



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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133rd IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 17 – 21.10.2015

Assembly
Item 2

A/133/2-P.5
17 October 2015

Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda

Request for the inclusion of an emergency item in the agenda of the 133rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union submitted by the delegation of New Zealand

On 17 October 2015, the Secretary General received from the Leader of the New Zealand delegation a request for the inclusion in the agenda of the 133rd Assembly of an emergency item entitled:

“The role of parliaments in taking urgent action to protect the climate”.

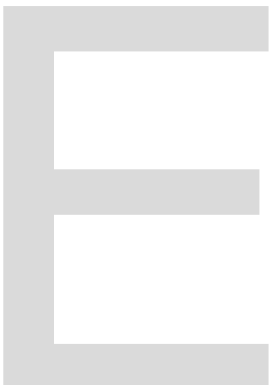
Delegates to the 133rd Assembly will find attached the text of the communication submitting the request ([Annex I](#)), as well as an explanatory memorandum ([Annex II](#)) and a draft resolution ([Annex III](#)) in support thereof.

The 133rd Assembly will be required to take a decision on the request of the delegation of New Zealand on Sunday, 18 October 2015.

Under the terms of Assembly Rule 11.1, any Member of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Such a request must be accompanied by a brief explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution which clearly define the scope of the subject covered by the request. The Secretariat shall communicate the request and any such documents immediately to all Members.

Furthermore, Assembly Rule 11.2 stipulates that:

- (a) A request for the inclusion of an emergency item must relate to a major event of international concern on which it appears necessary for the IPU to express its opinion. Such a request must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in order to be accepted;
- (b) The Assembly may place only one emergency item on its agenda. Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted;
- (c) The authors of two or more requests for the inclusion of an emergency item may combine their proposals to present a joint one, provided that each of the original proposals relates to the same subject;
- (d) The subject of a proposal that has been withdrawn by its authors or rejected by the Assembly cannot be included in the draft resolution submitted on the emergency item, unless it is clearly referred to in the request and title of the subject adopted by the Assembly.



**COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL
BY THE LEADER OF THE NEW ZEALAND DELEGATION**

15 October 2015

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

In accordance with the relevant rules of the IPU, specifically Assembly Rule 11.1, the New Zealand delegation wishes to submit a request for the inclusion of an emergency item in the agenda of the 133rd IPU Assembly, which will take place in Geneva from 17 to 21 October 2015, entitled:

“The role of parliaments in taking urgent action to protect the climate”.

The item is specifically to encourage our governments to ensure that their intended nationally-determined contributions are consistent with the two degree-Celsius threshold, as identified in the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Please find attached an explanatory memorandum in support of this request.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

Hon Annette KING, MP (Ms.)
Leader of the New Zealand delegation

THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN TAKING URGENT ACTION TO PROTECT THE CLIMATE

Explanatory memorandum submitted by the delegation of New Zealand

This resolution affirms that parliamentarians have a central role to play in their countries, and that the IPU must effectively partner with the United Nations to ensure effective climate protection policies.

The item is aimed specifically at encouraging governments to ensure that their intended nationally-determined contributions are consistent with the two degree-Celsius threshold, as identified in the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Background

Climate change has been described by world leaders as the greatest threat of our time. The 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is to meet in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015 in order to finalize negotiations for a global agreement to combat climate change. This is seen as a critical meeting of the international community and failure is not an option.

Parliamentarians potentially have a major role to play in making the Paris Conference a success and in ensuring effective national action following the meeting.

The international community has had climate change on its formal agenda for a quarter of a century: the IPCC was established and its first Assessment Report was published in 1990.

The UNFCCC (1992) remains to this day the basic framework for multilateral action on stabilization of the climate.

The Convention's objective,¹ however, is proving difficult to achieve:

- The Kyoto Protocol to the Convention established two commitment periods (CP-1 from 2008 to 2012 and CP-2 from 2013 to 2020), with a view to reducing emissions from developed countries. However, not all developed countries became parties to the Protocol, and the combined emissions of parties accepting binding commitments are currently only 10 per cent of global emissions.
- The first effort to follow the Kyoto Protocol with a global agreement that imposes binding obligations on all parties to the UNFCCC (Bali Action Plan 2007) ended in failure at the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) in Copenhagen in 2009.

The failure of this first attempt resulted from disagreement over the nature of the respective obligations of developed and developing countries (common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities) and the application of the principle of equity to "burden-sharing".

From COP16 (Cancun, 2010) to COP20 (Lima, 2014), the UNFCCC parties have re-established the negotiating framework for what is effectively the second attempt at a global agreement. The draft Paris Agreement is essentially a second protocol to the UNFCCC. If adopted, it will impose general obligations on States parties to combat climate change through effective mitigation, adaptation, financing and other measures. A separate standing schedule of voluntary contributions (intended nationally-determined contributions) by each State party will be associated with the Paris Agreement, and will be subject to ongoing peer review by other parties on a regular basis.

¹ Stabilization of atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases at a level that will prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate within a timeframe that enables ecosystems naturally to adapt.

It is on that basis that the international community is aspiring to undertake effective action, in time to avoid dangerous and perhaps even catastrophic climate change.

Climate change policy has naturally been the domain of the executive branch of government. This remains the case, whether such policy is being negotiated in the multilateral context of treaty-making (UNFCCC), or debated in the United Nations Security Council. This is not to suggest, however, that the legislative branch has no role to play. Indeed, the national legislatures of all countries have a critical role in implementing, through domestic policy, whatever is agreed upon at the international level.

It is now clear, however, that the role of parliaments naturally goes beyond implementation. As the magnitude and imminence of dangerous climate change becomes clear, the public in all countries are becoming increasingly concerned and determined to ensure that effective measures to combat climate change are undertaken. Parliamentarians have a critical role to play in the relationship between public concern and government resolve. That role will not have been recognized to a proper extent until the forthcoming Paris Conference.

The 133rd IPU Assembly offers an important opportunity to ensure that parliamentarians fulfil their natural role in ensuring that all States parties to the UNFCCC play their part in the global effort.

A draft outcome document already exists to that end, which will be discussed in the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade.

The New Zealand delegation suggests, however, that the item is sufficiently important to warrant an emergency debate in plenary.

Attached is a draft resolution which could form the basis of such a debate.

THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN TAKING URGENT ACTION TO PROTECT THE CLIMATE

Draft resolution submitted by the delegation of NEW ZEALAND

The 133rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Recalling* the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted in 1992, namely, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, within a timeframe sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally,
- (2) *Also recalling* the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations of 11 September 2009 (Climate change and its possible security implications, A/64/350),
- (3) *Endorsing* the view of the United Nations Security Council expressed in the Statement of the President of the Security Council of July 2011 (S/PRST/2011/15 of 20 July 2011) that climate change is a risk multiplier, exacerbating existing threats to international peace and security,
- (4) *Noting* the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Summary for Policy-Makers, 2013 and 2014),
- (5) *Affirming* the Lima Call for Climate Action released by the States Parties to the UNFCCC in December 2014 (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2014/cop20/eng/10a01.pdf>),
- (6) *Recalling* the view of the United Nations General Assembly that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, its alarm that the emissions of greenhouse gases continue to rise globally, and its acknowledgement that adaptation to climate change represents an immediate and urgent global priority (Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind, A/RES/69/220, 3 February 2015),
- (7) *Aware* of the importance of the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21), to be held on Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015, and of the imperative that a global agreement be reached at this meeting to ensure that future global emissions are consistent with the threshold of two degree-Celsius warming above pre-industrial levels, as agreed at the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) in Cancún, Mexico, in 2010,
- (8) *Considering* the critical role played by parliamentarians in conveying to their respective governments the concerns of the peoples they represent at the threat posed by climate change to their well-being,
- (9) *Conscious* of the responsibility to bequeath to future generations a planet that is habitable and pleasant, and capable of sustaining them,

1. *Calls upon* the governments of all its respective countries to ensure that their intended nationally-determined contributions are consistent with their common but differentiated responsibilities for staying collectively within the two degree-Celsius threshold identified above;
2. *Also calls upon* the peoples of the world to demonstrate their commitment to the protection of the global climate and the rights of future generations to a stable and benign climate that is compatible with life on Earth, through peaceful and lawful public action as appropriate for each country, in advance of COP21 in Paris;
3. *Urges* the United Nations to partner effectively with the IPU, through the forthcoming Cooperation Agreement, to ensure meaningful and robust cooperation between the legislatures and the executives of the governmental systems in all its countries, including through joint meetings on climate change;
4. *Invites* the IPU Secretary General to establish within the Secretariat a unit tasked with facilitating the transfer of information between our parliaments in order to coordinate effective parliamentary action, in fulfilment of the objective of the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change and, to that end, of the goals to be agreed upon at the forthcoming COP21 session in Paris.