



**INTERIM REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF
THE UNION SINCE THE 186th SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

(b) ANNUAL REPORTING EXERCISE BY IPU MEMBERS

The number of responses received for the 2009 reporting exercise is slightly lower compared to that of 2008, with fewer than 50 Members (31.5%)¹ fulfilling their statutory obligation to submit an annual report. However, and for the first time since this form of reporting was introduced, an equal number of responses has been received on parliamentary follow-up of resolutions adopted by the Organization and completed questionnaires on how IPU Member Parliaments organize their participation in the work and activities of the IPU.

The present document contains a summary of the reports submitted by IPU Members on how their parliaments have followed up and implemented recommendations of the three resolutions adopted at the 120th Assembly, namely: (i) advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and securing the entry into force of the comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: The role of parliaments; (ii) climate change, sustainable development models, and renewable energies; and (iii) freedom of expression and the right to information.

¹ Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Australia, Belarus, Benin, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Maldives, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay and Zambia.

An answer received from the Parliament of Egypt was received after going to print and, regrettably, could not be included.

The reports differ considerably in style, length and detail. The Parliaments of countries such as **Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Philippines** and the **United Arab Emirates** submitted comprehensive reports on action taken in parliament on all or some of the resolutions. Some of the reports (e.g. from **France**) also indicate whether IPU resolutions have initiated or otherwise prompted action. The Parliaments of **Belarus, Hungary, Mexico, Romania, Slovakia, Togo** and **Tunisia** detail each piece of legislation related to one or more recommendations contained in the resolutions. The Parliament of **Uruguay**, in addition to providing information linking each law passed to the subject matter of the resolutions, also sent copies of the laws. Other Parliaments, such as that of **Tajikistan**, have produced detailed reports on the national context and legal specificities relevant to the subject matter of the resolutions.

Some IPU Member Parliaments (**Greece** and **Maldives**) reported generally on their activities within the framework of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The Parliament of **Chile** indicated that some of the recommendations contained in the resolutions were reflected in documents prepared by the Congress Library and published on the parliament's website. Moreover, a report is made to Parliament after each Assembly. The Executive Committee of the **Croatian** National Group ensures that all IPU resolutions and activities are translated into the national language and are duly reported to Parliament, its committees, government ministries, state agencies and all interested public institutions.

The **Hungarian** National Assembly (HNA) reported that delegations to IPU meetings submitted reports to the National Assembly and that IPU resolutions (translated into Hungarian) were conveyed to the Head of State, Prime Minister and relevant government ministries. Moreover, the public and media were informed of the outcome of IPU meetings and the Organization's activities through reports submitted to the HNA's Press Office and information posted on the homepage of the Hungarian IPU Group.

The Parliament of **Andorra** explained that after every IPU Assembly, a complete report of the activities conducted by the delegation is sent to all members of Parliament and all resolutions adopted by the Assembly and the Governing Council are conveyed systematically to the leaders of the various parliamentary groups and the Head of Government. Moreover, the Andorran Inter-Parliamentary Group informs the media of IPU Assemblies and its results, mainly through press releases.

The Legislative Assembly of **Costa Rica** reports that once the resolutions have been received by the Committee on International Relations and Foreign Trade, the Bureau reviews the material and takes a decision on how recommendations can be implemented. Also, the resolutions are distributed both internally in the Parliament and externally to ministries, institutes and Government agencies, whose functions are related to the content of the resolutions. In relation to plenary and committee debates, sometimes material in the resolutions is used by members of parliament, in particular those who have attended meetings of the IPU Standing Committees, as well as other legislators who have studied the resolutions.

Others (e.g. from **Algeria**) reported that all of the resolutions in question had either been brought to the attention of Parliament, through various media, or transmitted to the relevant government ministries - but without providing details on the follow-up steps taken in response to the three resolutions chosen for the 2009 report. The Parliament of **Spain** provided details on the number of written and oral questions raised in plenary and committee on the three subject matters, as well as information on draft laws considered during the review period.

A recently affiliated Parliament - the National Assembly of **Afghanistan** - sent a report, for the first time, which contained information on legislation adopted during the first sessions of the 4th legislative year (January – June 2009) as well as work carried out by, and hearings of, the different parliamentary committees. Another Member Parliament, the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, returned a questionnaire, for the first time, on how their participation in the work of the IPU is organized.

It is hoped that many more IPU Members will draw inspiration from the examples given in this report and take steps of their own to implement, follow up and report on the recommendations contained in the IPU Assembly resolutions.

1. **ADVANCING NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT, AND SECURING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS**

This resolution was adopted by consensus in April 2009 at the 120th IPU Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and underscored that voluntary and concerted action by all States was necessary in order to achieve genuine progress. The resolution reaffirmed the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and expressed concern that certain States failed to respect the provisions of that instrument. The text condemned the fact that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) had still not entered into force although it was a fundamental instrument in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The resolution also called for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

In the course of the reporting period, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of **Belarus**, which is a party to the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction*, assumed the function of the National Agency for the Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The National Group of **Benin** is currently sensitizing members of parliament with a view to securing a positive vote on the bill authorizing accession to Protocols II, IV and V (amended) on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects.

The Law on *banning chemical and nuclear weapons* was promulgated by the National Assembly of **Cambodia** in December 2009 and is designed to strictly ban the production, stockpiling, transport and use of chemical and nuclear weapons in the country.

In its report, **Costa Rica** indicates that the resolution was used as a background document for a meeting between the Chairperson of the Committee on International Relations and Foreign Trade, and the Vice-Chancellor of the Republic, to discuss inter alia Costa Rican foreign policy and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In July 2010, this Committee unanimously agreed to the *Approval of the Additional Protocol of the Agreement between Costa Rica and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the application of the safeguards in relation to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*.

Since the adoption of this resolution, the **Czech Republic** has contributed financially to the running of the CTBTO Preparatory Committee. The Parliament also amended the *Law on the Peaceful Utilization of Nuclear Energy and Ionizing Radiation*. In the 2006-2010 electoral term, the Czech Republic, following parliamentary approval, ratified the *Agreement on Nuclear Energy* (resolution no. 474).

At the 122nd IPU Assembly in Bangkok, the **French** delegation took the initiative of organizing, with other countries that actively support the *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty*, meetings with the delegations of several Annex II countries, whose ratification is crucial to the Treaty's entry into force (e.g. Egypt, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Israel) to sensitize them to the importance of the treaty and the role parliaments can play in hastening its enforcement. Furthermore, on 23 March 2010, a debate on disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and security in France was organized at the Senate.

During the period under review, the **German** Bundestag adopted two motions of relevance to the "non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear testing", including a Printed Paper (17/1159) adopted on 24 March 2010 entitled *Germany must chart a clear course towards a nuclear weapons-free world*.

Against the background of **Japan's** experience of atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II, Japanese parliamentarians have a strong interest in nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. The National Diet unanimously adopted a Resolution of protest against North Korea's nuclear test in May 2009 as well as a Resolution *calling for strengthened measures aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons* in June. In this document, Parliament called on the Japanese Government to strongly prompt the international community to promote a "cut-off" treaty.

Moreover, in May 2010, the Japan-Kazakhstan Agreement for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy was approved in the National Diet.

In relation to recommendation 21 of the resolution, on 1 February 2010, the Senate of the **Philippines** approved Senate Resolution No. 1542, which coincided with the ratification of the *Additional Protocol to the Agreement between the Philippines and the International Atomic Energy Agency on the application of safeguards in connection with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty*. According to the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, by ratifying the Additional Protocol, the Philippines shows its strong commitment in support of the IAEA's efforts to boost international confidence in the absence of undeclared nuclear activities.

The **Slovak** Parliament is currently debating an amendment to Law no. 541/2004 on peaceful uses of nuclear energy. A key component of the draft law is a provision on the statutory duty to take the biometric data of all persons entering or leaving a nuclear facility, aimed at increasing the physical protection of nuclear facilities.

In 2010, the National Assembly adopted a Resolution on the *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia*, in which it undertook to *Strive for full implementation and comprehensive applicability of the treaties and other documents and measures relating to disarmament regulation, including prevention of illegal activities with conventional weapons and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, dual-use goods, strategic materials, and nuclear and other sensitive technologies without international control*.

On 15 February 2010, the Chamber of Deputies of **Tunisia**, meeting in plenary session, adopted a law approving accession by the Republic of Tunisia to the *Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and amendments thereto*.

The **United Arab Emirates** hosted in Abu Dhabi the *Annual Conference on the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism* in June 2010, which sought to promote the commitment to the principles of the Global Initiative and to bring into effect its decisions. Moreover, in May 2010, the IAEA Regional Seminar was held in the UAE and was attended by over 70 participants from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). They discussed best practices in relation to the safety, security and protection of nuclear facilities.

2. CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MODELS AND RENEWABLE ENERGIES

This resolution was also adopted by consensus at the 120th IPU Assembly. It calls for policy-making in the area of climate change and renewable energies to be more inclusive of women as key stakeholders and to build on best practices collected through specialized national and international networks, and for women's participation in overseeing the implementation of international conventions on climate change. The resolution further calls for greater cooperation between parliaments and their members, on the one hand, and United Nations agencies working in this field, on the other, especially the United Nations Environment Programme. The text also underscores that the global financial crisis and the ensuing

economic meltdown should not thwart States' efforts to protect the environment and reduce the impact of climate change via the use of environment-friendly but costly clean energy.

At a debate in plenary session held in March 2010, an MP from **Andorra** questioned the Government about *the Energy Plan*, while another MP sent a written question to the Government concerning implementation of the *Water treatment Plan*. The Government of Andorra brought an energy bill that provides for the production of energy through the installation of low-tension photovoltaic solar panels.

The National Assembly of **Belarus** has taken a number of steps to improve environmental legislation and is currently working on a draft law on *Renewable Energy Sources*. The main objectives of the law are to improve the level of energy supply security, diminish the human impact on the environment and climate, and develop and use effective technologies in the field of renewable sources of energy. Parliamentarians have also actively contributed to the draft State Programme *Clear Water for 2011 – 2015*, which aims to ensure the rational use of water resources and the future development of the country's water industry. According to the report, the passage of these laws is intended to comply, to a certain extent, with the provisions of the resolution adopted in Addis Ababa.

The bill authorizing ratification of a funding agreement between **Benin** and the International Development Association (IDA) to facilitate access to modern energy and the provision of energy services is currently under examination by parliamentary committees.

The **British** Inter-Parliamentary Group reports that Parliament's *Corporate Business Plan for 2010/11* states that "By the beginning of 2010/11 we will have in place a new Environmental Strategy, with challenging, but realistic, targets for improvement."

The Congress of **Chile** reports that this resolution was included in the background information prepared for the delegation participating in the 3rd International Parliamentary Climate Change Conference (IPCCC 3), held in London from 12 to 16 July 2010.

In its report, the Legislative Assembly of **Costa Rica** provided details of the bills and laws considered by the Parliament during the review period relating to issues in the resolution, including the *Framework law on water concession for generating hydroelectric energy*, and approval of the amendment to the *Montreal Protocol on the Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer*.

At its 14th session held in November 2009, Parliament adopted the Republic of **Croatia's Energy Sector Development Strategy** for the period through 2020, which defines the development of the national energy sector aimed at achieving a balance between security of the energy supply, competitiveness and environmental protection. The key challenge is to ensure long-term economic development with reduced carbon dioxide emissions.

The parliamentary Environmental Protection Committee organized a session in February 2010 devoted to *Challenges of Climate Change*; participants included representatives of responsible and interested ministries and agencies, as well as from the Embassies of Austria, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the UNDP Office in Croatia. At the session, the Committee presented its views on particular reports, bills and strategies, and incorporated recommendations from this resolution into its opinions.

In view of the 15th session of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and of the 5th Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, the House of Representatives of **Cyprus** drafted, voted on and adopted unanimously in November 2009 and February 2010 two resolutions on the subject matter.

Regulation no. 9/2009 issued by the **Czech** Ministry of the Environment regulates a special government Green Savings Programme administered by the State Environmental Fund. The Programme focuses on energy savings and renewable resources of households in detached houses and blocks of flats. The Czech Republic received the financial resources for this Programme from the sale of the *Kyoto Protocol Emission Credits*.

In accordance with the IPU resolution, precise definitions of the various types of pollution have been drawn up, and sometimes broadened, in order to enhance environmental protection, in addition to new legal and economic instruments. In July 2010, Law no. 2010-788 on the national commitment towards the environment (Grenelle II) was passed by the **French** Parliament, its most note-worthy feature being its organizational strategy: to promote cooperation among all the stakeholders concerned with environmental protection. This is in keeping with operative paragraph 21 of the resolution, which urges “governments to involve all relevant stakeholders in the design, development and distribution of efficient and cost-effective energy-saving initiatives”.

The French Parliament also approved ratification of several international conventions that promote the comprehensive management of environmental problems, including in March 2010, a law authorizing approval of the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006.

In the course of their parliamentary work, the Members of the **German** Bundestag devote a great deal of attention to global climate change, its economic, social and political implications, and its impact on the environment and natural resources. During the period from April 2009 to July 2010, this was reflected in a high number of oral and written questions to the Federal Government, as well as motions and debates in plenary. Much of the discussion has focused on active measures to combat climate change in Germany and on the material and legal prerequisites for such measures. Preparations for the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (COP15) in December 2009 and the response to its outcome also played a major part.

In a motion tabled in February 2010, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) group called for a new energy strategy that would make it possible to cut Germany's CO₂ emissions by between 80 and 95 per cent by 2050. To that end, the motion referred to the effectiveness of the *Renewable Energy Sources Act*, which provides for comprehensive strategic support for renewable energy, including resolute efforts to integrate energy from renewables into the grid and the market.

The Government of **Japan**, as part of an economic stimulus package, has implemented measures offering economic benefits, including gift vouchers, to persons who purchase environment-friendly home appliances and houses, reducing vehicle taxes and giving grants to persons who purchase fuel-efficient and clean-burning vehicles. Moreover, two bills enacted by the Diet in July 2009 show a clear policy of developing and promoting renewable energy - partial revision of the *Act on Promotion of the Development and Introduction of Alternative Energy* and the *Bill on the Promotion of the Use of Non-fossil Energy Sources and the Effective Utilization of Fossil Energy Source Material by the Energy Industry*. Following this legislation, the Government launched a new buyback programme for photovoltaic power generation as of November 2009.

In the **Mexican** Senate, the Third Committee tabled a motion on action to tackle climate change, specifically: environmental awareness campaigns, a status report on the country's principal hydrological basins, and measurement and evaluation of greenhouse gas emissions. It was passed by simple vote.

On 12 July 2010, a Forum on *The impact of climate change on the rural sector* was organized. Deputies, senators, federal officials and researchers underscored the importance of promoting public policy aimed at mitigating the effects of greenhouse gases and establishing a

legal framework for climate change. The Chairperson of the Chamber of Deputies Committee on Foreign Relations announced that a parliamentary meeting, organized in conjunction with the IPU, would take place on 6 December on the occasion of COP16. He underscored that the idea was to prepare a document containing valuable contributions to be handed over in Cancún to the Heads of State and Government. Furthermore, on 17 February 2010, a Special Committee on Climate Change was set up in the Chamber of Deputies.

The *Climate Change Act of 2009* was passed by the Senate and House of Representatives of the **Philippines** on 25 August and 2 September 2009, respectively. The Act aims to mainstream climate change into Government policy, establishes the framework strategy and programme on climate change and sets up a Climate Change Committee. Moreover, during the period under review, a number of resolutions were also filed in the Senate which aim to conserve natural resources, protect the environment and mitigate the impact of climate change, including Senate Resolution No. 979 on *Rainforests, Endangered Species and Biodiversity*.

The report also states that as recommended in operative paragraph 34 of the resolution, an amount of 350 million pesos was added to the budget of the Department of Science and Technology for 2010 to fund a renewable energy research institute, an industrial research centre, a disaster preparedness centre and scholarships for Filipino scientists and engineers.

In May 2009, the Sejm of **Poland** adopted a resolution on *State Environmental Policy for 2009-2012*, which sets the priorities of Polish environmental policy. Polish industry is developing very quickly, and thanks to modern technology, the negative impact on the environment has shrunk. However, there is still insufficient cooperation between industry and the scientific/research institutions, which should be more eco-innovative.

A draft law approving Government Ordinance 29/2010 for trading Romania's Assigned Amount Units (AAU) in conformity with the Kyoto Protocol was adopted by the Parliament of **Romania** in June 2010 and is currently being promulgated. This law provides the necessary framework for trading the country's AAU surplus within green investment schemes, i.e. equal and non-discriminatory treatment for all AAU purchasers, efficient selling of the AAU surplus and efficient use of the funds obtained.

On 27 March 2010, on the occasion of *Earth Hour*, the President of the Chamber of Deputies turned off the lights in and outside the Parliament Building in the presence of the Director of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Romania.

The **Slovak Republic** reports that, as a Member of the European Union, the country's legal regulations in the areas covered by the IPU resolution are compatible with those of other EU Member States and comply with EU legal norms. Currently, a number of draft laws are being debated in the Parliament, including a draft law to amend Law No. 572, Coll. on emissions trading. This draft law seeks to introduce changes to the conditions for the sale of emissions quotas so as to ensure that such sales are more transparent. Henceforth, the direct sale of emissions will not be possible and the Ministry of the Environment will be able to sell unused quotas either on the Exchange or through a mediator selected on an open-tender basis.

According to a Declaration adopted by the National Assembly of **Slovenia**, both Government and Parliament will draft a law as well as a national strategy on climate change. The Declaration calls upon the Government to ensure that all relevant EU regulations on climate change are transposed in a timely manner into Slovenian domestic law, to prepare legal studies on the possibilities, costs and benefits of measure to reduce emissions by at least 80 per cent by 2050, to formulate Slovenia's Development Strategy by 2020, and draft by 2011, at the latest, a national programme on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In the report from **Tajikistan**, it is noted that the Government passed a law on the *Use of renewable energy sources* in January 2010. Moreover, three large hydroelectric power stations are currently in the final stages of construction, with plans for an additional five stations to be built in the coming years.

Pursuant to recommendation 7, **Togo** reports that the Parliament adopted in June 2010 a bill on the *Water Code*, and another on *organization of the public water services and the collective treatment of household wastewater*.

The Chamber of Deputies passed several laws within the framework of **Tunisia's** policy to achieve a sustainable development model and deal with the challenges of climate change, e.g. Law No. 2009-78 of 30 December 2009 on approval of the guarantee agreement concluded in Washington on 8 July 2009 between the Government of Tunisia and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) on the State's guarantee on loans granted by the IBRD to Amen Bank, the housing bank and the bank for small and medium-sized enterprises that funds energy efficiency projects. This law authorizes the State of Tunisia's guarantee on the loans granted by the IBRD to the three Tunisian banks in order to finance energy-savings projects in the industrial sector with a view to fostering energy efficiency.

The resolution was conveyed by the Federal National Council of the **United Arab Emirates** to the Ministry of the Environment and Water. In 2011, Abu Dhabi will host the *Second World Ministerial Conference on Clean Energy*, which is a reflection of the leading role played by the UAE in the field of developing and disseminating clean energy solutions. The Abu Dhabi Government recently unveiled its programme for solar, hydrogen and wind energy projects, reduction and management of CO₂ emissions, sustainable development, etc., with a total investment of US\$ 15 billion.

Article 47 of the Constitution of the Republic of **Uruguay** provides that *Protection of the environment is in the general interest ... access to drinking water and sanitation are fundamental human rights*. Moreover, in October 2009, the General Assembly adopted Law No. 18.597 on *Efficient energy use in the country*.

In its report, **Zambia** mentioned that, while it does not have a specific policy on climate change, the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP) recognizes climate change as a challenge and advocates for measures to address it. Government, through the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, has put in place a National Environment Policy, which is designed to create a comprehensive umbrella framework for effective natural resources and environmental conservation.

3. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

This resolution was adopted by consensus by the Assembly in Addis Ababa in April 2009. The text stressed the centrality of freedom of expression to democracy and welcomed the expansion of freedom of expression and the right to information in the world. It underscored the importance of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to access information and the right to freedom of expression. It also highlighted that the literacy of men and women was crucial to enjoying that right. It underscored the need to protect freedom of the press and by extension, journalists, who should not be forced to reveal their sources.

Reports from several countries (e.g. **Belarus, Benin, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Tajikistan** and the **United Arab Emirates**) underscore that fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, are guaranteed by their constitutions and laws. According to Article 41 of the Constitution of **Cambodia**, *Khmer citizens shall enjoy freedom of speech, freedom of*

the press, freedom of publications and freedom of assembly. In the Federal Republic of **Germany**, the Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, freedom of information and freedom of the press. These freedoms are reinforced by ordinary legislation such as the *Press Acts*, adopted by the German federal states.

In June 2010, the Economic Legislative Committee organized a public hearing with the Director of **Andorra** Public Television with a view to ensuring that the station's programmes provide objective, impartial and truthful information and that freedom of expression and the right to information, among other general principles, are respected.

The **Australian** Rapporteur for this resolution at the Addis Ababa Assembly gave a speech in the House of Representatives in May 2009 on the *Evidence Amendment (Journalists' Privilege) Bill 2009*, in which she not only made a direct reference to this resolution but also quoted from several sections of the resolution. For example, in reference to preambular paragraph 25 on the subject of education and literacy, the MP stated that *In this country we do have virtually 100% literacy; our people are able to appreciate and have access to freedom of expression. But we also need the right to have information published without the fear of being incarcerated*".

In its report, **Belarus** remarks that the *Education Code* is in accordance with the recommendations of operative paragraph 19 of the resolution, which calls for Parliament to ensure that education is made compulsory and free and equally available to boys and girls until at least 16 years of age.

In its report, the **British** Inter-Parliamentary Group refers to Select Committee activity and a significant report entitled *Press standards, privacy and libel* (Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 24 February 2010). According to the information transmitted, the Committee's report clearly is relevant to much of the IPU resolution, even if no mention of the IPU appears explicitly *"The UK is a country which values the freedom of its press to report and comment on events, public figures and institutions, to be critical of them and to be a platform for dissenting views... In return, the public expects that members of the UK press will uphold certain standards, be mindful of the rights of those who are written about, and, as far as possible, be accurate in what they report."*

The National Assembly of **Cambodia** adopted in December 2009 the Law on *Peaceful demonstration*, which is intended to protect Cambodian citizens' freedom of expression through peaceful demonstration. However, this right shall not be exercised in such a way that violates other people's rights, the nation's good traditions and customs, public order, and national security.

During the review period, the Legislative Assembly of **Costa Rica** adopted a law on *Protection of victims, witnesses, and other people involved in the criminal process*, as well as amendments and additions to the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code.

An extremely important step towards the achievement of the objectives set out in the IPU resolution on freedom of expression and the right to information was the adoption of the new *Electronic Media Act*, which was passed by the **Croatian** Parliament on 11 December 2009. This Act guarantees freedom of expression and full programming freedom of the media. Particularly important provisions of this Act, which were extensively debated by the Committee and the Parliament, are those governing the protection of media pluralism and diversity. At the initiative of the Human and National Minority Rights Committee, Parliament recently examined in-depth efforts to enable national minorities to exercise their right to access the media and receive and disseminate information in their languages and scripts, which is a key prerequisite for preserving their national identity.

During the reporting period, an amendment to the *Rules of Criminal Procedure* was adopted by the **Czech** Parliament which, inter alia, prohibits the disclosure of information on suspected persons and persons accused during criminal proceedings. It also prohibits the disclosure of information from police phone-tapping.

The **French** Parliament passed in December 2009 Law No. 2009-1572 on bridging the digital divide, which aims to ensure an optimal transition to digital TV and establish territory-wide guidelines with a view to speeding up the implementation of very high speed digital lines in France. This is in direct response to the resolution, which "*encourages parliaments to take effective measures to narrow the digital divide*". Furthermore, on 26 May 2010, pointed questions grouped by theme were put to the Government at a question time organized in the Senate under the theme of "Power and the media".

In May 2009, the Alliance 90/The Greens parliamentary group tabled a motion in the **German** Bundestag on *Strengthening the Fundamental Right to Data Protection in the Public and Private Spheres*, which called for the protection of personal data to be enshrined as a separate constitutional right and for the protection of informational self-determination. Moreover, a Study Commission on the Internet and the Digital Society was established in March 2010; its terms of reference are to review progress and make policy recommendations in order to improve the general parameters for the information society in Germany in the fields of culture and media, the economy, the environment, education and research, consumer protection, law, social affairs and democracy.

With regard to operative paragraph 19 of this resolution, in March 2010, new legislation – the *Act on free tuition in public high schools and the provision of high school attendance assistance* – was enacted by the Diet of **Japan**, and came into force the following month. Its objective is to make tuition free at public high schools and to partially subsidize tuition at private high schools.

Pursuant to recommendation 20, the Senate of the **Philippines** Resolution No. 1374 was filed on 28 September 2009. The resolution directs the appropriate Senate Committees to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the validity of the Office of the Ombudsman Memorandum Circular No. 01, with the aim of proposing measures to strengthen protection of the public's right to information and access to documents and to ensure accountability of public officers.

Law 96/2010 on *Revising and complementing the legislation on the organization and functioning of the National Press Agency* was passed by the Parliament of **Romania**. The purpose of this law is to strengthen the status of the National Press Agency (a public autonomous institution, of national interest, editorially independent, placed under the control of parliament), placing it on an equal footing with the other two national media institutions (radio and television).

Since the adoption of this resolution in April 2009, the National Council of the **Slovak Republic** has adopted a number of laws that deal directly with some of the issues in the resolution, for example it has debated and passed a law on certain measures concerning Slovak Radio and Slovak Television, identifying the process for the preparation and approval of and a mechanism for putting into place, agreements between the State and state television and radio broadcasters concerning the content, aims and provision of services to the public. The key content-related framework in the preparation of agreements with the State will be based on a long-term strategy of developing programme services with an emphasis on the public interest.

Tajik citizens are encouraged to express their opinions to candidates during pre-election campaigns and at meetings held by members of parliament. The MPs in turn inform the House of Representatives of their constituents' views and proposals; this information is then conveyed to the Government and concerned ministries.

In relation to recommendation 9, the National Assembly of **Togo** passed, in 2009, a *bill amending organic law No.2004-021 of 15 December 2004 on the national agency responsible for audiovisual media and communication* (HAAC).

Law No. 2010-18 was passed on 20 April 2010 in the **Tunisian** Chamber of Deputies. It deals with the *Establishment of a scheme to foster creativity and innovation in the areas of information and communication technology (ICT)*. The purpose of this law is to encourage holders of a university degree to invest in ICT.

The **United Arab Emirates** is concerned at communication between government bodies and the media. Such concern was illustrated through the appointment of official spokespersons in ministries; and the establishment of the Government Communications Office (GCO) in the Cabinet, which provides thematic training courses on how Ministers should interact and communicate with the media.

Article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of **Uruguay** states that "*...the communication of thoughts through words, private or public writings in the press, or through any other form of dissemination shall be entirely free in all materials, without the need for prior censorship*". Moreover, one of the articles of the Law on *The media*, that was passed in July 2009, proclaimed 3 May each year "National Freedom of the Press Day", when "*tribute is paid to all journalists, in particular those who died doing their job*".