



**PODER LEGISLATIVO**  
*Congreso de la Nación*

## Sixth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians

***Achieving the SDGs and empowering youth through well-being***

**9 and 10 September 2019, Asunción, Paraguay**

### **Concept note**

The IPU's annual Global Conferences of Young Parliamentarians are unique platforms for young members of parliaments to get together, exchange, learn and define common and innovative strategies to advance youth empowerment. Since 2014, the Global Conferences have addressed numerous topical issues linked to youth empowerment and have provided policy orientation in areas such as political participation, peace and prosperity, social and economic inclusion and education and employment.

The sixth edition of the Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians will pursue these efforts by reflecting on another innovative approach, which is to consider youth empowerment from the perspective of well-being.

In today's world, with growing inequality, an ominous climate crisis and growing social unrest, new approaches and solutions need to be found. Growth alone and current, traditional development models are unable to provide an efficient answer to the social, economic and environmental challenges of our time. They are also unable to facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which require accelerated efforts, bold thinking and innovation. So, is the concept and objective of well-being the answer?

The pursuit of well-being and happiness is a fundamental human goal. Its link with development has been recognized by the United Nations since 2011.<sup>1</sup> A more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to development that promotes sustainability and poverty eradication as well as the happiness and well-being of all people is also at the core of the SDGs adopted in 2015.

With 11 years remaining to achieve the SDGs, the focus is on entry points that will accelerate action to meet the objectives set; this includes strengthening human well-being and placing the pursuit of happiness at the core of global, national and local efforts. On the occasion of the [128<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly](#) (Quito, Ecuador, 2013), the IPU Members recognized that well-being consisted of human factors that do not necessarily depend on unrestrained material consumption and production. Education, health, culture, leisure time, the practice of religion, the enjoyment of all human rights, emotional fulfilment, as well as a sense of belonging to a community, were all dimensions of human happiness that could be advanced at little cost to the environment and with huge social dividends.<sup>2</sup>

The transition to a well-being approach requires fundamental changes in the conceptualization and development of policies and the measuring of progress. Several countries, including Bhutan, Ecuador, France, Italy, India, New Zealand, the United Arab Emirates and Paraguay, are leading the way in implementing this vision in their national development policies, budgets, legislation and programmes at both the national and local levels, and they are achieving inspiring results.

In these efforts, timely interventions directed at young people can yield a great return in youth empowerment and sustainable development. Today's world youth population is the largest cohort ever to be transitioning to adulthood. As such, youth is a key driver of development. Yet, gaps in education, employment and health, as well as inequalities, are widespread among youth. This youth well-being gap needs to be closed. Can well-being policies and initiatives help close the gap?

The Conference discussions will be based primarily on the sharing of policies and creative practices that promote well-being and happiness with a focus on how such policies and practices contribute to

<sup>1</sup> Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 19 July 2011, [https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/715187/files/A\\_RES\\_65\\_309-EN.pdf](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/715187/files/A_RES_65_309-EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Quito Communiqué, adopted by the 128th IPU Assembly on 27 March 2013, <http://archive.ipu.org/conf-e/128/quito-comm.htm>

youth empowerment. Case studies on well-being policies, legislation, mechanisms and measures will be presented, analysed and discussed to identify good practices and action to be taken at the national level. Delegations are therefore encouraged to come prepared with examples of good practices from their home countries to share with their colleagues.

Young parliamentarians, as political leaders closest to the youngest generations, can play a critical role in amplifying the voices of young people and translating their interests into laws and public policies. By knowing more about how public action and legislation can be best designed to contribute to the well-being of all people and to more resilient societies, young parliamentarians will be better equipped to help young men and women realize their human potential, which is an essential component of youth empowerment.

The sessions of the Conference will focus on the following main themes:

- Well-being and happiness as core elements of the SDGs;
- Policymaking for well-being and happiness and the effect of well-being and happiness on youth empowerment: Case studies from around the world to be presented by young parliamentarians;
- Measuring well-being and happiness and exercising oversight of policy implementation.

Given the interest expressed by young parliamentarians to have mentorship and training opportunities, the sixth edition of the Conference will also include:

- a "**Mentorship Café**" where young MPs will explore possibilities to carry out peer-to-peer mentorship, share lessons learned from mentorship experiences and draw relevant recommendations to inform the crafting of mentorship programmes for young MPs;
- a "**Training Hub**" where young MPs can exercise their leadership and communication skills; the Training Hub will be organized in four groups (by language: English, French, Spanish and Arabic).

With the support of a trainer, each group will focus on building leadership and communication skills and explore the following key topics:

- Looking at the various types of leadership approaches and styles.
- Identifying one's strengths and weaknesses as a decision-maker.
- How to communicate? With what means (media, social media)? When and for what?
- How to speak in public? How to liaise with the media?
- How to address sensitive issues and bridge gaps, build consensus and work for the good of all?

The Sixth Conference of Young Parliamentarians will also be an opportunity to mark the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IPU and the International Day of Democracy, which is celebrated on 15 September.