the course of the year.

At its 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly, in March, the IPU also welcomed the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Director General of the International Organization for Migration to a special panel session on migration and refugees.

In December, the IPU and the Moroccan Parliament hosted a parliamentary meeting in Rabat which fed directly into the Global Compact, as adopted by world leaders a few days later at an intergovernmental conference in Marrakesh.

## Outcomes of the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

At the 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs hosted a discussion on the main theme of the 2018 HLPF with representatives from UN Environment and the Global Footprint Network, a research organization. Participants examined concrete ways to take action on SDG 12 to reform production and consumption patterns and to measure progress towards sustainability, particularly through monitoring ecological footprints.

At the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly, in October, the Committee focused on international taxation and measures to prevent corporate tax evasion, with contributions made by experts from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and civil society. There was strong support for the creation of a new UN body dealing with taxes, to help harmonize tax laws across countries and launch work on a comprehensive tax treaty for multinational companies.

*“The IPU Standing Committee on UN Affairs provides a unique space for MPs to discuss global issues with UN top officials and ask some tough questions. It empowers MPs to hold governments to account for the commitments they make at the UN.”*

**Senator Juan Carlos Romero**  
President of the IPU Standing Committee  
on UN Affairs, senator of Argentina

## Bringing parliamentarians to the United Nations

Throughout the year, the IPU represented the world parliamentary community, or facilitated the participation of MPs, in a number of UN debates and processes, including the Commission on the Status of Women, the UNCTAD World Investment Forum, the 8<sup>th</sup> Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, the ministerial meeting of the Conference of the

Parties to the climate change convention (COP 24), a special multi-stakeholder consultation on non-communicable diseases and various UN Economic and Social Council meetings.

The 2018 UN Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, chaired by the IPU Secretary General, focused on the role of parliaments and parliamentarians. The Forum brought together parliamentarians, government officials, civil society representatives and academia, who shared good practices and identified modalities to strengthen democracy, human rights and the rule of law at the national and international levels. The outcome of the Forum will also inform cooperation between the IPU and the UN Human Rights Council in the years ahead.

In other 2018 initiatives, the IPU and UN Environment signed a Memorandum of Understanding setting priorities for cooperation through the end of 2020. The agreement will help parliaments advance the environmental goals of the SDGs, particularly SDG 13 on climate change, building parliamentary capacity to legislate effectively and oversee the implementation of laws and policies. As a first tangible step following the agreement, a joint guidance note on the green economy was completed at the end of the year. The note describes the key elements of the green economy, providing practical guidance for parliaments on how to transition away from polluting, wasteful, and resource intensive modes of production and consumption.

## Strengthening parliamentary action on trade

The Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (PCWTO) is a joint initiative of the IPU and the European Parliament aimed at eliciting contributions from parliamentarians to the work of the WTO, enhancing its transparency and accountability and making global trade beneficial to all.

The PCWTO's Steering Committee took a number of decisions in 2018 to improve the work of the Conference and make its impact on the WTO more meaningful, such as the organization of information workshops for MPs across the world and the development of strong partnerships with other stakeholders, including academia, civil society and business.

At the Conference's 2018 Session, over 250 delegates called for modernization of the WTO to increase its effectiveness and legitimacy. They reiterated their commitment to an equitable international trading system based on free trade as the means to encourage global economic growth and sustainable economic development, create jobs and ensure welfare for all.

The Conference called for urgent action to address the ongoing impasse of the WTO Dispute Settlement Body, strengthen the multilateral trading system, and define more concrete strategies to achieve higher standards globally through coordinated efforts to address the basic issues of poverty, hunger and malnutrition in the world.

*“I remain convinced that the multilateral trading system, along with the WTO, will emerge stronger than ever (from the current challenges), with new prospects that will have a positive and significant impact on the lives of the people we represent. But that will not happen by magic. We must redouble our efforts, encourage imagination and innovation, and use our strong sense of responsibility to support global trade and ensure the achievement of our Sustainable Development Goals.”*

**Margaret Mensah-Williams**  
IPU co-Chair of the Parliamentary Conference  
on the WTO

## ►► The year ahead

Preparations are underway for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2020. The conference will identify actions to address the major challenges facing the global community to further enhance the parliamentary dimension to global governance. As part of its work, the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs plans to engage with parliaments in evaluating to what extent they have internalized their relationship with the United Nations - in particular in terms of translating global commitments into national realities.

In the context of the risks faced by the WTO and the global trading system, the IPU and the European Parliament will work together in organizing a series of regional and national workshops to help empower MPs to engage effectively on trade related issues.

## P20

In conjunction with the Summit of the G20 Heads of State in November, the IPU and the National Congress of Argentina brought together Speakers of Parliament and other legislators from the 20 leading economies of the world. The Speakers committed to working together to address challenges such as the future of work, development financing, the fight against corruption, the empowerment of women and youth, education, and a renewed commitment to multilateralism. The involvement of Speakers at this level is important to bridge the gap between G20 governance and the setting of national priorities in parliaments.

# Towards universal membership

## 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, Eswatini, 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, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, 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, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, 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)

## 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.

Under the presidency of Mr. Philippe Schwab, Secretary General of the National Council of Switzerland, the ASGP collaborated closely with the IPU in 2018.

Secretaries General continued to help define the concept for the [Centre for Innovation in Parliament](#), and showed leadership by offering to host regional hubs and providing financial support for the Centre. The ASGP is now formally an observer to the Steering Committee that provides strategic advice to the Centre about ways to support innovation in parliament.

Secretaries General also continued to contribute to the enhanced use and application of [Common Principles for Support to Parliaments](#) at a roundtable aimed at examining the principle of parliamentary ownership at a more granular level, and informed the production of a Guide for the Common Principles to strengthen their operationalization.

The IPU and ASGP jointly organized a workshop on parliamentary oversight at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly in October 2018. Parliamentarians and Secretaries General used the questions from a new draft self-assessment toolkit as a basis for identifying challenges that parliaments experience in their work to hold government to account, and how they have sought to address these challenges.

Members of the ASGP regularly provided substantial support to many of the parliamentary capacity building projects carried out by the IPU in 2018, and contributed to IPU's research into policy measures to combat violence against women in parliament.

# 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 2018. 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.

# Record number of IPU specialized meetings in 2018

[155<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians](#)  
25 Jan–2 Feb 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

[2018 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations](#)  
22–23 Feb 2018 / New York, United States of America

[Parliamentary Meeting at the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women: Parliaments deliver for rural women and girls](#)  
13–14 Mar 2018 / New York, United States of America

[Second Expert Roundtable on the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments – Proactive parliaments: Bolstering self-development](#)  
29 Mar 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

41<sup>st</sup> session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO  
24–25 Apr 2018 / Brussels, Belgium

[12<sup>th</sup> Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament](#)  
25–26 Apr 2018 / Cochabamba, Bolivia

[Regional Seminar on “Parliamentary cooperation for sustainable development: Combating poverty and promoting health care”](#)  
24–25 May 2018 / Belgrade, Serbia

[Technical briefing on “The role of Parliamentarians in achieving universal health coverage and global health security as two sides of the same coin”](#)  
25 May 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

[Information Seminar on the Structure and Functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for French-Speaking Participants](#)  
19–22 Jun 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

[Third South Asian Speakers’ Summit on Achieving the SDGs](#)  
11–12 Jul 2018 / Colombo, Sri Lanka

[Parliamentary side event at the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#)  
16–18 Jul 2018 / New York, United States of America

[Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity-Building and the Further Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: Implementing the SDGs through South-South Parliamentary Cooperation](#)  
10–12 Sep 2018 / Beijing, China

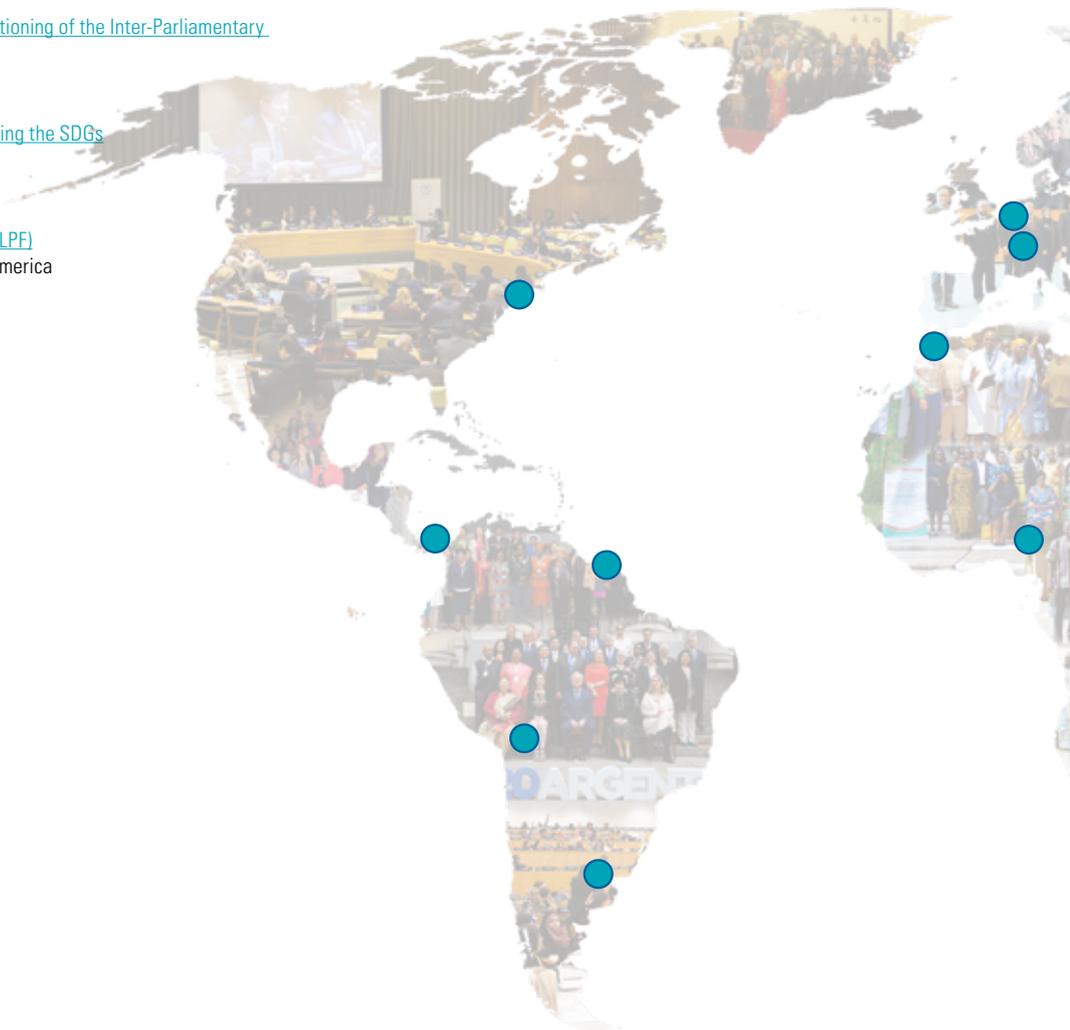
[Regional Seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals and Gender Equality for Parliaments of the Middle East and North Africa](#)  
18–20 Sep 2018 / Alexandria, Egypt

[Second Regional Seminar on Achieving the SDGs for the Parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean](#)  
28–29 Sep 2018 / Panama City, Panama

[The new wave of populism in the Americas: Advance or setback for indigenous communities? A Geneva Democracy Week event](#)  
4 Oct 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

42<sup>nd</sup> session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO on the occasion of the annual WTO Public Forum  
5 Oct 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

[Regional Seminar on Achieving the SDGs for the Parliaments of the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States](#)  
18 Oct 2018 / St. Petersburg, Russian Federation



[Workshop on the role of parliamentarians in ensuring implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)  
19 Oct 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

[Parliamentary Workshop and events in the context of the World Investment Forum 2018](#)  
22–24 Oct 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

[Parliamentary Speakers' Summit at the G20](#)  
31 Oct–2 Nov 2018 / Buenos Aires, Argentina

[Regional seminar on climate change and disaster risk reduction for the Parliaments of the Caribbean](#)  
5–6 Nov 2018 / Paramaribo, Suriname

[Vital Voices and Partnerships in Sustaining Peace: A Geneva Peace Week Event](#)  
8 Nov 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

[Inter-Faith Dialogue for Conflict Prevention and Resolution: Case Studies and Good Practices: A Geneva Peace Week Event](#)  
9 Nov 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

[Seminar on Achieving the SDGs for the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group and East Asia Parliaments](#)  
20–22 Nov 2018 / Jerusalem, Israel

[2<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law](#)  
22–23 Nov 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

[Follow-up regional seminar on the contribution of parliament to combat child trafficking and labour on the occasion of the ECOWAS Parliamentary session](#)  
23–24 Nov 2018 / Abuja, Nigeria

[World e-Parliament Conference 2018](#)  
3–5 Dec 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

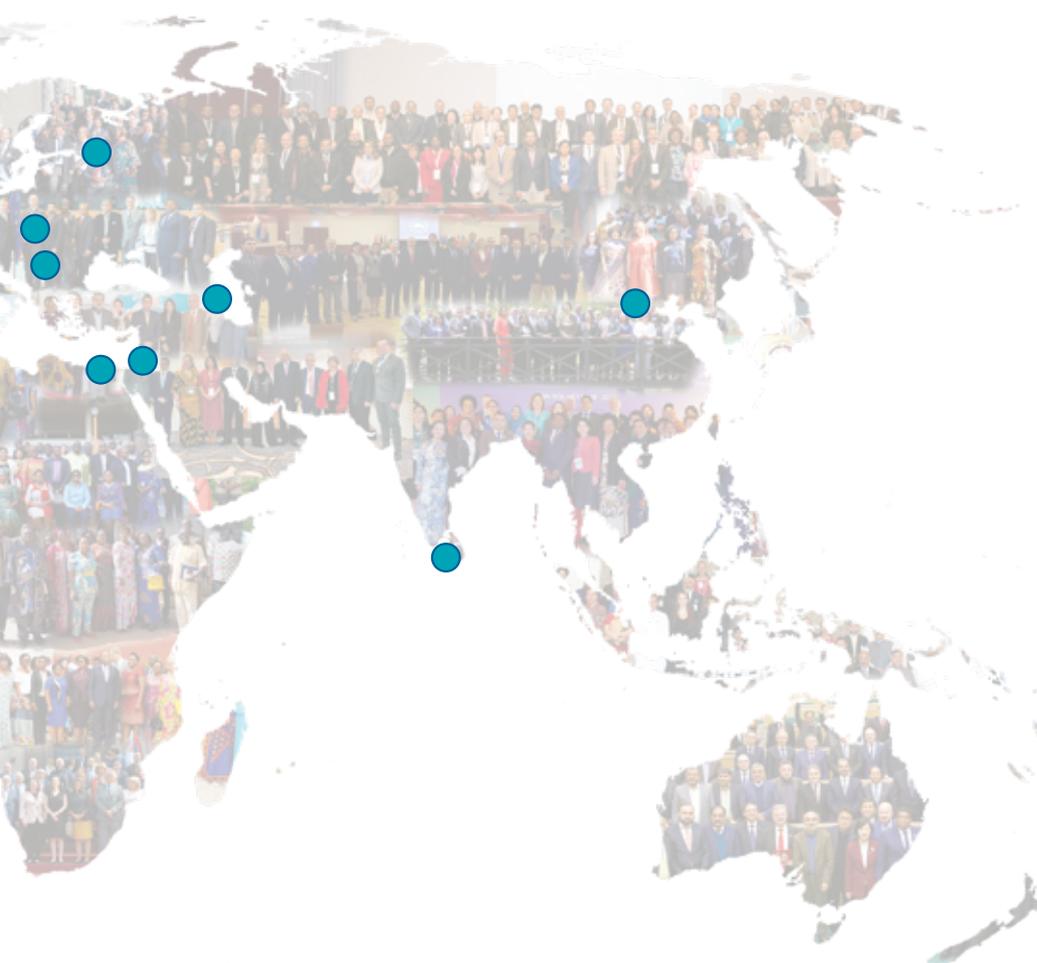
[Parliamentary Conference on Migration in the lead-up to the adoption of the Global Compact on Migration](#)  
6–7 Dec 2018 / Rabat, Morocco

43<sup>rd</sup> session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO on the occasion of the annual WTO session  
6 Dec 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

[Annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO](#)  
6–7 Dec 2018 / Geneva, Switzerland

[Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference \(COP24\)](#)  
9 Dec 2018 / Katowice, Poland

[The Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians](#)  
14–15 Dec 2018 / Baku, Azerbaijan



# Financial results

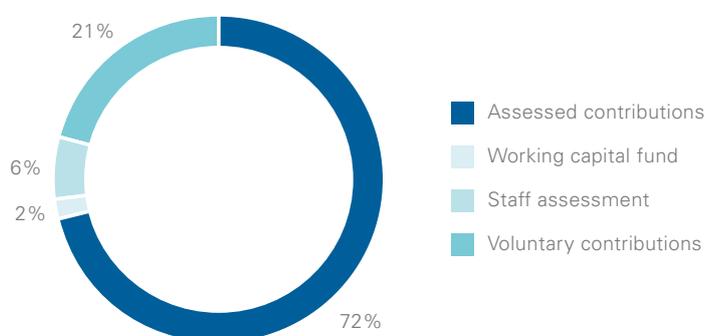
## Financing

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 2018 is presented below, including staff assessment for expenditure comparison.

### IPU Revenues by Source (budget basis)

	CHF (Swiss francs)	%
Assessed contributions	10,515,200	72%
Working capital fund	237,000	2%
Staff assessment	953,671	6%
Voluntary contributions	3,014,508	21%
Investment and other income	-79,579	-1%
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>14,640,801</b>	

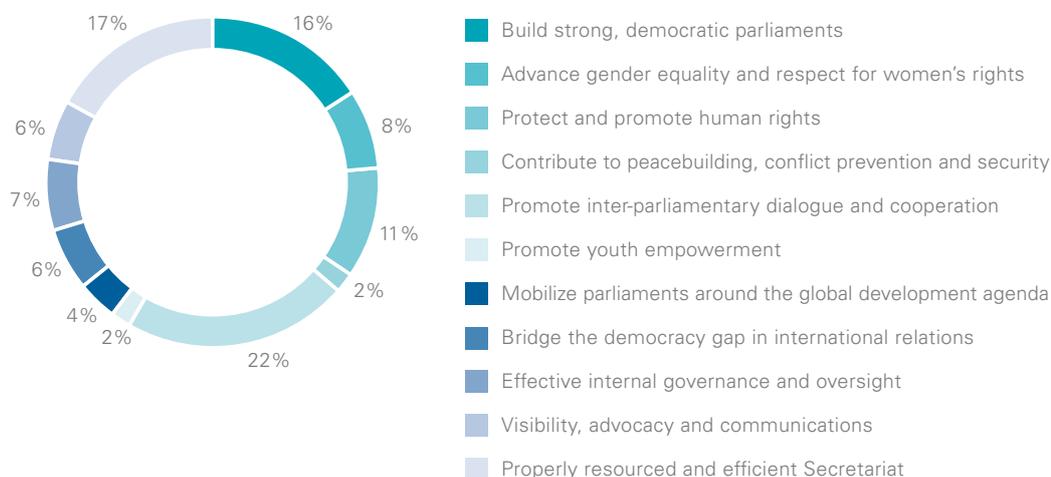


# Expenditures

IPU expenditures are dedicated to achieving the strategic objectives of the Organization. A breakdown of expenditures by strategic objective and enablers 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	2,355,912	16%
Advance gender equality and respect for women's rights	1,242,100	8%
Protect and promote human rights	1,553,726	11%
Contribute to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and security	272,699	2%
Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation	3,318,091	22%
Promote youth empowerment	224,405	2%
Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda	644,595	4%
Bridge the democracy gap in international relations	898,119	6%
Effective internal governance and oversight	993,207	7%
Visibility, advocacy and communications	910,119	6%
Gender mainstreaming and a rights-based approach	549	0%
Properly resourced and efficient Secretariat	2,444,700	17%
Other charges and eliminations	-111,031	-1%
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>14,747,192</b>	



# Financial statements

The consolidated financial statements of IPU and its legacy Pension Fund for 2018 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 seventh 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 2018 in CHF (Swiss francs)

	2018	2017 restated
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash on hand	13,658	7,377
Cash in current accounts	4,080,445	5,734,320
Cash held by investment fund manager	335,638	344,217
Term deposits and savings accounts	4,738,877	4,738,777
Sub-total cash and cash equivalents	9,168,618	10,824,691
Accounts receivable		
From Members	872,329	965,983
From donors	403,100	161,443
From tax reimbursements	75,207	37,334
Others	53,045	5,761
Sub-total accounts receivable	1,403,682	1,170,520
Investments	7,243,100	8,567,896
Other current assets	180,100	273,787
Sub-total current assets	17,995,500	20,836,895
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Fixed assets		
Building and grounds	8,237,189	8,255,438
Furnishings	24,298	24,782
General equipment	59,033	60,317
IT equipment	79,268	73,993
Vehicles	10,675	16,775
	8,410,464	8,431,304
Intangible assets	246,787	68,021
Sub-total non-current assets	8,657,251	8,499,326
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>26,652,751</b>	<b>29,336,221</b>

2018

2017 restated

**Liabilities**

Accounts payable and accrued payables	217,062	429,956
Advances from Members	337,639	227,124
Deferred revenue	1,554,798	2,677,682
Loans	189,600	189,600
Sub-total current liabilities	2,299,099	3,524,363
Borrowings long term	5,120,998	5,248,065
Closed Pension Fund	12,306,973	12,625,046
Other employee benefits	1,517,019	1,395,194
Sub-total non-current liabilities	18,944,990	19,268,305
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>21,244,089</b>	<b>22,792,668</b>

**Net assets**

Restricted funds	431,683	434,251
Actuarial gain (loss) recognized in net assets	-3,787,393	-3,259,247
Accumulated fund balance (Working Capital Fund after contribution)	8,764,378	9,368,551
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>5,408,668</b>	<b>6,543,555</b>



# 2018 publications

## Issues Briefs

- [Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe](#)
- [Global trends in climate change legislation and litigation: 2018 snapshot](#)

## Handbooks

- [Good practices in nationality laws for the prevention and reduction of statelessness](#)
- [Freedom of expression for parliaments and their members: Importance and scope of protection](#)
- [A Guide to international refugee protection and building state asylum systems International Humanitarian Law](#)

## Reports

- [Youth participation in national parliaments: 2018](#)
- [World e-Parliament Report 2018](#)
- [Women in parliament in 2017: The year in review](#)
- [Annual report on the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union: 2017](#)

## Infographics

- [Youth in Parliament in 2018](#)
- [Violations of the human rights of MPs – 2018](#)

# IPU collections

The IPU has six collections primarily meant for parliamentarians and policy makers. All IPU publications are available [here](#).

**Issues Briefs** are designed to raise awareness on a particular issue. They give an overview of a particular theme with statistics, tables, graphs, facts and figures.

**Handbooks** are an in-depth look at a theme designed for legislators involved in preparing laws and policies. They contain best practice, examples from other countries, definitions of key concepts, background information and advice for implementation.

**Tool Kits** allow parliaments to self-evaluate what they have, what's missing and what action they need to take in a particular area.

**Reports** generally go into detail on a particular strategic theme to report on progress or setbacks. They contain new data and are published either annually or periodically.

**Reference publications** are designed as guidelines to help support parliamentary development.

**Infographics** are usually in the form of maps to highlight visually a particular theme.

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