

Concept Note

Information Seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for Spanish-speaking participants

Organized jointly by the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

27-28 November 2019, San José (Costa Rica)

Background

Every year, the IPU organizes an Information Seminar for parliamentary staff serving as Secretaries of IPU Groups of Member Parliaments. It is intended to provide them with an opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge about the IPU, and therefore to facilitate their work in advising and assisting their Parliament and its members on all matters relating to its organization, programmes and activities, structures and working methods. The Information Seminar takes place at IPU Headquarters in Geneva and is delivered only in English or French, without interpretation.

The annual Information Seminar is generally attended by representatives of some 20 Members from all geopolitical groups. However, between 2001 and 2009, only five Spanish-speaking countries from Latin America had attended.

The Information Seminar on the structure and functioning of the IPU for Spanish-speaking participants is a new concept, specially designed for Latin American parliaments, that takes into account the particularities of the region and the specific challenges faced by these Members in their interaction with the IPU, and will be delivered in Spanish on this occasion. It aims at filling the existing gap of the historically low participation of the Geopolitical Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) Members in the traditional Information Seminar in Geneva. It will bring the IPU closer to those who deal with IPU requests on a daily basis and who keep alive the institutional memory in the region while alleviating the financial burden that could represent sending delegations to Geneva.

The Information Seminar for Spanish-speaking participants will be a condensed version of the traditional Information Seminar. It will take place in San José, Costa Rica, and will be open to Secretaries General and parliamentary staff in charge of international relations and IPU matters from GRULAC. Participants will share national experiences and opportunities/challenges related to interacting with the IPU and implementing its decisions and resolutions. The seminar will also contribute to creating a regional network of parliamentary staff dealing with inter-parliamentary affairs.

The event will bring together Secretaries General and parliamentary staff from across the region, the GRULAC Secretariat and IPU staff. It will increase awareness about the IPU and its areas of work, identify what parliamentary staff can do at the national level to facilitate the participation of their parliaments within the Organization and explore new avenues for enhanced coordination between parliaments, geopolitical groups and the IPU.

Objectives of the Meeting

This seminar will provide a comprehensive overview of the different areas of the IPU's work and objectives. It will also create a platform to explore ways in which parliamentary staff can better interact

with the IPU while facilitating a fruitful participation of their respective parliaments in the Organization's work.

A central aim of the meeting will be to encourage the exchange of good practices on working modalities of national IPU Groups and on preparations for IPU Assemblies. One session will be dedicated to the rights and obligations of IPU Members and the new reporting exercise.

Organization of proceedings

The Information Seminar will gather Secretaries General and parliamentary staff from Spanish-speaking Member Parliaments from Latin America and the Caribbean. Other IPU Members can also take part if they wish. Staff members of GRULAC's permanent Secretariat will also be invited.

The seminar will be run interactively. Experts will deliver their presentations by way of question-and-answer sessions which will be followed by plenary debates and interactive discussions. Sessions will include presentations by IPU staff, GRULAC's permanent Secretariat and parliamentary staff from the region. Group breakout sessions could also be organized.

Language

The meeting will be conducted in Spanish.