141st IPU Assembly

Belgrade (Serbia)
13-17 October 2019

Speakers' Dialogue on governance

Tuesday, 15 October 2019, 2.30 - 5.30 p.m.
Halls 3/1 and 15/1 (first floor), Building A, Sava Centre

Concept note

The Speakers' Dialogue at the 141st Assembly follows on from the first such Dialogue in Doha in April this year. The Dialogue is a platform for high-level political exchange. By focusing on practical ways to strengthen governance and the role of parliament, it will provide an important contribution to the 2020 World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

In a fast-changing world, parliaments face growing challenges to their authority and their capacity to act on behalf of the people. Parliaments are seeking ways to modernize the institution in order to remain in close contact with society.

In parallel, citizens' demands for good governance are increasing. People are concerned by the way government functions – one global study found that in 2018, 58 per cent of the respondents felt that their governments were not acting in their interest.[1] People want their voice and concerns to be heard and demand that their problems be at the top of their respective government's agenda. These include issues such as poverty, governance, peace, security, the economy, unemployment, human rights and many others that are set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which, as its title indicates, should be accomplished by 2030.

During the first block of discussions, Speakers will be faced with challenging statements and will be asked to give answers to the following questions: What are the challenges facing democracy today? What economic outlook are we expecting for 2020 and what awaits the next generation? The answers should consider technological changes and their impact on global and national politics and the economy. After a plenary introduction to the session, Speakers will divide into groups to hold interactive discussions, share best practices and propose creative solutions to the following key issues:

(a)   Development and the economy

According to the United Nations, the Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future for all. By addressing the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate and environmental degradation, among others, the objective of the goals is to achieve peace and justice for all. The SDGs are interconnected and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we reach them and their targets by 2030.

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[1]   Source: "Democracy Perception Index 2018" conducted by Dalia Research in collaboration with the Alliance of Democracies and Rasmussen Global. The research conducted in June 2018 covered 125,000 respondents from 50 countries. http://www.allianceofdemocracies.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Democracy-Perception-Index-2018 -1.pdf

How can parliaments transform the planet in just 10 years? What new ways of carrying out the development agenda can be implemented by parliaments? How can budget allocation commitments and financing for development help to advance in this regard? How can we use our representation responsibility to engage our constituencies?

The 2008 financial crisis highlighted the inadequacies of the rules needed for a solid and prosperous global economy. After a long period of stagnation, the world economy is finally strengthening but inevitably facing more and new turbulences. Policymakers need to broaden their economic scope to address the systemic issues that continue to hamper progress on the Sustainable Development Agenda, to cope with an increasing trend towards automation, and to face current trade wars and tariff impositions.

How to provide better jobs and salaries in a context of industrial revolution? How to include the new generations in this process? How to use new technologies to improve our economies and our performance as parliamentarians?

(b)   Security and human rights

Strong rule of law protects and promotes human rights and helps to mitigate violent crime by enabling legitimate means and processes for the resolution of grievances. Achieving the Sustainable Development Agenda requires respect for human rights, and respect for human rights prevents conflicts and fosters a secure environment for all.

There is no tradeoff between security and human rights so how can we best reconcile the promotion of and unrestricted respect for human rights in a context of uncertainty and threats to people's safety? What are the new security challenges? How can we modify our laws to have societies that are safe and respectful of human rights? How can we face the challenges posed by organized crime and terrorism?

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Each group will then share its conclusions and main action points in a concluding plenary session. The second Speakers' Dialogue should deliver concrete recommendations on how to translate the discussions into tangible legislative, budgetary and public policy proposals.