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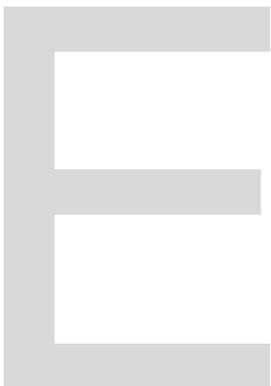
Standing Committee on
Sustainable Development,
Finance and Trade

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Engaging the private sector in implementing the SDGs, especially on renewable energy

***Explanatory memorandum submitted by the co-Rapporteurs
Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) and Mr. Duong Quoc Anh (Viet Nam)***

1. Two years ago, the United Nations adopted its comprehensive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since then, helping parliaments to understand and play their role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has become one of the main objectives of the IPU's actions and five-year strategy. This draft resolution comes squarely within the purview of that general objective. It focuses on a specific Sustainable Development Goal 7: "Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all" – and a particular stakeholder involved in the implementation of the SDGs – the private sector – and aims to identify what parliaments can and should do to maximize the impact of the latter's engagement in the area of that particular goal.
2. In drafting this resolution, the co-Rapporteurs have benefited greatly from the preliminary debate of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade during the 137th IPU Assembly in St. Petersburg. They wish to thank the expert from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Mr. Adrian Whiteman, and all colleagues who took the floor during the debate for their valuable insights, which they have tried to incorporate into the text.
3. Goal 7 is one of the sustainable development goals where progress on its three main targets (access, transition to renewable energy sources and energy efficiency) will be immediately visible and can be most easily measured. It also provides a good example of the interconnectedness of the SDGs. Progress on Goal 7 will have a direct and positive impact on economic development and poverty reduction, on people's health and well-being and on the environment, including the mitigation of climate change.
4. The draft resolution stresses the potential of the private sector as a development agent. It is therefore pivotal that, in developing their national sustainable development strategy, governments and parliaments clearly identify the role of the private sector in its implementation. Simultaneously, the private sector, like other stakeholders, needs to recognize its own part and responsibility in SDG implementation. The resolution urges parliaments to raise public awareness about this and to ensure that sustainable development content is incorporated into curricula at all education levels, but especially into business and commercial school courses, in order to foster entrepreneurship for sustainable development and corporate social responsibility.



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5. Public-private risk-sharing partnerships will be crucial for SDG implementation, and perhaps nowhere more so than in the field of renewable energy, where innovation and smart investment are vital to the success of the Goal. The resolution encourages parliaments to create a facilitating legal framework and incentives for such public-private partnerships in order to speed up the transition towards more sustainable forms of energy production and consumption. On the public side, such a framework requires investment into essential infrastructure, setting standards and norms and establishing a reporting and monitoring mechanism as well as a forum for dialogue among all interested parties, including citizens and local communities/authorities, to ensure public support.

6. The resolution draws attention to the potential of off-grid and mini-grid renewable energy projects, including small-scale electricity generators converting power from renewable energy sources, for boosting the implementation of Goal 7, especially in developing countries. Parliaments should make sure that the specific needs of these small local projects in terms of risk management are taken into account in their efforts to engage the private sector in this field. This requires a close dialogue with the local communities concerned.

7. The resolution also points out the particular relevance of Goal 17 (global partnership for sustainable development) to the attainment of Goal 7. Developing countries are at a particular disadvantage when it comes to access to the technology and finance required to achieve universal access to energy, especially renewable energy. The co-Rapporteurs call for more cooperation leading to the transfer of innovative green technologies and for new international investment agreements for the implementation of the SDGs in general.

8. Finally, the resolution recommends more exchange between parliaments, the IPU, regional parliamentary organizations and other international organizations on SDG policymaking and implementation. We can all learn from each other in this area.