



130
years of
empowering
parliamentarians

Impact Report 2019



The IPU

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the global organization of national 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 179 national member parliaments and 13 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.

Contents

Foreword	4
OBJECTIVE 1 Build strong, democratic parliaments	6
OBJECTIVE 2 Advance gender equality and respect for women's rights	10
OBJECTIVE 3 Protect and promote human rights	14
OBJECTIVE 4 Contribute to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and security	18
OBJECTIVE 5 Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation	22
OBJECTIVE 6 Promote youth empowerment	26
OBJECTIVE 7 Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda	30
OBJECTIVE 8 Bridge the democracy gap in international relations	34
Towards universal membership	38
Resource mobilization: How the IPU is funded?	39
IPU specialized meetings in 2019	40
Financial results	42

One year, 130 years: Taking stock, taking the long view



IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong
© Dixon

2019 was a watershed year for the IPU as we celebrated our 130th anniversary. With 179 Member Parliaments and 13 Associate Members, the IPU has come a long way since the first meeting of a small group of parliamentarians from just nine countries in 1889.

Some 130 years after our founding, we continue to be convinced of the power of getting MPs around the table to address the issues of the day. In 2019, through two successful Assemblies, in Qatar and Serbia, and at numerous other events, we mobilized thousands of parliamentarians to act on a vast gamut of issues including climate change, education, health, the economy and security, and to bring a parliamentary dimension to global governance and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We also facilitated record numbers of bilateral and face-to-face meetings at our parliamentary meetings, demonstrating that the IPU remains the primary platform for global parliamentary diplomacy and peacebuilding between nations as our founders had originally envisaged.

Celebrating 130 years of the IPU

Throughout the year we were delighted to host and support multiple celebrations of our 130th anniversary. In June, British and French parliamentarians recreated the original 1889 IPU foundation meeting in Paris, in the city where the IPU was born. In parallel, we launched an exhibition of our work over the decades at the United Nations in Geneva and in New York before it travelled to Member Parliaments including Bangladesh, Serbia and Paraguay.

And, on 30 June, International Day of Parliamentarism and the date of our foundation, IPU Assembly Presidents – past, present and future – joined the IPU President and Secretary General to commemorate our anniversary at IPU Headquarters. It was an opportunity to reaffirm our dedication to the original values articulated by the founders of the institution.

Assuming our leadership role

Our 130th anniversary celebrations have served as a useful springboard to boost our visibility and leadership in a number of areas, as confirmed by some recent nominations.

As we remain committed to the health of women, children and adolescents: the IPU President sits on the High-Level Steering Group of the *Every Woman, Every Child* movement, and the IPU Secretary General is on the Executive Committee of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

In recognition of the IPU's commitment to gender parity, the IPU Secretary General was elected Chair of the Global Board of the International Gender Champions, a network of decision-makers committed to breaking down gender barriers. Earlier in the year, he was also appointed as one of the global leaders committed to fighting malnutrition through the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement.

Showing our impact

This year we have renamed our annual report the impact report to emphasize the results of our work, at a time when there is a growing emphasis on what has been achieved, making a difference, than on what has been done. From promoting democracy, to helping parliaments to become stronger, younger, gender-balanced and more innovative, to defending the human rights of parliamentarians in danger, we can look back on a number of achievements in 2019; for example:

- Last year saw a surge of 39 new endorsements from national parliaments of one of the IPU's principal tools, the Common Principles of Support to Parliaments, which define how parliaments can take control of their own development to become more effective institutions.

- Following the IPU's groundbreaking research in 2016 and 2018 on sexism and violence against women in parliaments, we turned our attention from analysing the issue to providing solutions with the publication of new guidelines on how to make parliaments safe spaces free from harassment and abuse. We also advised seven parliaments who asked for our help in addressing sexism in their institutions.
- In 2019, the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians defended the cases of 533 MPs who complained of human rights abuses, the second-highest number in the Committee's 40-year history and probably, and unfortunately, just the tip of the iceberg. The Committee had some successes during the year notably with the release of former Congolese MP Mr. Eugène Diomi Ndongala. Cooperation with national authorities has improved remarkably and bears out the approach adopted by the IPU: dialogue first and foremost and intransigence when it comes to defending the integrity of the parliamentary institution. This has also been our steadfast approach to the protection of parliamentarians in Venezuela throughout the year.
- In October, at the 141st IPU Assembly in Serbia, Member Parliaments adopted the first-ever parliamentary resolution on universal health coverage. This landmark resolution was the culmination of efforts to mobilize parliaments worldwide to ensure that the right to public health for all by 2030 is enshrined in law across the globe. This is one more prominent example of how parliaments through the IPU are striving to be relevant on an ongoing basis. We are thankful to our partners from the World Health Organization (WHO), including its Director-General, for their strong support.
- The impact that the IPU can have on national legislation and domestic agendas was confirmed by our annual survey of Member Parliaments. In the survey, 31 per cent of respondents confirmed that new legislation had been put in place as a direct result of IPU assemblies, programmes, initiatives and resolutions. Of the sample, 75 per cent also said that they had taken concrete actions following IPU meetings.

Growing visibility

Our new communications strategy is also starting to have an impact as evidenced by our visibility metrics which have increased on all fronts. In 2019 we launched our new website, enabling us to reach over 200,000 visitors during the year, up from 64,000 in 2017.

Our social media presence was greatly fortified by strong engagement from the parliamentary community on Twitter and Facebook and our recent launch on Instagram. We also opened a new profile on LinkedIn as part of our ongoing efforts to reach out to parliamentarians around the world.

And in a bid to give members of parliament more space and airtime, our strategy of publishing more interviews with MPs is beginning to bear fruit, with close to 50,000 views of our online videos by the end of the year.

Looking ahead

In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the IPU will continue to galvanize parliamentary action and co-ordination through its programmatic work and parliamentary meetings. The pandemic is an unprecedented global challenge that knows no borders and impacts everyone, especially the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized. International solidarity, cooperation and coordination have never been so important and the parliamentary community has a vital role to play.

As well as the 142nd Assembly, in October in Kigali, Rwanda, we will partner with the United Nations and the Austrian Parliament to host the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Vienna from 19 to 21 August to take these issues to the highest level of parliamentary representation.

130 years after our foundation, and as we approach universal membership, our objective remains constant: to empower the world's 46,000 parliamentarians to promote peace, democracy and sustainable development. The IPU is about parliaments, by parliaments and for parliaments. We are privileged to help the Organization pursue its noble agenda.



Martin Chungong
Secretary General



OBJECTIVE 1

Build strong, democratic parliaments

Building strong, effective parliaments is essential for democracy and development. In pursuing this primary strategic objective, we establish common standards and guidelines and help parliaments take control of their institutional development. In 2019 we provided capacity-building support in nine countries in areas ranging from strategic planning to evaluation of public policies. 2019 was also the first year of operation of the IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament, which has so far established eight hubs in parliaments around the world.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize that effective institutions are essential for making progress in all areas of the SDGs. Targets 16.6 (effective, accountable and transparent institutions) and 16.7 (responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making) are especially relevant to parliaments. Our work on strong, democratic parliaments directly supports progress towards these SDG targets and, by extension, towards sustainable development in all its facets. The IPU is the official custodian of the SDG 16.7.1a indicator that monitors decision-making positions in parliament by sex and age.

POUR 359

CONTRE 114

NOMBRE DE VOTANTS 545

SUFFRAGES EXPRIMÉS 473

MAJORITÉ ABSOLUE 237



Putting parliamentary self-development into practice

The 10 Common Principles for Support to Parliaments, adopted by the IPU in October 2014 to help parliaments develop into stronger, better institutions, have now been endorsed by 161 parliaments and partner organizations.

At the heart of the Common Principles is the vision that parliaments should be in the driving seat of their own development: "Parliament alone is best placed to articulate its needs and to define broad strategic objectives, as well as tactical approaches to particular activities." (Common Principle 1)

In 2019 we developed a *Guide to the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments* to help parliamentary leaders define their development objectives through a process of parliamentary self-development. As a practical, action-oriented document, it draws on examples from across the world, highlighting where parliaments have moved forward decisively in taking control of their futures. We continued the good practice of broad consultation with parliaments to develop the guide; over 40 parliaments contributed.

"We use the IPU Common Principles for Support to Parliaments as the guidelines for all our parliamentary support efforts."

German Bundestag

Following IPU training in 2018, the Parliament of Zambia set an example of parliamentary ownership by adapting the IPU's self-assessment toolkits and carrying out a series of self-assessment exercises for 49 MPs and 37 staff. We also ran a refresher training course beforehand for the parliamentary staff who facilitated the self-assessment.

Strengthening parliaments' core functions

In Djibouti, we continued supporting the National Assembly in its transformative change. As part of a human rights project funded by the European Union, we helped the National Assembly establish a gender caucus and redefine an existing committee's scope of work to take on a formal human rights role.

We also trained women MPs to better work with and represent their constituents, and supported the National Assembly's deliberations on a new law to prevent violence against women and girls (since adopted in February 2020). In addition, we supported the establishment of a coordination unit within the parliamentary administration to improve internal coordination and management of human resources.

We continued training MPs and staff in Chad and Pakistan to better understand their legislative drafting and policy evaluation roles. Our support to Pakistan saw it restructure its legislative drafting unit to better meet its needs. In Chad, we helped the Parliament update its rules of procedure to include its policy evaluation role in line with the 2018 Constitution.

In Djibouti and Tunisia, our efforts contributed to strategic visions that will guide each Parliament's future development. We also continued supporting the Myanmar Parliament's strategic priority of establishing a centre of excellence for in-house learning.

Key number:

39

2019 saw a surge of 39 new endorsements of the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments on the occasion of the IPU's 130th anniversary.

Mr. Mohamed Ali Houmed
Speaker of the National Assembly of Djibouti



Capacity-building workshop for parliamentarians in Djibouti.
© Djibouti National Assembly/ Ambassa Mohamed Ambassa.

Harnessing ICT for improved parliamentary processes and access to information

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 continue to create a digital divide between developed and developing countries.

Giving MPs and parliamentary staff easier access to parliamentary documents and information was a focus in Myanmar and Vanuatu. Our work with the Myanmar Parliament helped it launch a parliamentary intranet and provide remote access for MPs and staff. Our ICT work in Vanuatu saw the Parliament launch a news clipping service, create a digital repository, where over 2,000 collections have been uploaded so far, and train staff to maintain it. In both Myanmar and Vanuatu, digital documents can now be accessed online by MPs.

Building a network of parliamentary innovation hubs

Parliamentary hubs bring together parliaments that want to cooperate on boosting innovation to strengthen parliaments. Hubs function on a regional or a thematic basis. So far, through the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament, a partnership between the IPU and parliaments to better use new technology, eight parliaments have stepped forward to offer to host hubs. Hubs meet online and face-to-face

to develop joint projects covering capacity-building, good practice and building networks of expertise.

Thematic hubs

Open Data Hub – host: Chamber of Deputies of Brazil

IT Governance Hub – host: European Parliament

Transparency Hub – host: Israel

Regional hubs

Latin American Hub – host: Chamber of Deputies of Chile

Southern African Hub – host: Zambia

East African Hub – host: Kenya

Caribbean Hub – host: Trinidad and Tobago

Pacific Hub – host: New Zealand

Tracking innovation in parliaments around the world

The IPU [Innovation Tracker](#) is a quarterly electronic publication produced by the IPU. Its purpose is to share information among parliaments in order to stimulate thinking and foster cooperation. Each Tracker provides an update on the work of the hubs, and highlights innovative developments within parliamentary administrations as well as parliamentary action on new technologies that impact society. The Tracker has thus far featured innovation stories from the Parliaments of Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Finland, Greece, Myanmar, Jordan, Suriname and Zambia.

Case study

Accessing legislation through open data

Most parliaments produce a wealth of legislation and related documents. But it can be difficult to access legislation from a range of countries. What if there could be a single point of entry where legislative documents from different parliaments could be searched, viewed, and automatically translated into your national language? This is the ambition of the Inter-Parliamentary Open Data Cloud, the first project of the Open Data Hub, one of the three thematic hubs of the Centre of Innovation.

In December 2019, the project published its first [Proof of Concept](#), which offers the possibility to search English translations of legislative documents from five parliaments: Brazil, Canada, Estonia, Spain and the European Parliament. The goals for 2020 are to incorporate more data into the system, improve the underlying model and build dashboards so users can easily locate and compare legislation across countries.

Helping parliaments (re)connect with the people

The IPU flagship report on the state of parliaments, the Global Parliamentary Report, is published every four years in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). After extensive consultation in 2019, the third edition (planned for 2021) will focus on citizen participation in direct or participatory democratic processes. We will start research in 2020 among parliaments and other stakeholders, notably in civil society.

►► The year ahead

As well as research for the Global Parliamentary Report, we will begin work on the next World e-Parliament Report, the IPU's biennial report on how parliaments can use new technology to become better and stronger institutions. We will also make improvements to our open-data platform Parline, including gathering and reporting data for SDG indicator 16.7.1a, which will feed into the work on the draft parliamentary indicators for SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7. And we will host the third expert round table on the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments.

Impact of the IPU: Pooling data for and about parliaments

The IPU's open data platform [Parline](#) is recognized as the leading global source of data on national parliaments, for use by parliaments as well as researchers, students and numerous top-tier media outlets. It contains data on the structure and functioning of every parliament, as well as the representation of women and young people.

More than 65,000 people used Parline in 2019. Data on women in national parliaments is the most widely used resource.

In all, 93 per cent of the world's parliaments contributed data to Parline in 2019. We also established a network of Parline Correspondents to support the exchange of information between the IPU and parliaments; 44 per cent of parliaments have already designated their Parline Correspondent and we are aiming for 100 per cent to reinforce our position as the world's leading source of information for and about parliaments.

Setting indicators for strong, democratic parliaments

The IPU is a designated reference to monitor the implementation of SDG targets 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels) and 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels). A meeting organized by the IPU of representatives of regional parliamentary organizations, academia and parliamentary development partners drew up an initial framework to develop a set of reliable and comprehensive indicators for assessing parliamentary capacity and performance by October 2021.



OBJECTIVE 2

Advance gender equality and respect for women's rights

2019 marked the 40th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the main global framework for equal rights between men and women. We used this occasion to step up our fight for gender equality in politics. We are more ambitious than ever: 50/50 is the target and we are here to drive it. Too many laws around the world still discriminate against women and girls – we are working to make the elimination of such discrimination a priority for men and women legislators alike. Much of our work in 2019 was to eliminate sexism and violence against women in politics. Democracy cannot flourish in the face of violence: we continue to guide parliaments towards the objective of becoming safe spaces free of all forms of abuse.





Aiming for 50/50 participation in parliament

In 2019, in partnership with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, we called for greater collective commitment and efforts to reach 50/50 parity in political leadership by 2030. More and more countries have moved towards this objective in part thanks to our efforts; the number of parliaments¹ where women hold at least 40 per cent of the seats rose from 15 in 2018 to 22 in 2019. And six countries had a woman Speaker of parliament for the first time in 2019.

Through our flagship publications and data, we continue to build knowledge and raise awareness of the importance of women's participation in parliament. Our data on women in parliament is cited as the reference in top-tier media outlets such as *The Economist* or *The Washington Post* or influential reports from international organizations such as the World Economic Forum.

Practising what we preach, in 2019 we strengthened our internal measures to promote gender equality by amending our Statutes and Rules to impose stiffer or more stringent sanctions on single-sex delegations attending IPU Assemblies. Such practices set an example for other organizations and were showcased at the UN Human Rights Council as good gender mainstreaming practice.

Supporting national and regional initiatives

- In Turkey, we saw a constructive shift in the debate on gender electoral quotas. MPs from different political affiliations, gathered at an IPU workshop to promote women's political participation, agreed that temporary special measures were needed to overcome the obstacles to election faced by women.
- In Mali, we helped women and men MPs identify and address loopholes in a new law which stipulates a quota of 30 per cent women in all decision-making positions. We helped MPs analyse the impact of constitutional amendments on the implementation of the 30 per cent quota for women.
- Our support to the National Assembly of Benin paid off in 2019 when the Parliament unanimously adopted a new constitutional provision allowing the introduction of legislation to promote women's representation in decision-making.
- In the Pacific region, where women's participation in parliament is the lowest in the world, we helped open a space for dialogue among men and women MPs from across the region who agreed on common strategies, including adopting laws on equitable access for women to leadership positions and calling on political parties to amend their internal rules to recruit more women candidates.

Empowering and defending women MPs

We also focused on supporting women parliamentarians to boost their leadership and influence. We are proud to have provided support to the Parliament of Djibouti to establish its first-ever caucus of women parliamentarians, which is now up and running. We helped women's parliamentary caucuses strengthen their convening power in Namibia, set up peer-to-peer mentoring in Tanzania and put gender sensitivity on the agenda of the Parliament in Serbia.

Our pioneering studies on violence against women in parliament were showcased at more than 20 international conferences and meetings, including at the United Nations and in the US Congress.

¹ Unicameral parliaments or lower chambers of bicameral parliaments

Key figure:

49

Women accounted for 49 per cent of all IPU-organized panels in 2019.



The German Bundestag marks 100 years since German women were granted the right to vote. © AFP/Tobias Schwarz

During the year, seven countries requested our help in addressing violence against women in parliament or political parties (Iceland, Ireland, Germany, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and the United Kingdom).

Helping parliaments become more gender-sensitive

Our Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments continued to guide parliamentary transformation.

Following IPU-supported gender assessments in recent years, parliamentary structures were created or overhauled in 2019 to further parliamentary work on gender equality.

In Kenya, a gender caucus was set up to bring together men and women from across the political spectrum to step up legal reform for gender equality. In Namibia, two caucuses of women parliamentarians merged to form a super-structure to better coordinate and scale up their action across the two houses of parliament.

In 2019, we supported gender assessments by the Parliaments of Colombia and Serbia. The parliamentary authorities in Colombia took immediate action to improve the working environment for women in parliament including a campaign called *Congreso En Igualdad* to sensitize MPs as well as the general public on the need to enhance gender equality in representation, the workforce and policy-making.

And in Serbia, as a result of the assessment in which the caucus of women parliamentarians and the leadership of Parliament played prominent roles, the Parliament has amended the electoral laws to introduce a minimum quota of 40 per cent of female candidates on electoral lists for parliamentary and local elections.

"The 2019 self-assessment of Parliament's gender sensitivity provided the opportunity to discuss issues that are not regularly addressed in parliament and was a learning experience to be repeated for the MPs of the next legislature."

Milorad Mijatović
Chair of the SDG Focus Group,
National Assembly of Serbia

Eradicating discrimination and violence against women

We celebrated CEDAW's 40th anniversary by mobilizing and empowering parliamentarians to translate the Convention into legal and policy action for gender equality.

Thanks to sustained efforts by the IPU and the CEDAW Committee over the years, parliamentarians are now increasingly involved in CEDAW review and implementation processes. For instance, 28.5 per cent of the parliaments we surveyed in 2019 expected to be involved in parliamentary follow-up on CEDAW reviews – a jump from 12.5 per cent in 2018. Of the 21 States Parties reviewed by the CEDAW Committee in 2019, 3 (14.2%) included a member of parliament in their official delegation, up from only 1 in 2018.

In New Zealand, the women's parliamentary caucus followed up on the CEDAW Committee review by calling on the relevant minister to implement the recommendation to amend legislation on equal pay for work of equal value. In Qatar, the Speaker announced that Parliament would debate the next report to the CEDAW Committee and review what action had been taken to implement past recommendations made by the Committee.

We also helped the Parliament of Djibouti educate MPs about harmful practices and different forms of violence against women and girls, with particular emphasis on the culture of silence and the social burdens that discourage survivors from filing complaints. As a result, parliamentarians planned awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives for 2020 using outreach caravans across the country. Equipped and mobilized, the MPs expressed readiness to consider legislation on violence against women and girls and strengthen comprehensive care for survivors.

Case study

Kenya promotes gender equality

The Parliament of Kenya has a long history of engaging with the IPU on gender equality. In 2016, it was the first to apply the IPU gender-sensitivity toolkit. In follow-up, it ran gender training for staff and appointed a senior focal point to help MPs mainstream gender in their work. In 2018, a parliamentary seminar on implementing CEDAW was carried out with IPU support. As a result, a gender caucus was created to advance the work of parliament on gender equality. Subsequently, a new reproductive health bill was introduced by Senator Susan Kihika, President of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, and is currently under committee scrutiny.



Women stand shoulder to shoulder against gender-based violence. © AFP/ François Guillot

Impact of the IPU

A road map to eliminate sexism against women in parliament

On International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (25 November), we published new guidelines to provide parliaments with practical information on devising and implementing policies and complaint-handling mechanisms to prevent and eliminate sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament. With these guidelines, the IPU turns its attention from analysing violence against women in politics to proposing concrete solutions. The guidelines contain examples of good practice from parliaments around the world. Parliaments actively contributed by providing us with information on actions taken to counter abuses within their institutions that can serve as an example for others.

►► The year ahead

2020 will mark the 25th anniversary and review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the UN global blueprint to achieve greater equality and opportunities for women. This year, the IPU will step up its parliamentary engagement in UN-related processes, including the Commission on the Status of Women and the UN General Assembly. We will also encourage parliamentary action in follow-up to the review's conclusions through IPU Assemblies, the Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament and the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, and we will bring the younger generation on board through the Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians. We will provide tailored support to parlia-

ments on gender equality in Djibouti, Fiji, Kenya, Maldives, Oman, Serbia, Sierra Leone and Turkey. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325, we will further step up support to parliamentary action in the field of women, peace and security.



OBJECTIVE 3

Protect and promote human rights

In the face of a global retreat on human rights, we redoubled our efforts in 2019 to empower parliaments and protect parliamentarians to help buck this trend. We worked closely with parliamentary human rights committees to advance the implementation of international human rights recommendations at the national level. In the course of the year, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians examined an ever more challenging caseload. This work bears out that parliamentarians across the world, particularly in countries where democracy is backsliding, are increasingly facing intimidation and threats. The Committee's ability to help end such abuse, as in the case of Maldives, nevertheless offers a silver lining.





Number of human rights cases doubles in last five years

The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians is a unique mechanism that defends the rights of MPs worldwide by mobilizing the international parliamentary community to support threatened MPs, lobbying national authorities, visiting MPs in danger and sending trial observers.

In 2019, the Committee was asked to investigate the cases of 533 parliamentarians from 40 countries, almost double the number registered five years ago and probably only a small fraction of the total number of parliamentarians in trouble. Most of the cases are from countries in political crisis where the government is putting undue pressure on MPs from the opposition.

The most common violations of MPs' human rights were undue suspension of parliamentary mandates, lack of a fair trial and violations of freedom of speech. For the first time, threats, acts of intimidation, torture and ill-treatment were in the top four of the most common violations, and number one in the Americas region.

The Americas were also the region with the highest number of violations – 134 cases in total – most of which concerned the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Access to the country for a fact-finding mission has been denied to the IPU despite several requests since the beginning of the crisis.

We were able to conduct field missions to Mongolia and Turkey to assess the situation of opposition MPs, including to observe the trial of Mr. Selahattin Demirtas, a jailed leader of the Turkish opposition Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). We also mandated three trial observations in the Philippines to monitor legal proceedings against opposition Senator Leila de Lima.

The Committee closed 66 cases of alleged violations against MPs in nine countries in 2019. This included the situation of seven MPs in Maldives following an end to their arbitrary detention and legal proceedings to which they had been subject when they were in opposition.

2019 marked a record number of new cases (111 parliamentarians), compared with 78 new cases in 2018. Most of the new cases submitted were from Venezuela and Yemen. Also new was the case of Ms. Seham Sergiwa, an independent member of the House of Representatives in Tobruk in Libya, who has been neither seen nor heard from since she was abducted from her home in Benghazi in July 2019.

The cases in these three countries, as well as in other situations before the Committee, such as in Cambodia, Palestine, Israel, Eritrea and Turkey, underscore that the difficulties faced by individual MPs are compounded by a generally harmful political and security situation. Helping these MPs therefore needs to go hand in hand with promoting genuine political dialogue and reform in these countries.

For the first time, the IPU also examined the case of an MP whose rights had been violated because of sexual orientation. Mr. Jean Wyllys had been a member of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil since 2010. He was the first openly gay Brazilian member

Key figure:

533

2019 saw alleged human rights violations against 533 parliamentarians worldwide.

Detained opposition Senator Leila de Lima arrives to vote in Manila on 13 May 2019.
© Ted Aljibe / AFP

Impact of the IPU

Securing the release of former Congolese MP Eugène Diomi Ndongala

Former MP from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mr. Ndongala, was released on 21 March 2019. The IPU Committee had lobbied intensively on his behalf in the belief that he had been targeted by a campaign of political and legal harassment aimed at removing him from the political process. Mr. Ndongala thanked the IPU and praised its "constant and tireless efforts over the years to defend the human rights of DRC parliamentarians, and in particular my case."

Violations of the human rights of MPs in 2019

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

The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians is the only international complaints mechanism with the specific mandate to defend the human rights of persecuted parliamentarians.

Its work includes mobilizing the international parliamentary community to support threatened MPs, lobbying national authorities, visiting MPs in danger and sending trial observers.

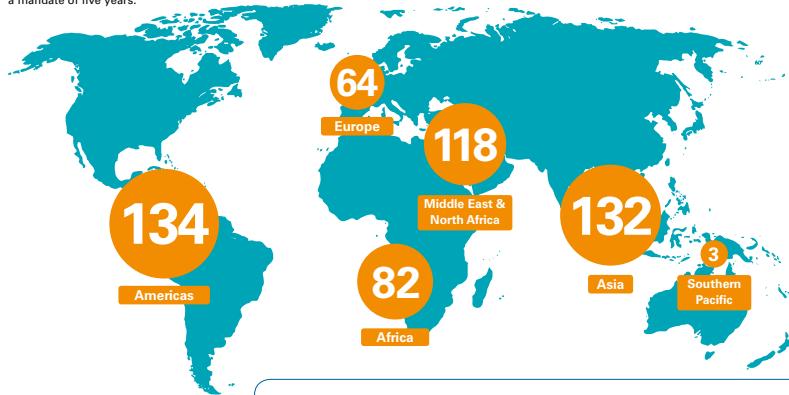
The Committee is made up of 10 parliamentarians, representing the various regions of the world, and elected by their peers for a mandate of five years.

More information about Human Rights at the IPU
<https://www.ipu.org/our-impact/human-rights>

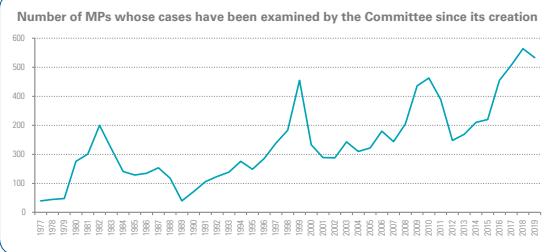


Most common violations

- 1 Undue suspension and loss of parliamentary mandate
- 2 Lack of fair trial and other unfair proceedings
- 3 Violation of freedom of expression
- 4 Threats, acts of intimidation



533 MPs in 40 countries



If you know of an MP in danger,
contact us immediately on
hrteam@ipu.org

FOLLOW US ON
Twitter IPUparliament
Facebook InterParliamentaryUnion
Instagram ipu.parliament_official

of Congress and a well-known and active supporter of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community. In January 2019, Mr. Wyllys gave up his parliamentary seat and went into exile because of repeated threats and the alleged failure of the Brazilian authorities to offer him adequate protection.

In 2019, the IPU also worked increasingly with regional and national institutions to give visibility to the Committee's work. Together with the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and the House Democracy Partnership, the IPU organized on 19 September a briefing at the US Congress on parliamentarians at risk around the world. That same month, we made progress in discussions with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights with a view to enhancing synergies around the protection of parliamentarians in the Americas.

Monitoring the trial of Philippine Senator Leila de Lima

Senator de Lima, an outspoken critic of Philippine President Duterte, has been in detention since February 2017 despite the absence of any corroborated evidence to justify the charges against her. The IPU has been critical of the apparent motives and grounds for prosecuting her and decided to send a trial observer to monitor the legality and fairness of the criminal proceedings.

"I express my gratitude to the IPU for fulfilling its commitment in sending a monitor in my cases. This initiative sends a strong message that indeed the world is watching and taking cognizance of the various issues emerging in the Philippines under the current administration."

Ms. Leila de Lima
Senator from the Philippines



Members of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. © IPU/Jorky

In 2019, we focused on the valuable work done by parliamentary human rights committees in the belief that they are at the forefront of promoting a human rights agenda in and outside parliament. Together with OHCHR, we brought together members of these committees in Geneva in June at a time when the UN Human Rights Council was in session. This facilitated direct exchanges between parliamentarians working on human rights and the global human rights community in Geneva. The meeting for parliamentary human rights committees helped identify numerous examples of good parliamentary practices in support of human rights and ways to adapt them to different local and national realities.

We also offered assistance at the national level to enable parliaments to boost their efforts to promote and protect human rights, such as through a parliamentary seminar organized in Burkina Faso in December 2019. In part thanks to IPU influence, the dedicated Burkinabe parliamentary committee on human rights was able to visit the high security prison in Ouagadougou to assess the living conditions of the inmates. Committee members recommended that measures be taken to ensure better respect for the prisoners' human rights and that they should continue carrying out such visits to monitor progress.

Building political momentum in support of refugees and stateless people

With 70 million people forcibly displaced around the world; including close to 30 million refugees and asylum seekers and some 10 million stateless persons, sustained political will and engagement by parliaments is required to trigger change and action.

At the IPU Assembly in October in Serbia, we adopted two sets of pledges to support the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees and to end statelessness. Developed at the initiative of the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, the pledges involve collecting examples of good parliamentary practices to boost further action by parliaments to implement change at the national level, especially by engaging women and young MPs.

In complement, the IPU organized, with the support of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a regional conference for African parliamentarians, hosted in South Africa by the Pan-African Parliament. The event brought together more than 60 parliamentarians to discuss concrete strategies aimed at implementing the Global Compact and addressing statelessness situations.

2019 also marked the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions which regulate armed conflict and seek to limit its effects to reduce human suffering. At the initiative of the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, and with the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), we organized a panel discussion during the Belgrade Assembly to draw attention to the core principles of the Geneva Conventions.

We also focused specifically on the situation of women with an exhibition entitled *Women in War* highlighting their various and often complex roles – women as fighters, humanitarians, mothers, daughters, labourers, community leaders and survivors.

►► The year ahead

Our focus in 2020 will be on enhancing the effectiveness of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians in reaching satisfactory settlements, including through stronger engagement with the IPU membership at large, other IPU bodies and geopolitical groups as well as international and regional human rights mechanisms.

In addition to promoting parliamentary engagement with the UN Human Rights Council, the IPU will involve parliaments more closely in the work of selected UN human rights treaty bodies. We will also assist parliaments to adopt a rights-based approach to their work by developing a human rights self-assessment toolkit. We will collect and disseminate good parliamentary practices in the promotion and protection of human rights, with a particular focus on initiatives undertaken by parliamentary human rights committees. And we will continue raising awareness among and supporting parliaments, focusing in particular on women and young MPs, to implement the Global Compact on Refugees and address statelessness.



OBJECTIVE 4

Contribute to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and security

Current threats to peace and security are profoundly transforming and disrupting the global order, requiring new approaches. In 2019 the IPU guided and supported parliaments through these transformations by addressing many of the factors that generate international instability – from conventional threats, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and violent extremism and terrorism, to the failure of climate change mitigation – all of which pose major risks to global security, peace and stability.



Parliaments: A driving force for sustaining peace

At the 140th IPU Assembly in Doha, IPU Member Parliaments adopted a resolution on the recruitment, financing and use of mercenaries and foreign fighters. The resolution draws a parallel between both types of individuals and calls for a legal definition of foreign fighters. It also condemns any form of impunity granted to both mercenaries and foreign fighters, and urges parliaments to take legislative measures to prevent their nationals carrying out such activities and to support the victims of resulting violations.

Parliamentarians also addressed the issue of money laundering by sharing their experiences and presenting national legislative frameworks put in place to combat this scourge. At the 141st IPU Assembly in Belgrade, IPU Members reflected on the link between climate change and security – highlighting the impact of climate on human security and its destabilizing effects, and putting forward solutions to be included in a 2020 resolution on the topic.

Ahead of the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the IPU facilitated discussions on the impact of armed conflict on women and their contribution to conflict resolution at the parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and meetings of the IPU Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

Building bridges through parliamentary diplomacy

Against a backdrop of increased tensions in the Middle East, the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions, which addresses conflict-related issues in the region, including through dialogue with parliamentarians from the region, heard directly from delegations from Libya and Yemen to try and find parliamentary solutions in these conflict zones.

For several years, the Committee on Middle East Questions has been working on developing initiatives that use science as a vehicle for conflict resolution and peace. In 2019, at the 141st Assembly, the governing bodies gave the green light for a Working Group on Science and Technology with a mandate to forge closer ties between the parliamentary and scientific communities.

The IPU Group of Facilitators for Cyprus met during the 141st Assembly with members of the House of Representatives of Cyprus and representatives of the Turkish-Cypriot political parties. The parties expressed their determination to resume negotiations to reach a solution based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, and in accordance with relevant UN resolutions and the values of the European Union.

Advocating for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation

In 2019 we set out to strengthen commitments made in the 2014 IPU resolution *Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The role of parliaments by exploring parliamentary strategies for comprehensive disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation*. We campaigned extensively to encourage parliaments to get their countries to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty so that it can finally be enforced. We also promoted ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a clear step towards implementing the 2014 IPU resolution.

"Combating the threat of terrorism requires a holistic strategy, not only confined to security and military aspects but also refuting the underlying intellectual foundations on which terrorism is based, promoting the values of democracy, and correcting the religious discourse."

Dr. Ali Abdel Aal
Speaker of the House of Representatives of Egypt

Champions of both treaties were given a platform when parliamentarians reviewed the implementation of the 2014 IPU resolution during the 141st Assembly. The review allowed IPU Members to share how they had followed up on the resolution and to take stock of significant progress.

The IPU also organized two side events on advancing national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention during the 2019 Assemblies.

Addressing the causes of terrorism and violent extremism

The IPU-UN Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism stepped up a gear in 2019, with the signing of a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding between the IPU, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

We organized three regional conferences on countering terrorism: in Luxor, Egypt, in February; in Niamey, Niger, in June; and in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in October.

Following the conference in Luxor, the Egyptian Parliament moved to establish a parliamentary committee on combating hate speech and extremism. The committee will be the focal point for all activities related to these issues, as well as interacting with other parliamentary committees dealing with associated areas of work, such as education, security and defence, and social coherence. At the regional conference for the Sahel in Niamey, MPs argued for national activities to counter the rising levels of terrorism in the region. And following on from the conference in Kuala Lumpur, a national capacity-building event is on the cards for Afghanistan.

Impact of the IPU

Promoting ratification of peacebuilding treaties

The IPU and the Parliament of New Zealand, with support from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, organized a regional seminar for Pacific Island parliaments on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Over 50 people attended the seminar in Wellington, New Zealand, including 30 MPs and parliamentary staff from 10 parliaments and two territories.

In the closing joint statement, the participants reaffirmed their commitment to follow up on resolution 1540. The Solomon Islands are preparing their first national report to the 1540 Committee; Bangladesh, Kiribati and Maldives ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and Timor-Leste will host a workshop to promote ratification of the 19 international legal instruments related to the prevention and suppression of international terrorism in early 2020.

Group photo of participants at the regional seminar for Pacific Island parliaments in Wellington. © New Zealand Parliament



Case study

Outreach on climate justice

During Geneva Peace Week, we co-hosted an outreach event on climate justice and peacebuilding in partnership with the Environmental Committee of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and the Quaker United Nations Office. This event, directly linked to a forthcoming IPU resolution on parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against climate-related threats, aimed at engaging an interested public in drafting the resolution.

►► The year ahead

2020 will be a pivotal year for disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, with the 10th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We will continue helping parliaments bring their full weight to bear in the negotiations and push for key disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control treaties to be enforced and implemented. The issue of good governance of the security sector and the role of parliamentarians therein will also be addressed throughout the year.

Under the IPU-UN Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, two more regional conferences on counter-terrorism – for Eurasia and for Latin America and the Caribbean – will be organized, as well as an expert group meeting on legal provisions for victims of terrorism, hosted by Italy. We will also help organize national capacity-building events in Niger and Afghanistan.



OBJECTIVE 5

Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation

Objective 5 of the IPU Strategy is to promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation – true to our founding principles which saw the first IPU meetings take place as part of the peace movement in the late nineteenth century. IPU Assemblies continue this tradition by providing a unique opportunity for the global parliamentary community to come together, exchange good practices, and identify avenues for parliamentary action. In 2019, we organized two successful Assemblies – in April in Doha, Qatar, and in October in Belgrade, Serbia. Both Assemblies enjoyed near record attendance – proof of the IPU's continued convening power and testament to the legitimacy of the Assemblies' outcomes as reflecting the views of the global parliamentary community. The participants rallied behind outcomes aimed at promoting peace, democracy and the rule of law, with a focus on sustainable development. On the sidelines of the official programme, there was a major increase in the number of bilateral meetings between delegations, again proof that the IPU is a key forum for parliamentary diplomacy.



Facilitating international parliamentary dialogue

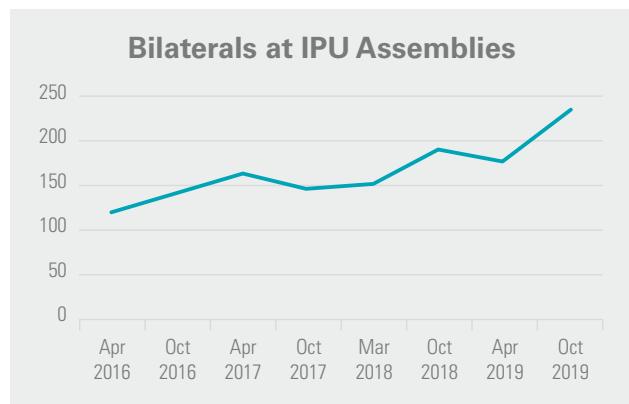
The 140th IPU Assembly was held in April in Doha with over 1,500 delegates in attendance, including:

- MPs from 147 national parliaments
- over 110 Speakers and Deputy Speakers of parliament
- 8 Associate Members (regional parliamentary bodies)
- 37 Permanent Observers and other partner organizations.

During the Assembly, there were more than 170 IPU-facilitated bilateral meetings – an aspect of our Assemblies that has been steadily growing in importance over the years.

Bilateral meetings give parliamentarians the chance to talk freely with their counterparts from around the world. These meetings are not restrained by protocol and help build bridges between countries and ease tensions at the parliamentary level.

The Assembly's General Debate focused on how parliaments can promote education for peace, security and the rule of law. Dr. Rafael Yuste, from the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) initiative, opened the debate in which close to 150 MPs from 115 Member Parliaments, including 52 Speakers, as well as representatives of a dozen partner organizations, contributed. Many of the good practices and recommendations were reflected in the final [Doha Declaration](#).



The 141st IPU Assembly, held in Belgrade in October, was also well attended by:

- almost 85 per cent (149) of IPU Members
- 120 Speakers or Deputy Speakers of parliament
- 9 Associate Members (regional parliamentary bodies)
- 40 Permanent Observers and other partner organizations.

Setting a new record, the IPU facilitated over 230 bilateral meetings between national delegations.

Highlights included a keynote address delivered by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, member of The Elders, at the opening of the General Debate on *Strengthening international law: Parliamentary roles and mechanisms, and the contribution of regional cooperation*.

We also heard from 144 legislators

from 110 Member Parliaments, including 52 Speakers and 15 young parliamentarians, as well as representatives of 10 partner organizations.

"The IPU is an ideal platform for championing high values and fostering dialogue and cooperation for a peaceful and inclusive future."

Mr. Nicholas Prea
Speaker of the National Assembly, Seychelles

Outcomes and decisions

At each IPU Assembly, Member Parliaments adopt an emergency resolution on an urgent situation requiring immediate action by the international parliamentary community. The 140th Assembly adopted an emergency item calling for support for Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, hit by Cyclone Idai. The 141st Assembly adopted a proposal submitted by India on addressing climate change.

At the 141st Assembly in Belgrade, Members also adopted a landmark resolution calling for parliaments to take all legal and policy measures to achieve universal health coverage by 2030.

Parliamentarians from all over the world attend the April 2019 Assembly in Doha.
© IPU/Parliament of Qatar

Other key outcomes from the 2019 Assemblies were resolutions on mercenaries and foreign fighters as a threat to peace, security and human rights; and the role of trade in achieving the SDGs.

Strengthening cooperation with other parliamentary organizations

In 2019 we pursued our efforts to make global parliamentary cooperation more consistent and effective.

We convened representatives of over 15 parliamentary organizations with Associate Member or Permanent Observer status on the sidelines of the 140th Assembly. This was a privileged space for dialogue and reflection on how to address common challenges effectively through regional and global parliamentary cooperation.

Cooperation was also the watchword of specialized events such as the IPU Regional Conference on Comprehensive Responses to Refugee Situations in follow-up to the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees, hosted by the Pan-African Parliament from 11 to 13 November. We also co-organized an event on combating violence against women organized in collaboration with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the occasion of the 41st session of the Human Rights Council in July in Geneva.

Monitoring implementation of IPU decisions and facilitating the exchange of good practices

The IPU annual reporting exercise allows us to collect information and concrete examples of action taken by national parliaments following IPU resolutions and decisions. Our 2019 surveys found that 75 per cent of parliaments who responded reported concrete action taken in follow-up to IPU outcomes and 31 per cent passed new legislation as a direct result of an IPU resolution.

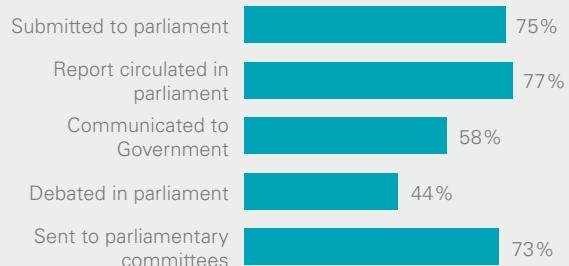
Key number:

31

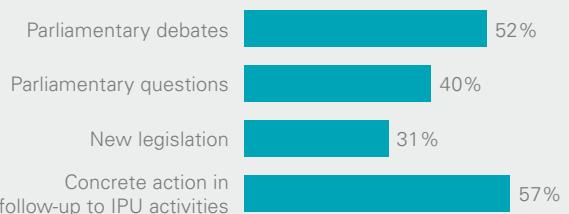
IPU surveys reveal that 31 per cent of parliaments polled passed new legislation as a direct result of an IPU resolution.

Results of the 2019 reporting exercise

Outcomes of the 139th Assembly



Parliamentary action influenced by the IPU in the past two years



Examples of other follow-up actions to IPU decisions include:

- Fiji: A guidance note was brought out on integrating the SDGs into the work of parliament.
- Japan and Kenya: New laws were adopted on gender parity.
- Jordan: A plenary session of parliament was held on youth participation in politics.
- Latvia: A Diaspora Law was enacted, and the Immigration Act was revised.
- Micronesia: The Parliament adopted a resolution making universal health coverage a national priority.
- Paraguay: New mechanisms were introduced for legislative monitoring of the SDGs.
- Seychelles: Environmental sustainability projects were launched in parliament.
- United Arab Emirates: A Future Committee was established in parliament.
- Uzbekistan: National human rights action plans were adopted by parliament.

Towards universal membership

In April 2019, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines became the 179th Parliament to join the IPU – showing steady progress towards our strategic goal of universal membership – and the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie became our 13th Associate Member – as part of our emphasis on giving more space to parliamentary assemblies in order to generate and convey a coherent parliamentary message.

We also continued engaging with non-member parliaments. In May, parliament clerks from non-members Belize and Kiribati accepted our invitation to join an information seminar

on the structure and functioning of the IPU. In early December, we helped organize a regional seminar on achieving the SDGs in the Caribbean Region in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Parliament of Barbados attended the seminar and its representatives requested information on the membership procedure.

Case study

Reaching out to Spanish-speaking Members

The IPU held its first regional information seminar in Latin America on the functioning of the organization. The seminar was held in San José, Costa Rica, on 27 and 28 November 2019 in partnership with Costa Rica's Legislative Assembly. Participants included senior staff from 11 countries: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela. The IPU annual seminar for parliamentary staff is normally held at IPU Headquarters in Geneva in either English or French. Participation from Latin American parliaments has traditionally been low, mainly because of the geographical distance and language considerations. In an effort to strengthen ties with these parliaments, the IPU took the seminar to Latin America, with a complete programme in Spanish.

"The Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica applauds the efforts undertaken by the IPU to raise awareness not only of its defining values but also of its vision for the future through the exchange of best practice and experience among its Members."

Ms. Zoila Volio Pacheco
Deputy Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Costa Rica

►► The year ahead

The highlight of 2020 will be the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament – an unparalleled opportunity for the global parliamentary community to come together at the highest level, take stock of the challenges facing the world today, and set forth an ambitious road map of parliamentary action. The Conference will also reinforce the strategic partnership between the IPU and the United Nations and enhance the parliamentary dimension of global governance. With the April 2020 Assembly cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, our focus will be on finding innovative ways to continue our work, communicate with our Members and support their efforts to deal with the global health emergency. The 142nd Assembly is now due to be held in Kigali, Rwanda, in October, with a packed agenda (including the election of a new IPU President).

MPs attend the October 2019 IPU Assembly in Belgrade. © IPU/ Serbian Parliament





OBJECTIVE 6

Empowering young people

More than half the world is under 30 years of age. Those young people have the highest stake in today's action – or *inaction* – to address global issues like climate change. For decision-making to be inclusive and responsive, the strong participation of everyone is required, especially of young people. Youth participation is not only *right*, it is also *smart*. Youth are a largely untapped resource that have much to contribute to efforts to tackle global issues. But to do so, they need a seat at the table and the ability to influence decisions. In 2019, the IPU took its objective of empowering youth to new heights. In addition to continuing to promote youth representation by mobilizing decision-makers and providing them with policy guidance, we also launched new training activities to help young MPs become stronger political leaders.



Tapping into the leadership potential of young MPs

At the Sixth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Paraguay in September 2019, we brought together some 100 young MPs from 40 countries to launch a series of training hubs for young legislators to hone their political skills. The training sessions focused on political leadership and communications through group work and one-to-one sessions. A mentorship café allowed both young and more senior MPs to share experiences and advice. MPs reported that these training opportunities empowered and equipped them to be more effective leaders.

At the Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, participants explored ways to better place people's well-being and happiness at the centre of public policy.

As well as calling for improved human capital by reducing inequalities and enhancing youth employment, education and health, young MPs pledged to move beyond gross domestic product as the only measure of a country's performance, to more forward-thinking approaches that account for well-being.

"We certainly need more of us young MPs at the table. But numbers alone are not enough. Although we face many obstacles to be elected to parliament, we also face them once we are elected. As young MPs, we need to be empowered to lead this change."

Outcome Document, Sixth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians (Paraguay)

Key number:
21.5

Changes in 2019 to the IPU's rules intended to enhance participation by young MPs at IPU Assemblies started to have an impact: 21.5 per cent of MP delegates at the October IPU Assembly were young MPs, up from 17.4 per cent at the April Assembly. As the first statutory provisions of their kind for any international organization, the amended rules send a clear signal of the IPU's commitment to opening up politics to young people.

Unveiling successful youth laws and policies

We partnered with the World Future Council, the UNDP and the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth to organize the Future Policy Award, the so-called "Oscars" of best policies. In 2019, the award celebrated laws and policies on decent and sustainable jobs for youth. With both the President of the IPU and the President of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians serving on the selection jury, the winners were announced at an award ceremony during the 141st IPU Assembly. The Award celebrated eight winners – Rwanda, Estonia, Scotland (United Kingdom), Nepal, South Africa, the Council of Europe, Los Angeles (United States) and Senegal – exemplifying effective youth laws and policies that can inspire others looking to leverage the power of youth.

Based on an evaluation of 67 nominated policies from 36 countries, the award process was an opportunity for the IPU and its young parliamentarians to better identify the ingredients that make for successful youth laws and policies.

Raising youth voices in international deliberations

No decisions about us without us! Under this motto, the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians continued boosting the role of youth in the IPU and in parliaments more generally as well as giving a youth perspective to international deliberations. The Forum met in April and October during the IPU Assemblies. On the agenda: monitoring countries' progress in empowering youth and ensuring youth priorities were taken into account in the IPU resolutions adopted in 2019.

We also facilitated young MPs' efforts to bring a parliamentary dimension to major international forums. For example, a dynamic delegation from the IPU's Forum of Young Parliamentarians participated in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Global Youth Forum in April 2019 on youth inclusion.

Swedish activist Greta Thunberg leading a demonstration for climate action.
© AFP/Geoff Caddick



Participants at the Sixth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Paraguay. © Parliament of Paraguay

Building political will for youth participation

On International Youth Day on 10 August, we launched a campaign encouraging parliaments and MPs to celebrate the IPU's 130th anniversary through youth themes. Many parliaments around the world joined in the campaign, with special mention to Bhutan which organized a special outreach event. The campaign reached over 100,000 people through the IPU's digital platforms.

International Youth Day was also an opportunity to promote the youth participation targets adopted by the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. Based on the proportion of young people in the population, the Forum calls for countries and parliaments to reach by 2035:

- a minimum of 15 per cent of MPs under 30 years of age
- a minimum of 35 per cent of MPs under 40
- a minimum of 45 per cent of MPs under 45.

Each target includes a gender parity provision of 50 per cent young women and 50 per cent young men.

Monitoring youth participation in parliaments

In 2019, we continued to be the watchdog for youth participation in national parliaments. We made our unique data on young MPs publicly available through the IPU's open-data platform, [Parline](#). This open-source data has become an international reference for parliaments, the media, academics, and civil society and international organizations seeking to research and promote youth participation. It is also one of the official reference sources for monitoring progress on indicators 5.5.1 and 16.7.1 of the SDGs.

Impact of the IPU

As a partner of the Not Too Young To Run Campaign, the IPU has for years called for the lowering of age limits to run for elections. With our support, the National Assembly of Nigeria passed constitutional amendments to lower the minimum age of candidates running for the House of Representatives – among other offices – in 2018. The impact in the 2019 Nigerian elections was impressive: over 34 per cent of candidates in the election were young men or women, up from 21 per cent in 2015. The total number of young people under 35 in elected office rose to 103, up from 60 in 2015.

►► The year ahead

In 2020 we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the [IPU resolution on youth participation](#) that triggered the launch of the IPU youth movement in 2010. We call on all parliaments to commit or recommit and to redouble efforts to take action to encourage more young people to enter politics. We will mobilize parliamentary commitments and action in IPU Assemblies, the Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. We will aim to launch a new IPU campaign on youth participation to mobilize leaders. In 2020 we will also continue to train young MPs and strengthen their political skills through global and national initiatives. Young parliamentarians will also mark the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on gender equality, with a focus on young women's political participation.



OBJECTIVE 7

Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda

With 2020 marking the start of the SDG Decade of Action and the entry into effect of the Paris Agreement, parliaments must take action, now more than ever, to set the planet on a sustainable path. In 2019, the IPU continued promoting parliamentary action on the global development agenda – focusing on national implementation, shedding light on the science and evidence, and more generally promoting parliamentary engagement towards achieving the SDGs.



Promoting parliamentary cooperation on the SDGs

Our Members continued to prioritize regional interaction as a means to access the latest data and expertise and learn from the experiences of other countries. Five regional seminars organized in 2019 brought together some 300 parliamentarians and staff from 68 parliaments from Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa and the Caribbean.

Each seminar focused on bridging theory and practice, with field visits to projects promoting sustainability and prosperity. Poverty alleviation and climate change were key concerns, as witnessed through visits to Chinese provinces like Zhejiang and to depleting coastal areas of Maldives. The shared conclusion was that the only way to overcome such challenges is through greater cooperation with neighbours.

The Speakers of South Asian parliaments met for the fourth time to work closely with the IPU on monitoring parliamentary action on the SDGs. European parliaments met again only six months after their first meeting held in Israel in 2018 to find ways to use innovation as a driver of sustainable development, economic growth and health.

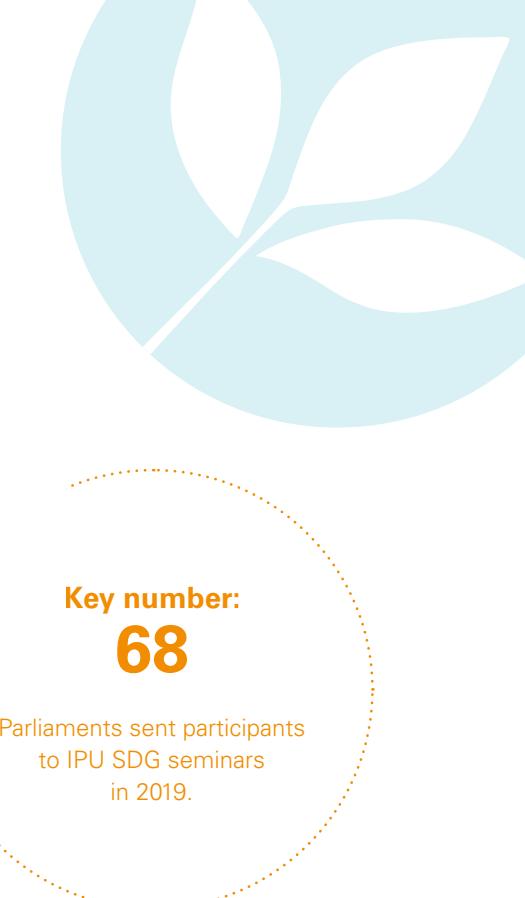
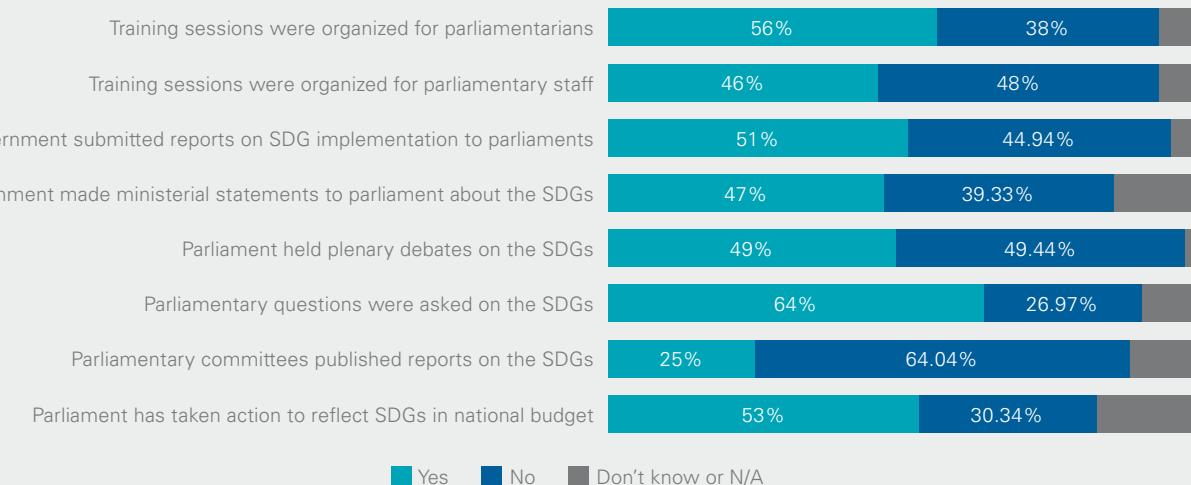
In 2019, the IPU-UNDP self-assessment toolkit on SDG implementation was used by the Parliaments of Sierra Leone, Vanuatu and Serbia. The Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago decided to focus the Caribbean regional hub that will be organized within the IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament on the realization of SDG 16.

At the international level, we organized multiple activities that brought together more than 140 parliamentarians from 50 parliaments to review progress towards the SDGs at the annual High-level Political Forum (HLPF) at the United Nations in New York. The Forum gave parliamentarians participating in the HLPF an opportunity to discuss the main theme of the session and exchange experiences of SDG implementation.

In the lead-up to the HLPF, we carried out a survey on parliaments' contributions to the preparation of their countries' voluntary national reviews. It found that, of the 47 countries reporting on SDG progress in 2019, about one third (34%) of their parliaments had been involved. This is consistent with data from the last three years.

A second IPU survey on institutionalizing the SDGs in the work of parliaments revealed a mixed picture. While examples of good practice emerged, with some parliaments playing a very active role, the data also showed that implementation of the SDGs remains primarily government-led. We will continue to strengthen parliaments' capacity to deliver on the SDGs. We will also promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and exchanges of good practice, as well as collecting and providing data and evidence that feed into laws, policies and parliamentary practice.

Parliamentary activities on the SDGs based on IPU surveys



A medical check-up at a clinic in West Darfur. © UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran

Mobilizing parliaments for universal access to health

Currently, at least half the world's population does not receive the health services they need according to the World Health Organization (WHO). In October 2019, the 141st IPU Assembly adopted the first global parliamentary resolution on universal health coverage (UHC). This landmark resolution was the culmination of long-term efforts to mobilize parliaments worldwide. It calls for parliaments to take all legal and policy measures to achieve UHC by 2030 to ensure that the right to public health is guaranteed for all, without discrimination.

In April, at the 140th IPU Assembly, we held a debate on UHC that highlighted the need for the provision of people-centred health services without discrimination. In May, we joined forces with WHO to organize a technical briefing and a parliamentary seminar during the World Health Assembly. Participants identified political will and strengthening parliamentary institutions as key to progress on UHC.

As part of these efforts, we promoted the parliamentary perspective at the United Nations High-Level Meeting on UHC. We also strengthened partnerships by joining the multi-stakeholder platform UHC2030 and by launching the Legal Solutions Network, a new initiative with Georgetown University, WHO, UNAIDS and UNDP aimed at supporting policymakers in crafting laws, regulations and policies that realize the promise and power of UHC.

As we turn to the implementation of the IPU resolution on UHC, the IPU Advisory Group on Health has stepped up to act as focal point for parliamentary accountability. As such, starting in 2020, it will take stock of country efforts to expand health coverage and, on that basis, make targeted recommendations to national parliaments.

Under the umbrella of UHC, some groups require particular attention. In 2019, we continued focusing on women, children and adolescents. With the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) and other partners, we brought

parliamentarians from 11 sub-Saharan countries together with researchers, civil society representatives and government officials to discuss data on inequity in women's, children's and adolescents' health. The IPU's leadership in this area is increasingly recognized: the IPU President and the IPU Secretary General sit on the *Every Woman, Every Child* High-Level Steering Group and the PMNCH Executive Committee respectively.

Finally, as part of our engagement on the determinants of health, at the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Global Gathering the IPU Secretary General, who is a member of the SUN Movement Lead Group, took the lead in signing a pledge to take action on nutrition by encouraging governments to adopt a multisectoral approach to nutrition as well as to secure adequate fund allocation. The pledge also stressed the importance of integrating nutrition into UHC.

Stepping up efforts on climate change

Parliaments asked, we listened – by joining forces with the UN Environment Programme and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to launch a new series of technical assistance workshops on climate change. In 2019, the Parliaments of Zimbabwe, Burundi and Zambia benefited from such workshops, which helped them determine how best to get involved in the national implementation of the Paris Agreement. In addition to the legislative branch, members of the executive, including UNFCCC national focal points, participated in the workshops, establishing the important but often-missing link between the two branches of power.

At the workshop in Zimbabwe, parliamentarians decided to review and tighten measures for collecting a national carbon tax. In Burundi, parliamentarians realized the importance of their role in raising public awareness and systematically advocating action on climate change and the conservation of biodiversity.

On the margins of the twenty-fifth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 25), the IPU and the Parliament of Spain organized a parliamentary

Impact of the IPU

Using parliamentary powers to promote health

Following the adoption of the IPU resolution on UHC at the 141st IPU Assembly, delegates from Micronesia went back to their Parliament and introduced a national resolution putting health at the top of the country's political agenda. The Micronesian resolution, adopted by Parliament in November 2019, calls on the Government to take all appropriate measures to achieve UHC by 2030 as a first step towards a comprehensive UHC agenda.

In November, we partnered with the Parliament of Uganda to provide training on budget advocacy for women's, children's and adolescents' health. Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff identified entry points for advocacy during the budget process and for developing strategies to prioritize better budget allocation and to strengthen their role in tracking expenditure. This timely training enabled Ugandan MPs to put their acquired knowledge and skills into action when the budget was tabled in Parliament in January 2020 and ensure that vital initiatives for the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents are properly funded and implemented.



Parliamentary self-assessment exercise on the SDGs in Sierra Leone. © IPU/Isabel Obadiaru

meeting that was attended by over 150 delegates from more than 30 countries. Parliamentarians and experts agreed on the urgency of climate action and the role of parliaments in maximizing their legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions to transform the Paris Agreement into national laws, policies and action plans, and to hold their governments accountable.

In early 2019 the IPU, together with the UN Environment Programme, published [*Shades of green: an introduction to the green economy for parliamentarians*](#). The publication provides parliamentarians with a basic understanding of the green economy and of the policies required to transition toward it.

"The IPU is pivotal in bringing parliamentarians together to ensure that we put in place the policies that are going to deliver on the sustainable development goals before 2030. [...] I think it's fantastic that we can come together via IPU, via our parliaments and agree the sustainable development goals, agree a path towards achieving them making sure that no one is left behind, that young people have a future and that people have a way out of poverty."

Dr. Lisa Cameron
UK MP

Case study

Implementing the SDGs in Serbia

In June, the National Assembly of Serbia used for the second time the IPU-UNDP self-assessment toolkit on the SDGs. The Serbian Parliamentary Focus Group on the SDGs used the toolkit to evaluate progress since the first exercise two years earlier. The self-assessment also helped the Group formulate proposals for the following year's budget to further strengthen SDG implementation in Serbia. Those proposals were subsequently turned into amendments to the 2020 budget bill.

►► The year ahead

With the Paris Agreement coming into effect and the start of the SDG Decade of Action, we will step up our efforts to rally political will and promote parliamentary engagement with the global development agenda. We will continue to work closely with our UN partners to make sure our efforts are informed by the latest science and evidence. We will focus on practical ways to turn the goals into reality, such as finding solutions in the key areas of legislation and financing. To this end, our activities will encompass: capacity-building for parliamentarians; developing knowledge and honing skills; and facilitating dialogue and inter-parliamentary exchanges. We will also make accountability our watchword by prioritizing delivering health for all through the implementation of the IPU resolution on UHC.



OBJECTIVE 8

Bridge the democracy gap in international relations

Peace and sustainable development dominated the IPU's relationship with the United Nations in 2019, with parliamentarians upping the ante on implementation and advocacy. We signed an agreement with two UN agencies to bridge legislative gaps and mobilize parliamentary action on terrorism and violent extremism. We managed to have our annual SDG meeting upgraded to a Parliamentary Forum as part of the official programme of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and the IPU played a prominent role at the UN SDG Summit. The IPU and parliaments made important strides politically, as the United Nations formally invited their contribution to important negotiations and events on gender equality, youth participation and universal health coverage. In the field, we strengthened the relationship between UN country teams and national parliaments for key development and peacebuilding processes.





Bringing parliamentarians' voices to the United Nations

Status matters when it comes to getting things done at the United Nations. A big win for the IPU this year was getting our regular event at the annual HLPF recognized as a full-fledged Parliamentary Forum. This higher status applies to only a handful of the hundreds of side events. It will help give more visibility to the role of parliaments and parliamentarians at the HLPF, the main global accountability mechanism to push the SDGs forward.

The 2019 Parliamentary Forum brought together over one hundred parliamentarians to discuss growing inequality and parliamentary engagement with the SDGs. We explored the results of the annual survey of parliamentary engagement in the voluntary national reviews (VNRs). While the results suggest there is a long way to go for parliaments to contribute to VNRs at the HLPF, the growing number of participating parliaments is a good sign that the VNRs are becoming a household word within the global parliamentary community. While in New York for the HLPF, many parliamentarians also participated in an IPU-UNDP workshop on their joint self-assessment toolkit to institutionalize the SDGs in parliament.

In March, the IPU and UN Women organized the regular parliamentary meeting at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York, intersecting with our strategic objective of advancing gender equality and respect for women's rights. The meeting focused on social protection, public services and infrastructure delivery for women and girls. In addition, we worked with various partners to organize three side events on violence against women, women in decision-making, and women in politics.

In June in Geneva, the IPU and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights organized a seminar for members of parliamentary human rights committees. The event discussed parliamentary engagement on human rights and parliamentary involvement in the work of UN human rights mechanisms.

On International Day of Democracy (15 September), we co-hosted an event with the UN Democracy Fund and International IDEA. Entitled *Inclusion and participation as foundations of democracy*, the event considered how decision-making processes that do not take into account all people and communities, including the economically insecure, contribute to growing income and wealth inequality, disempower people and fuel resentment against the institutions of democracy.

In line with our policy of facilitating the participation of parliamentarians in high-level UN meetings, the information we provided to parliaments also helped bring large numbers of MPs to major UN conferences as part of their national delegations.

Impact of the IPU

In 2019, three UN resolutions stressed the role of parliaments thanks to IPU lobbying.

The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted *Technical assistance provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime related to counter-terrorism*, explicitly acknowledging "the important role that parliaments can play in preventing and countering terrorism and addressing conditions conducive to terrorism, and recognizing also the relevance of the partnership established between the Inter Parliamentary Union, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Office of Counter Terrorism in that regard".

Two UN General Assembly resolutions invited the IPU to contribute to a high-level meeting on universal health coverage in September 2019, and to the high-level meeting on the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 2020. Both texts also invited parliamentarians to participate in multi-stakeholder consultations.

The IPU is approaching universal membership with 179 Member Parliaments.
© IPU

Representing the IPU in UN forums

The IPU made statements at the CSW, the HLPF, the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage, the ministerial meeting of the Climate Change Conference (COP 25), the ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, and a number of other meetings.

An IPU delegation of young parliamentarians took part in the ECOSOC Youth Forum in April. Entitled *Youth: Empowered, Included and Equal*, the Forum focused on inclusion as a vehicle of youth empowerment and progress in achieving the SDGs.

But by far the most significant UN event this year for the IPU was the SDG Summit, where Heads of State gathered to review progress and commit to “accelerating” action in the remaining decade before the 2030 deadline. The IPU President was the only parliamentary representative invited to participate in one of the Summit’s seven round tables, on “localizing the SDGs.” The round table was restricted to a small group of Heads of State and one senior UN representative.

“It is parliaments who are responsible for legislation that domesticates global agendas, sets national priorities and allocates budgets. National parliaments bring global agendas to the national level, and, unless they are fully engaged in the implementation of the SDGs, the SDGs will fail.”

Gabriela Cuevas Barron
IPU President,
speaking at the round table on localizing the SDGs



IPU President Gabriela Cuevas Barron. © IPU/Miriam Sangiorgio

Contributing to multilateralism

The 2019 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, a joint IPU-UN event, was held in February in New York. Over 200 parliamentarians attended, and heard from the 73rd President of the General Assembly and the UN Secretary-General. Entitled *Emerging challenges to multilateralism: A parliamentary response*, the hearing contributed ideas to ongoing UN

reforms, many of which focus on its conflict prevention and peacekeeping mandate. More broadly, the hearing delved into the reasons for growing scepticism about multilateralism and how parliamentarians could address it.

The Parliamentary Hearing report was circulated in the General Assembly, providing useful insights for the conversation on the future of multilateralism and of the United Nations which will take place in 2020 to mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations.

Case study

Strengthening the link between parliaments and UN country teams

Working closely with the UN Development Coordination Office in New York during a total overhaul of the UN’s development system, the IPU succeeded in inserting “engagement with parliaments” in the revised job description of UN Resident Coordinators. Ways in which UN field engagement with parliaments might be mutually beneficial as part of key development and peacebuilding processes were discussed at the annual global meeting of UN Resident Coordinators in November 2019.

Pursuing the work of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

The first Committee session of the year, at the 140th IPU Assembly, provided an opportunity for parliamentarians to share good practices in implementing the SDGs and ensuring they are factored into national budgets and legislation. The focus was on the main themes of the 2019 HLPF: SDG 10 (inequality within and among countries) and SDG 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice, and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

At the 141st Assembly, the Committee focused on respect for international law in keeping with the UN Charter and other relevant texts. The Committee also reviewed the results of a new IPU survey on the relationship between parliaments and the United Nations which sought to strengthen the role of parliaments in the implementation of international agreements as well as to help parliaments hold governments to account for their decisions at the United Nations.

Engaging with the World Trade Organization

The Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, a joint initiative of the IPU and the European Parliament, contributed to the 2019 WTO Public Forum through a parliamentary panel on digital trade and the new generation of trade agreements. Speakers included Mr. J. Mudenda, Speaker of the National

Assembly of Zimbabwe, Ms. Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Member of the European Parliament, and Ms. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

The 80 participants, including 35 parliamentarians, discussed actions parliaments can take to create an environment that facilitates digital trade while advancing the ambitious objectives of the new generation of trade agreements. They also addressed the relationship between value addition and data use in the digital markets. They stressed the importance of a multilateral trading system and skill development of smaller countries to defend their interests in trade negotiations.

►► The year ahead

A highlight of 2020 will be the UN75 Summit to mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations in September. The Summit's final declaration will set forth a vision for the future of multilateralism within a renewed UN system. The IPU will mobilize parliaments and parliamentarians to contribute to this process, including by participating in a global survey to identify key priorities for policymakers and citizens and by holding national debates with their constituents. The IPU will also seek to carve out a clear role for parliaments in the UN75 Summit declaration.

2020 will also usher in a new UN General Assembly resolution on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU. This resolution will provide a fresh opportunity for UN Member States to take stock of the political and operational dimensions of the IPU-UN relationship.

Towards universal membership

Members (179)

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, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 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 (13)

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 and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF).

* The membership rights of Honduras, Mauritania and Papua New Guinea are now suspended due to arrears of three or more years of contributions (non-participating Members).

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 ASGP'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 2019.

Secretaries General are closely involved in the [Centre for Innovation in Parliament](#). At each Assembly, the ASGP helps to organize meetings of the parliamentary hubs within the Centre, as well as coordination meetings with the Secretaries General of parliaments that are hosting hubs. The ASGP is 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 the [Common Principles for Support to Parliaments](#). In particular, the ASGP contributed important content and feedback to the Guide to the Common Principles, which aims to support their operationalization in parliaments.

The IPU and ASGP jointly organized a preliminary consultation on the 2021 Global Parliamentary Report at the 141st Assembly in October 2019. The discussion examined the areas and issues of concern regarding the place and functioning of parliament. The conclusion was that the next Global Parliamentary Report should focus on public engagement in the work of parliament. Research will be carried out in 2020 in cooperation with the ASGP.

Members of the ASGP regularly provided substantial support to many of the parliamentary capacity-building projects carried out by the IPU in 2019, and contributed to the IPU's research into policy measures to combat violence against women in parliament.

Resource mobilization: How is the IPU funded?

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 multi-year funding agreements that were active during 2019. These include the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the European Union, Irish Aid, Worldwide Support for

Development, and the Governments of Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, China, Micronesia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Partnerships with the UN family, particularly UNDP, WHO, UNOCT, UNODC and UN Women, 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 its strategic objectives.

IPU specialized meetings in 2019



158th session of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians
29 January–8 February 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

First meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Fifth World Conference of
Speakers of Parliament
8 and 9 February 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

[2019 Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations](#)
21 and 22 February 2019
New York, United States

[IPU-UN Regional Conference for the Middle East and North Africa: The role
of parliamentarians in addressing the threat of foreign terrorist fighters and
associated challenges](#)
26–28 February 2019
Luxor, Egypt

[Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 63rd session of the Commission on
the Status of Women](#)
13 and 14 March 2019
New York, United States

Information seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary
Union for English-speaking participants
14–17 May 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

[Technical briefing: From commitment to action: Parliaments moving the UHC
agenda forward](#)
23 and 24 May 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

[Second Regional Seminar for the Asia-Pacific Region Parliaments on Achieving the
Sustainable Development Goals](#)
27 and 28 May 2019
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

[Regional Seminar on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for the IPU's
Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group](#)

5 and 6 June 2019
Lisbon, Portugal

[Fourth Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity Building and the
Further Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: Stronger Inter-
parliamentary Exchanges for a More Efficient Achievement of the SDGs](#)
12–14 June 2019
Beijing, China

[IPU-UN Regional Conference for the countries of the Sahel Region: Parliamentary
engagement in addressing terrorism and conditions conducive to terrorism in the
Sahel region](#)
12–14 June 2019
Niamey, Niger

[Parliamentary engagement on human rights: Identifying good practices and new
opportunities for action](#)
24–26 June 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

[Legislating for gender equality: Eliminating gender-based discrimination and
violence by 2030](#)
26 June 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

[The CEDAW Convention: 40 Years of Promoting and Empowering Women](#)
8 July 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

[#NotInMyParliament—Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women
Parliamentarians](#)
10 July 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

[Parliamentary side event at the High-Level Political Forum for sustainable
development \(HLPF\) and related meetings](#)
13–18 July 2019
New York, United States

Fourteenth Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians
27 and 28 July 2019
Wroxton, United Kingdom

[Fourth South Asian Speakers' Summit on Achieving the SDGs](#)
1 and 2 September 2019
Malé, Maldives

[Sixth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians](#)
09 and 10 September 2019
Asunción, Paraguay

[Regional seminar on parliaments and the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 for Pacific Island Parliaments](#)
19 and 20 September 2019
Wellington, New Zealand

[Capacity-building workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the Asia-Pacific Group](#)
30 September–3 October 2019
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

44th session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO
7 October 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

[Parliamentary session within the framework of the annual WTO Public Forum](#)
9 October 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

[Sixth Speakers' Summit in the context of the G20](#)
4 November 2019
Tokyo, Japan

[Creating a Future for All: Climate Justice and Peacebuilding – A Geneva Peace Week Event](#)
6 November 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

[African Regional Parliamentary Conference: Comprehensive Responses to Refugee Situations – Effective Parliamentary Approaches](#)
11–13 November 2019
Midrand, South Africa

Second meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament
18 and 19 November 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

[Executive Education Parliamentary Leadership seminar](#)
25–28 November 2019
Mexico City, Mexico

[Information seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for Spanish-speaking participants](#)
27 and 28 November 2019
San José, Costa Rica

[Second Regional Seminar for Parliaments of the Caribbean: Strengthening parliamentary action on the Sustainable Development Goals](#)
5 and 6 December 2019
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

[Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 25th UN Climate Change Conference \(COP 25\)](#)
10 December 2019
Madrid, Spain

Financial results

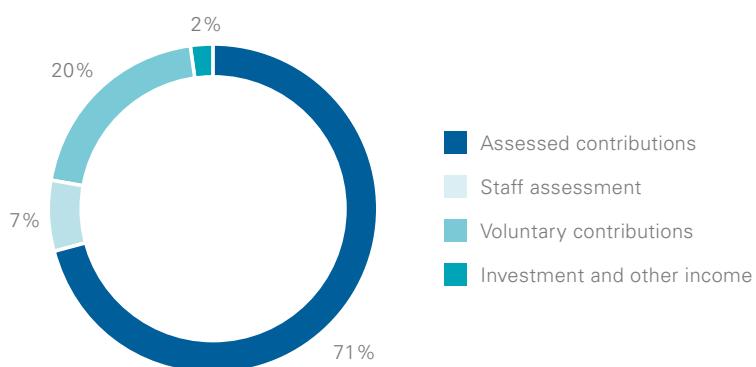
Financing

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 2019 is presented below, including staff assessment for expenditure comparison.

IPU Revenues by Source (budget basis)

	CHF (Swiss francs)	%
Assessed contributions	10,526,650	71%
Working capital fund	0	0%
Staff assessment	1,057,109	7%
Voluntary contributions	3,011,285	20%
Investment and other income	207,932	2%
Total revenue	14,802,977	

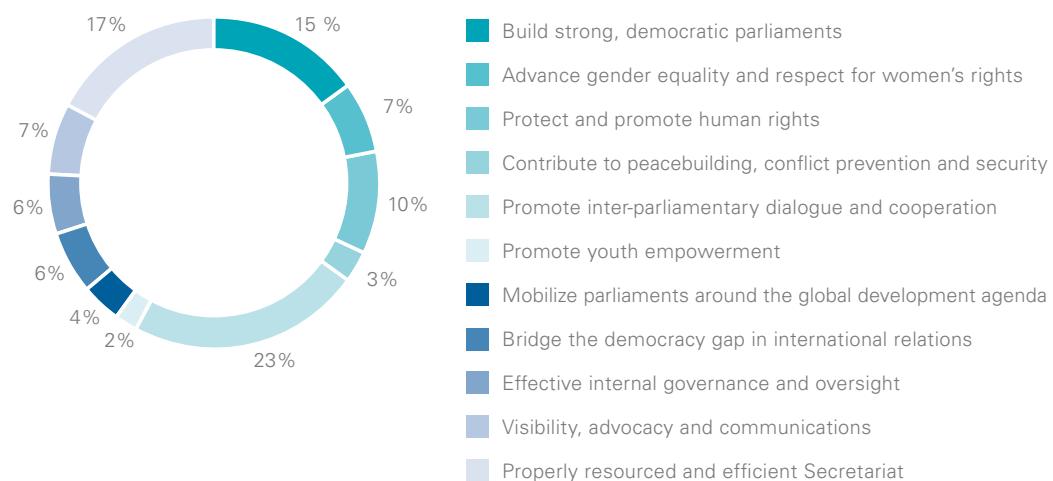


Expenditures

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	2,195,939	15%
Advance gender equality and respect for women's rights	963,847	7%
Protect and promote human rights	1,408,501	10%
Contribute to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and security	508,004	3%
Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation	3,384,267	23%
Promote youth empowerment	251,659	2%
Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda	651,607	4%
Bridge the democracy gap in international relations	889,351	6%
Effective internal governance and oversight	916,532	6%
Visibility, advocacy and communications	958,429	7%
Gender mainstreaming and a rights-based approach	271	0%
Properly resourced and efficient Secretariat	2,505,228	17%
Other charges and eliminations	-110,673	0%
Total expenses	14,522,963	



Financial statements

The consolidated financial statements of IPU and its legacy Pension Fund for 2019 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 the 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 eighth 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 the IPU's financial processes, including its annual financial statements and consolidated budgets, is 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 2019 in CHF (Swiss francs)

	2019	2018
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash on hand	14,483	13,658
Cash in current accounts	4,746,575	4,080,445
Cash held by investment fund manager	392,773	335,638
Term deposits and savings accounts	<u>4,738,919</u>	<u>4,738,877</u>
Sub-total cash and cash equivalents	9,892,751	9,168,618
Accounts receivable		
From Members	805,643	872,329
From donors	3,923,433	403,100
From tax reimbursements	52,313	75,207
Others	<u>17,704</u>	<u>53,046</u>
Sub-total accounts receivable	4,799,093	1,403,682
Investments	6,945,168	7,243,100
Other current assets	<u>85,749</u>	<u>180,100</u>
Sub-total current assets	21,722,760	17,995,500
Non-current assets		
Fixed assets		
Building and grounds	8,029,536	8,237,189
Furnishings	17,510	24,298
General equipment	43,633	59,033
IT equipment	71,248	79,268
Vehicles	4,575	10,675
	8,166,503	8,410,464
Intangible assets	252,332	246,787
Sub-total non-current assets	8,418,835	8,657,251
Total assets	30,141,595	26,652,751

	2019	2018
--	------	------

Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued payables	343,077	217,062
Advances from Members	268,467	337,639
Deferred revenue	5,492,408	1,554,798
Loans	<u>189,600</u>	<u>189,600</u>
Sub-total current liabilities	6,293,552	2,299,099
Borrowings long term	4,992,470	5,120,998
Closed Pension Fund	11,958,951	12,306,973
Other employee benefits	<u>1,431,981</u>	<u>1,517,019</u>
Sub-total non-current liabilities	18,383,401	18,944,990
Total liabilities	24,676,953	21,244,089

Net assets

Restricted funds	437,909	431,683
Actuarial gain (loss) recognized in net assets	-4,262,739	-3,787,393
Accumulated fund balance (Working Capital Fund after contribution)	9,289,478	8,764,378
Net assets	5,464,647	5,408,668

2019 publications

Handbook

- [Eliminating Forced Labour: Handbook for Parliamentarians No. 30](#)

Reports

- [Activities Report of the IPU Presidency: An accountability exercise to evaluate the first half of the 2017-2020 mandate](#)
- [Shades of green: an introduction to the green economy for parliamentarians](#)
- [Women in parliament in 2018: The year in review](#)
- [Annual report on the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union: 2018](#)

Reference publications

- [The IPU at a glance](#)
- [Human rights at a glance](#)
- [Gender equality at a glance](#)

Guidelines

- [Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament](#)

Infographics

- [Women in Politics: 2019](#)
- [Violations of the human rights of MPs – 2019](#)

IPU collections

The IPU has seven collections primarily meant for parliamentarians and policymakers. 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.

Toolkits 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.

Guidelines are aimed to turn attention from analysis to solutions. They support and better equip parliaments in efforts to put their own houses in order.

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

Copyright © Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020

For personal and non-commercial use, all or parts of this publication may be reproduced on condition that copyright and source indications are also copied and no modifications are made. Please inform the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the usage of the publication content.

ISSN 2410-6755

Original version: English
Design and layout: Philippe Boisson
Printed in France by Courand et Associés



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

T +41 22 919 41 50

F +41 22 919 41 60

E postbox@ipu.org

Chemin du Pommier 5

Case postale 330

1218 Le Grand-Saconnex

Geneva – Switzerland

Follow us on [ipu.org](#) and

