



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Chemin du Pommier 5
Case postale 330
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland
www.ipu.org

Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Launch of the preliminary Indicators for democratic parliaments

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I have the pleasure today to launch the preliminary version of the Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7.

As the biggest and oldest organization of parliaments, the IPU is committed to strengthening the role of parliaments across the world. Independent and effective legislative institutions are the backbone of strong democracies. Particularly in times like this, when the world is facing many challenges, parliaments are expected to constantly adapt, learn, change and improve to address the people's needs and concerns.

Parliaments have proven their resilience time and again and will continue to do so. The Indicators for democratic parliaments are intended to accompany these evolutions. By providing a framework for parliaments to assess their capacity and performance, the Indicators act as a tool for learning and development that helps parliaments to draw conclusions that can guide their future development.

This is a very ambitious project indeed. The Indicators cover all dimensions of parliamentary activity, and are intended to be reliable and universally relevant regardless of parliamentary context. The preliminary version of the Indicators that we are launching today runs to 450 pages and comprises 25 indicators, 111 dimensions and almost 500 assessment criteria.

It is the product of a joint effort of the parliamentary community, initiated and led by the IPU, in a close partnership with eight partner organizations: Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), European Commission, INTER PARES, National Democratic Institute (NDI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and Directorio Legislativo.

I take this opportunity to thank all the partners for their trust and enthusiasm for this initiative, and for the significant contributions of time and resources in all stages of the indicators' development. The IPU and partners also very much appreciate the contribution of parliaments: more than 20 parliaments conducted pilot exercises to review the indicators and provide feedback, which informed the current preliminary version.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the importance of strong institutions, including strong parliaments. We believe that the Indicators, among other purposes, will help parliaments to evaluate their progress against SDG 16, particularly 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). These adjectives, which closely mirror the ones that

IPU identified back in 2006 as key criteria for democratic parliaments, provide the structure to the preliminary version of the Indicators.

The Indicators are primarily intended for parliaments, their members and staff, to assist them in assessing their strengths and weaknesses, as a basis for improving their performance and for tracking progress. They are based on the principle of self-assessment, placing parliament firmly in the central role in its own development.

However, we expect the parliamentary indicators to be useful not only to parliaments, but also to governments, parliamentary strengthening organizations and other local or international organizations, donors, scholars and civil society actors interested in strengthening democratic institutions. The indicators are a public good and are available to anyone who wishes to use them.

The Indicators are the result of long, detailed and careful planning, analysis and consideration of existing knowledge and parliamentary practices. Today, we have reached the point where the IPU and partner organizations have decided to make them publicly available in the form of a “preliminary” version. The intention is to let the indicators “live in the real world” for a period of time to allow their relevance and usability to be examined, tested and confirmed by parliaments for whom they are created.

Therefore, this launch event also represents the opening of a public consultation process. Throughout the remainder of 2022, we will be listening and learning how to improve this preliminary version. I invite parliaments, organizations that work with parliaments and any interested stakeholders to provide feedback on this preliminary version of the Indicators. Our ambition is for the Indicators to become a common tool within the parliamentary community, that is used by parliaments and parliamentary strengthening organizations to strengthen the institution.

I recognize that measurement and assessment of parliamentary capacity and practice takes time and effort and will inevitably generate differences of opinion. I am confident, however, that the Indicators can be an important reference point and an accelerator of progress towards strong, democratic parliaments that deliver on the aspirations of the people they represent. I invite you to discover the Indicators. I reiterate the IPU’s support to parliaments as they seek to develop their institutions.

Thank you.