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## Fourth South Asian Speakers' Summit on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

Organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the People's Majlis

Male' (Maldives), 1 and 2 September 2019

### CONCEPT NOTE

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global call to action to eradicate extreme poverty, protect the planet and improve political and economic stability globally while ensuring that nobody is left behind. The Member Parliaments of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) applauded the ambition of this agenda, and committed to translating the SDGs into enforceable domestic laws, holding governments accountable and aligning budgets with national sustainable development plans.

In January 2016, Speakers of Parliaments of the South Asian region met for the first time in Dhaka (Bangladesh) to discuss how the SDGs and their targets apply to their countries, and to share experiences as well as good practices. Recognizing the value of this meeting, they decided to establish the South Asian Speakers' Summit, whose aim was to meet on a regular basis under the auspices of the IPU in order to review progress on the implementation of the SDGs at the regional level.

The Fourth South Asian Speakers' Summit will give participants the opportunity to build on the recommendations identified during the previous editions and pursue discussions on key challenges and opportunities with respect to SDG implementation. Topical issues that will be discussed are: equality at work, including the gender pay gap and the creation of job opportunities for young people; nutrition and food security as drivers of maternal, child and adolescent health; and the importance of strengthening action to combat climate change. Special emphasis will be placed on the interrelation and interconnection of the SDGs, as well as on the importance of ensuring that the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups are taken into consideration.

Ensuring equality at work and creating youth employment could not only contribute to reducing disparities and achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, but also improve national productivity and economic growth. Health goals and targets will not be achieved without addressing the long-lasting effects of malnutrition, which remains prevalent in the region. The Summit will consider the linkages between nutrition and health, and how working on SDG 2 (food security and the eradication of hunger) can help drive progress for SDG 3 (healthy lives and well-being), in particular maternal, child and adolescent health. Participants will also have the opportunity to receive updates on projected trends of climate change in South Asia as well as information on its anthropogenic causes and social and economic impact. Climate change represents an alarming threat in the region, thus the need to pursue discussion on effective ways to strengthen the regional response.

#### **Format, objectives and expected outcomes of the Summit**

The Summit is open to Speakers of the Parliaments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Delegations will also be composed of the

parliamentary Secretaries General or Clerks, members of parliament and senior parliamentary staff. The event will follow up on the conclusions of the Third South Asian Speakers' Summit held in Colombo (Sri Lanka) and will be made up of a series of interactive panel discussions led by relevant experts.

The aim of the Summit is to have the Parliaments of the South Asian region share experiences and engage in comprehensive discussions on: equality at work; nutrition, food security and health; and climate change. Special emphasis will be placed on sharing good practices and increasing understanding about how parliaments in the region can institutionalize the SDGs, capture synergies and build coherence at the policy level. It is expected that there will be a qualitative exchange of the opinions and the diverse experiences of the representatives of parliaments.

The Summit is expected to adopt a declaration setting out forward-looking recommendations to effectively advance the realization of the SDGs at the national and regional levels.

**Venue and dates:** Male' (Maldives), 1 and 2 September 2019

**Draft agenda:** The agenda will be jointly agreed upon by the IPU and the People's Majlis.

**Language:** The proceedings of the Summit will be conducted in English.