



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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## Cooperation with the United Nations System

*This document provides a brief checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system from 15 October 2015 to 15 March 2016.*

### The United Nations

The annual **Parliamentary Hearing** at the United Nations, jointly organized with the President of the General Assembly, took place on 8 and 9 February. The hearing was entitled *The world drug problem: Taking stock and strengthening the global response*. It was designed to make a contribution to a Special Session of the General Assembly on drugs (UNGASS 16) in April this year. A mix of MPs, Permanent Representatives, UN officials and civil society experts took part in panel discussions. The report of the hearing is an official document for UNGASS 16.

Consultations on a new **cooperation agreement** between the two organizations continued on the basis of a new draft that takes into account comments received by the UN Department of Legal Affairs. The Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, Jan Eliasson, was personally involved in facilitating a timely conclusion to ongoing consultations in view of the 2016 resolution of the UN General Assembly *Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union*.

As part of the process leading up to the **UN General Assembly resolution on interaction with parliaments and the IPU**, expected in May or June, the IPU Secretary General and his team continued consultations about and provided input for the preparation of the UN Secretary-General's report that will provide the background to the resolution. The IPU provided a consolidated list of activities between the UN and IPU covering the two years since the UN Secretary-General's report in 2014. A working lunch to hear the views of Permanent Representatives on ways to strengthen the UN-IPU relationship was held on 10 February.

On 1–2 February, six members of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians participated in the 2016 session of the **Youth Forum** that takes place every year under the aegis of the Economic and Social Council. This year's session highlighted the youth-related targets of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the role of young people in facilitating the implementation of the SDGs at the national level.

There has been regular coordination with the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. The Envoy will take part in the IPU's Third Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians on 16 and 17 March in Lusaka, Zambia.

In January, the IPU President agreed to join the new High-Level Advisory Group of the UN Secretary General on **Every Woman, Every Child**, the long-running global initiative to support women's, adolescents' and children's health.

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With funding from the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, the IPU organized a seminar for African parliaments on the implementation of **UN Security Council resolution 1540**. It raised awareness of the resolution as the linchpin of international action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), particularly in the light of the growing terrorist threats from non-State actors. It also helped to strengthen parliaments' ability to assess the risk of WMDs and identify avenues of parliamentary action aimed at lowering risk in the region. The seminar took place in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, on 22 and 23 February.

The IPU contributed to the agenda and preparations for the third symposium of the **UN Development Cooperation Forum** which will be held in Brussels on 6–8 April. The meeting will focus on development cooperation issues that pertain specifically to the Least Developed Countries. It will also review the results of the Forum's survey on mutual accountability for development cooperation to which IPU members contributed in fall 2015.

The IPU worked with the **Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation**. Together with UNDP and OECD, the Partnership organized parliamentary focal points on development cooperation. It also began preparations for its second High-Level Meeting that will take place in Kenya in November.

In November 2015, the IPU submitted its response to a UN questionnaire on the **global monitoring process for the new SDGs**. This was the IPU's contribution to the report of the UN Secretary-General on that subject. Discussions were held with officials in the Department for Economic and Social Affairs, in order to organize a parliamentary contribution to the UN High-level Political Forum on sustainable development, which will meet in New York in July.

The IPU worked closely with UN partners (such as the UN Development Programme, World Health Organization and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) in the context of the **South Asian Speakers' Summit on the SDGs** (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 30–31 January). This will be followed by a regional Seminar on the SDGs for the parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe, to be held in Bucharest, Romania, on 18–19 April.

The IPU cooperated with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic Commission for Africa in building parliamentary capacity to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (UNSC 1325) in Arab countries. A series of four training workshops for parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and representatives of national women's machineries were held in Tunis and Amman from November 2015 to February 2016.

#### **UNOG / USA Mission: International Geneva Gender Champions Initiative**

In November 2015, the IPU Secretary General joined the International Geneva Gender Champions Initiative, led by the UN Office in Geneva (UNOG) and the United States Mission to the UN and Other International Organizations in Geneva. The initiative enables champions among the heads of Geneva-based international organizations and diplomatic missions to commit to ensuring that there are women in all debates and events happening in Geneva (the Geneva Gender Panel Parity Pledge); this complements two additional commitments made by UNOG and the United States Mission on their work to promote gender equality.

#### **OHCHR – CEDAW Committee**

At the 133<sup>rd</sup> IPU Assembly in October 2015, two members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) took part in several sessions of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. The contributions of the members, Ms I. Jahan and Ms. L. Nadaraia, were designed to highlight CEDAW's approach to the protection of migrant women (particularly those who seek asylum due to gender-related persecution), as well as to highlight the links between CEDAW and UNSC 1325.

The IPU prepared reports on parliaments' involvement in the CEDAW reporting process and women's political participation in the States reporting to the 62<sup>nd</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> CEDAW sessions, held in October 2015 and February 2016 in Geneva.

Working group meetings were also held between CEDAW members and the IPU's Gender Partnership Programme during CEDAW sessions. The meetings discussed various aspects of the parliamentary oversight of CEDAW, and shared information on efforts to link up the post-2015 development agenda with the CEDAW Convention.

## UN Development Programme

Work progressed on the second edition of the **Global Parliamentary Report**, published jointly with UNDP. A joint call for written input was issued in October 2015, and a survey questionnaire for parliaments was developed. An expert group meeting was held in February 2016 to discuss the structure and content of the Report, based on the results of the survey and other data collected. The Report is due to be launched by the end of 2016.

The IPU continued to work closely with UNDP country offices, providing capacity-building programmes to national parliaments. Over the past six months, these programmes have been run in Afghanistan, Myanmar and Tunisia. Of particular note was the IPU-UNDP support programme to the parliament of Myanmar, where parliamentary elections were successfully held in November 2015.

In November, the UNDP Administrator and the IPU Secretary General formally invited all UN system agencies to adhere to the **Common Principles for Support to Parliaments**, following which the Principles were endorsed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS). The Principles aim to ensure the best possible results from assistance and other external support provided to parliaments worldwide.

## OHCHR

In October 2015, a new **Handbook for Parliamentarians on migration** was published by the IPU and its partners, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Handbook no.24, *Migration, human rights and governance*, discusses migration issues and provides tools and policy responses to address the international movement of people. To mark the launch of the handbook, ILO and OHCHR assisted the IPU in developing and implementing a campaign to raise awareness among MPs about key international treaties on migration, and to mobilize those MPs to promote their ratification and implementation.

The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, which examines allegations of violations of the human rights of MPs, continued to work closely with OHCHR and its field offices in order to help progress individual cases currently before the Committee.

The IPU and OHCHR advanced towards finalizing a joint compilation of good practices of parliamentary involvement in the work of the UN Human Rights Council, particularly in its Universal Periodic Review.

## Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

A conference on statelessness was held in Cape Town on 26–27 November. It was co-organized by the IPU, the Parliament of South Africa and UNHCR, and entitled *Ensuring Everyone's Right to Nationality: The Role of Parliaments in Preventing and Ending Statelessness*. The meeting identified parliamentary strategies to support UNHCR's campaign to end statelessness within 10 years through a 10-point Global Action Plan.

## UNAIDS

**A High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly** to review global commitments on HIV/AIDS is scheduled for June 2016. In support of the meeting, the IPU and UNAIDS began work to provide a parliamentary contribution, including a possible briefing for MPs attending the meeting. UN General Assembly Resolution 70/228, adopted in December 2015, specifically invites the IPU to contribute to the meeting.

New IPU-UNAIDS **guidelines on ways to speed up HIV treatment** were published in October 2015. *Fast-tracking HIV treatment: Parliamentary action and policy options* defines a range of measures open to parliaments, which aim to ensure that all citizens with HIV have access to treatment.

## UNICEF

In October, the IPU and UNICEF organized a **parliamentary seminar on malnutrition** in the region of the Southern Africa Development Community. The Namibian Parliament hosted the event. The meeting recognized the critical importance of food and nutrition security to economic development, to the survival and healthy growth of children, and to breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty. Participating MPs underscored their commitment to ensure that necessary laws and budgets were in place, to scrutinize government policies more closely, and to further galvanize parliamentary action to tackle high malnutrition rates.

## **UN WOMEN**

In cooperation with UN Women, the annual **parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women** took place on 15 March 2016 in New York. The meeting tracked the main theme of the Commission's session: the links between women's empowerment and sustainable development, with a focus on the power of legislation. A parliamentary side event was held on 14 March about the implementation of UNSC 1325 in Arab countries.

UN Women and the IPU also launched a joint project of support to the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The project, entitled *Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey*, was launched in Ankara on 7 December 2015. It aims to support political leadership and the participation of women in Turkey by using the transformative capacity of parliament. The project is being implemented in partnership with the Committee on Equal Opportunity for Women and Men of the Grand National Assembly.

The IPU, UN Women, the UN Development Programme, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance supported the organization of two e-discussions. One was on the role of parliaments in implementing UNSC 1325 in Arab countries; the other was called *Parliamentary Oversight of Gender Equality* and was hosted by iKNOWpolitics.org.

## **World Health Organization (WHO)**

The IPU successfully implemented a funding agreement with WHO for 2015. Under the agreement, the two organizations assisted parliaments in countries most affected by maternal and child mortality to develop legal frameworks and improve accountability for results. The agreement also produced a comprehensive study on the impact of legislation on child marriage rates in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as a number of activities aimed at community engagement on the issue. Consultations on a new agreement started towards the end of 2015. The IPU and WHO also started preparations for the first-ever parliamentary side event at the World Health Assembly. The 69<sup>th</sup> WHA will take place in May in Geneva.

## **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)**

The IPU and WMO held a series of consultations with a view to concluding a Memorandum of Understanding. The Memorandum would provide a formal framework for joint activities aimed at strengthening parliaments' capacities to tackle the threat of climate change. In his address to the Parliamentary Meeting organized by the IPU on the side-lines of the COP21/CMP11 meeting in Paris, the WMO Secretary-General underscored the importance of basing legislative action on the findings of climate science.

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

In advance of the 10<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference (Nairobi, December 2015), the IPU stepped up its campaign to expedite parliaments' ratifications of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The TFA focuses on improving border procedures and on updating antiquated customs rules. By the end of 2015, over 60 WTO members had formally accepted the TFA.

The need to increase the efficiency of the parliamentary oversight of multilateral trade negotiations was reiterated by the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO at its session in Brussels in February 2016. The plenary session of the Conference will take place on WTO premises in June 2016.

## **UNFCCC**

On 5–6 December 2015, at the time of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21/CMP11) in Paris, the IPU and the French Parliament jointly organized a Parliamentary Meeting. It was a resounding success and reaffirmed the leading role of the IPU as the convenor of parliamentary events held in conjunction with annual UNFCCC sessions. This fact was acknowledged by the UN Secretary-General himself, when he addressed the inaugural session of the Parliamentary Meeting. Among other guest speakers were the heads of OECD, UNEP, UNESCO, WMO and IPCC.

The Outcome Document of the Parliamentary Meeting made clear that legislators were conscious of their own share of responsibility for the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement adopted by UNFCCC Parties at COP21, including at the stage of its ratification, acceptance or approval. To provide a comprehensive legislative response to climate change and complement the Paris Agreement with concrete action, the IPU has prepared a Parliamentary Action Plan on Climate Change.