

## COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

*This document provides a brief checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system between March and October 2012.*

### The United Nations

- A new and far-reaching resolution on *Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU* was adopted by the General Assembly in May 2012 with the sponsorship of 90 States. Negotiations were led by the mission of Morocco in New York. The consultation process included an informal meeting with Member States, which was chaired by the Ambassador of Morocco and the IPU Secretary General. A comprehensive report of the UN Secretary-General describing the variety of forms UN interaction with the IPU takes provided the backdrop to the formal General Assembly debate on the resolution.
- The landmark 20-year anniversary UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) was held in Rio de Janeiro in June. IPU Members were invited to participate in the conference as part of their national delegations. The IPU also organized a briefing for parliamentarians on the first day of the Conference to take stock of the negotiated outcome document, which many found disappointing.
- A first-ever Declaration on the rule of law was negotiated during the summer at the United Nations and eventually adopted at a formal high-level meeting of the General Assembly on 24 September in New York. Through the combined efforts of the IPU and a few Member States, an important acknowledgement of the role of parliaments and of the IPU in supporting the rule of law was included in the Declaration. To reflect on the significance of this outcome, a meeting was held two days later with the participation of MPs attending the opening week of the General Assembly. The meeting was held in partnership with the International Development Law Organization and with the sponsorship of the Mission of Italy to the United Nations.
- As the sole parliamentary partner of the ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum, an IPU delegation of 10 MPs participated in the June DCF symposium in Brisbane, Australia, as well as the main July session of the DCF in New York. The Brisbane meeting in particular focused on the connection between development cooperation and sustainable development and helped provide input into the UNCSD in Rio. The main DCF session concluded with a summary of the President, which also included many of the viewpoints expressed by the parliamentarians participating in the process over the past two years. On the occasion of the DCF session, the IPU also organized a side event highlighting the need for parliaments to be invested with the necessary legal authority to effectively oversee development cooperation.

- The Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs conducted a field mission to examine One UN reform and system-wide coherence at the national level. The mission, which took place from 10 to 14 September in Albania and Montenegro, was organized with strong support from the two host Parliaments, as well as from the respective UN country teams. The findings of the mission will be examined by the Committee on United Nations Affairs at its next session (to be held on the occasion of the 127<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Quebec City), with the participation of the Director of the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (UNDOCO).
- The fifth World e-Parliament Conference was held in September in Rome, Italy, in cooperation with the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament and the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The theme of the conference centred on "open parliament", i.e. how technologies can further support transparency and accountability. The joint *Global e-Parliament Report 2012* was also launched at the Conference.
- The IPU President delivered a statement to the XIII UN Conference on Trade and Development held in Doha, Qatar, in June. Other statements were delivered at UN meetings followed by the IPU Office in New York, including a statement on the need to involve parliaments in the preparations for the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. As a result, the Resolution establishing the modalities of the World Conference calls for parliamentarians to participate in a multi-stakeholder UN-sponsored hearing, whose outcome will help inform the outcome document of the conference.
- Preparations for the 2012 Parliamentary Hearing, to be held in early December, got under way in partnership with the new President of the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, Minister Vuk Jeremic of Serbia. The theme of the hearing will focus on the role of parliaments in conflict prevention, reconciliation and peace-building. The meeting will also discuss how parliaments and the United Nations can support each other, both politically and operationally, to better promote peace around the world.
- The IPU actively promoted the International Day of Democracy, on 15 September, by inviting Member Parliaments to mark the Day through a special activity or political statement. Over 30 parliaments heeded that call with imaginative displays of support.

## **UNDP**

- Following its official release at the Kampala Assembly, the joint IPU-UNDP *Global Parliamentary Report* was promoted in the United States through two additional launch events in Washington and New York. The Washington event was hosted by the National Democratic Institute. Both events attracted an audience of between 60 and 80 democracy practitioners, diplomats and UN officials.
- As part of its work in support of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in May the IPU co-sponsored and contributed to an African regional meeting of UNDP Millennium Campaign in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting attracted close to 150 parliamentarians and concluded with a Declaration of commitment to further accelerate implementation of the MDGs before they expire in 2015. Similar meetings are being prepared in cooperation with the Millennium Campaign for the Asia-Pacific region in November (Manila) and December (Dhaka). Taken together, the meetings also provide an initial ground-level consultation with parliamentarians on the development framework that will replace the existing MDGs after 2015.

- The IPU continued to work closely with UNDP country offices, providing technical assistance and capacity-building programmes to national parliaments. This was the case, over the past six months, in Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Pakistan and Palestine, where there are on-going Memoranda of Understanding for joint implementation of activities. Discussions are under way to partner under new agreements in Afghanistan, Libya, the Maldives, Myanmar and Tunisia. In Myanmar the IPU and UNDP carried out a joint project formulation mission in July 2012.

### **UN Women**

- Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women, accepted the IPU's invitation to join the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament (3-4 October, New Delhi), as a keynote speaker. The Meeting this year focused on gender-sensitive parliaments, with a special focus on the role of women Speakers in mentoring young women politicians.
- The IPU and the UN Women Sub-Regional Office for Central and Southeastern Europe signed a Memorandum of Understanding in July 2012, aimed at promoting gender equality in Turkey. As part of the agreement, the IPU and UN Women would work together on implementing the UN joint programme *Fostering an Enabling Environment for Gender Equality in Turkey*, in particular in terms of lending technical support to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and its Commission on Equal Opportunities.

### **Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Human Rights Council**

- In cooperation with the Office of the President of the UN Human Rights Council, the IPU held a side event on 14 March at the Palais des Nations, which focused on *Parliament's contribution to the Universal Periodic Review*.
- On 21 March 2012, the IPU contributed to a panel discussion on *Sharing of best practices and promoting technical cooperation: Paving the way towards the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review*, during the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council.
- In cooperation with OHCHR, the IPU is updating the Handbook on Human Rights for parliamentarians. In the same vein, the IPU is finalizing its handbook on migration from a human rights perspective.
- In keeping with past practice, the IPU contributed a report for each country under review by the UN Committee entrusted with monitoring implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) when it met in July in New York and in October in Geneva. The IPU was also represented by the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda at an event to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CEDAW Committee.

### **UNAIDS**

- The Parliamentary Meeting at the XIX International AIDS Conference was organized by the IPU in cooperation with UNAIDS. The four-hour meeting, which took place at the US Congress in Washington, D.C., brought together about 60 members of parliament attending the XIX International AIDS Conference. The meeting provided MPs with up-to-date information on issues related to the HIV epidemic. It served as a forum for an exchange of views on major issues, such as the translation of scientific knowledge of HIV treatment and prevention into policy and practice. It also provided an opportunity to

discuss the concept of shared responsibility for the AIDS response and the centrality of parliamentary leadership to that response. The IPU guide entitled *Raising the Profile of HIV and AIDS in Your Parliament* was launched at the meeting.

### **World Trade Organization (WTO)**

- The IPU has pursued its active involvement in the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO – a decade-long joint venture with the European Parliament aimed at ensuring effective parliamentary oversight of this uniquely empowered international organization. Two sessions of the Conference Steering Committee took place in Brussels and Geneva, in May and September respectively. The latter was organized in the wings of the WTO Public Forum – a popular annual event where participants from government, parliament, civil society, the business sector, academia and the media jointly reflect on the functioning of the multilateral trading system and analyse the institutional state of the WTO.
- Preparations got under way for the holding of the annual session of the Conference in mid-November, on WTO premises in Geneva. Convinced that parliamentarians can give strong political impetus to the stalled Doha Round of negotiations, the Steering Committee decided that the Conference session in November should be held under the overarching general theme *Back to basics: Connecting politics and trade*.