



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Annual Report 2015



What is the IPU?

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the global organization of national parliaments. We work to safeguard peace and drive positive democratic change through political dialogue and concrete action.

The only international organization to bring together the world's national parliaments, we promote democracy and peace through this unique parliamentary membership.

An ever-changing pool of about 45,000 MPs, representing citizens worldwide, ensures IPU always has a finger on the pulse of democracy.

IPU is an independent, self-governing body funded mainly by our Members. Our current membership includes 167 national parliaments and 10 regional parliamentary bodies as associate members.

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Reconnecting people and democracy through development

2015 has been another year of successes and achievements for IPU. From the Quito Communiqué our Members adopted in March 2013 to the Hanoi Declaration in March this year, we have come full circle in our quest to help shape the post-2015 development agenda. Our advocacy work has helped to secure recognition for the role of parliaments in implementing Agenda 2030. Our aim now is to make parliaments “fit for purpose” to tackle the three major interlinked processes under this agenda – disaster risk reduction, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate change – in a coherent and consistent manner.

The Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament was a milestone for IPU and the global parliamentary community, and raised significant awareness of our Organization and its strategic value. At the five-yearly event, one of a series of high-level meetings leading up to the UN Sustainable Development Summit, Speakers of the world’s parliaments acknowledged the many difficult challenges facing peace, democracy and development. But they committed parliaments to fulfilling their critical legislative, budgetary and oversight of government role to ensure the necessary change that would leave no one on our planet behind.



That includes youth. Our growing work on youth participation in politics has become increasingly relevant at a time of growing marginalization, social and economic alienation and violent extremism. The inclusion of all groups of people in society in decision-making at every level is of paramount importance if the world is to successfully tackle the deeply worrying threat that terrorism and conflict pose to our peace and security.

During the year, we have spoken out strongly and repeatedly against violence and conflict, affronts to democracy and human rights, and the many horrific acts of terrorism that occurred during 2015. These have underlined again that terrorism knows no geographical boundaries or limitations. Only collective action will work and IPU's greatest asset is the strength of its Members, who have placed the issue high on our agenda.

Elsewhere, from the protracted conflict in Syria to outbreaks and flare-ups in other regions, IPU has kept a watchful eye on unfolding events. Having pledged to revive our dossiers on forgotten conflicts and neglected constituencies, my missions in 2015 have taken me to Syria and the Korean Peninsula to offer IPU as a neutral platform for parliamentary dialogue to help bring an end to the Syrian conflict and foster inter-Korean dialogue.

The death of thousands of refugees and migrants trying to reach safe ground in Europe has been one of the greatest tragedies of 2015. Their plight and that of many millions of people on the move across the world has underscored the urgent need to resolve conflicts and to find coherent and positive solutions to all forms of migration in the twenty-first century. It is also why our Members have pledged action on this complex challenge.

While we take stock of our achievements in the year, we must also put our mind and shoulders to successfully addressing the many challenges we now face. We will be reflecting recent global developments in our revised Strategy to align our work with the commitments made by States. We will produce blueprints for parliaments to self-assess and strengthen capacity to deliver on the promise to build strong, effective institutions. We will strive to make a bigger and deeper impact on the international arena through our growing partnership with the United Nations. A new cooperation agreement with the United Nations will be a cornerstone of this endeavour.

The events of 2015 have reiterated the continued relevance of our core values. IPU will remain intransigent when democracy and the institution of parliament come under attack, including in countries such as Burundi. We will also bolster our efforts to bring Egypt and Thailand back to the democratic fold.

We continue to build on the progress of previous years to increase our visibility and outreach. We are reaching new and broader audiences, and getting more media coverage, whilst the continued partnership with the United Nations to use innovative communication approaches to change perceptions is raising greater awareness of IPU and our work, in addition to strengthening ties. Our outreach through social media has reached new heights and is contributing to building communities of thought and networks. Our revamped website, when operational, will help in these efforts.

Universal membership of our Organization remains a key objective, and one in which I am personally and deeply involved. With the Caribbean and the Pacific regions being a particular focus for me, my missions to Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago, Australia and New Zealand helped to reach out to non-Members and foster a greater sense of belonging among existing Members of the GRULAC and Asia-Pacific geopolitical groups. Cognizant of the financial burden associated with membership and travel costs, plans are afoot to establish a parliamentary solidarity fund to encourage the parliaments of Small Island Developing States to join our Organization.

In a climate of ongoing financial austerity, we are deeply grateful to our Members who continue to show faith in IPU by pledging support to our core work of promoting democracy and strengthening parliaments, especially in developing countries. This support and that of other external partners is crucial if IPU, as an Organization, is to deliver continued success against a backdrop of austerity and dwindling financial resources.

Martin Chungong
IPU Secretary General



“Around the world, youths are struggling to define their identities and discover their purposes. Many of them feel marginalized – like they don’t have a place in society or that their voices aren’t being heard. Some are angry; they feel that violence and extremism are their only recourse...

You – the most powerful lawmakers and leaders in your nations – you have the ability to change this...You need to speak for people all around the world who are not being heard – for former child soldiers in Uganda, South Sudan and Myanmar; for gang members in Mexico and the United States; for orphans in Syria and many other countries around the world. You have to help these people find their way so they can stand strong in their identities. You have to demonstrate that everyone matters, and that every person in your democracy has power and efficacy. You have to convince them to hope again.”

Artist and humanist Forest Whitaker made an impassioned appeal to the 4th Speakers Conference to help give hope to the world’s youth.
© IPU/Kim Haughton, 2015

Excerpt from the keynote address by Forest Whitaker

Building the world people want

In a landmark year for global decision-making that would define the future of humanity and our planet, the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament had its rightful place.

The once-every-five-year event, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 31 August to 2 September, was a unique opportunity to launch a new era of political leadership. The decisions made at the global conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai earlier in the year, and the adoption of the new SDGs and the Paris Agreement on climate change afterwards, would require political muscle and a will to effect the necessary political reform to transform our world.

The individual leadership of the Speakers of Parliament to mobilize parliaments would help determine how each country would fare in implementing these global agreements in the long run. The critical impact Speakers could have was not lost on UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President of the UN General Assembly Sam Kutesa, and artist, humanist and UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation Forest Whitaker.

Addressing more than 170 Speakers and Deputy Speakers from nearly 140 countries in the largest gathering of its kind, they and IPU President Saber Chowdhury underscored the complexity of the challenges ahead, urged the parliamentary leaders to put people at the heart of all their efforts, and affirmed their confidence that the global parliamentary community could come together, find common ground and provide the impetus for action.

Focusing on “[Placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development: building the world the people want](#)”, the Speakers Conference married this political message with the more practical questions concerning ‘[Parliamentary oversight: challenges and opportunities](#)’ and ‘[Translating the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) into action](#)’.

In a far-reaching Declaration adopted at the end of the Conference, the world’s parliamentary leaders stated their unequivocal support for the new development agenda and committed themselves to working to achieve the SDGs in their own countries. This included achieving Goal 16 on the promotion of peaceful, inclusive societies and the building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, such as parliaments.

They pledged to reconnect people with democracy by bringing parliament closer to the people, by tackling the growing public scepticism with politics, social marginalization, gender inequality and an imbalanced power relationship with government.

The Declaration acknowledged that extraordinary efforts would be needed to turn the tide against the many challenges that undermined democracy, peace and development. This included constitutional and institutional reform in transition countries, social justice and respect for human rights.

With conflicts in Syria, the Central African Republic, Yemen, Afghanistan and Iraq causing considerable loss of life and suffering, the Speakers called for greater efforts to solve conflicts, end terrorism and violent extremism, and for better protection for migrants and refugees. As prerequisites for development and social equity, global peace and security had to be an international priority.

Women Speakers of Parliament, whose annual gathering took place just beforehand, provided their input into the global Speakers Conference. Their meeting, which brought together nearly half of the world’s women Speakers, focused on ways to speed up progress on gender equality through innovative ideas and practices. The women Speakers also defined a forward-looking agenda for gender equality within a generation. Effective communications will be key to challenging and changing mind-sets that perpetuate inequalities, promoting the education of boys as well as girls and in working with communities. This work would have to be in parallel to on-going efforts to end violence against women and girls and to enhance women’s political participation.



Women Speakers of Parliament adopted an innovative agenda to achieve gender equality within a generation.
© IPU/Joel Sheakoski, 2015



Turning words to actions

Against the backdrop of an unprecedented flow of people into Europe, displacement crises around the world, the threat of terrorism and climate change, the two IPU Assemblies in Hanoi and Geneva brought together the global parliamentary community to tackle the critical challenges of our times. Parliamentarians agreed that failure to address these challenges would lead to unprecedented humanitarian catastrophes, and an inhospitable, overheated planet, whose resource base could no longer meet the needs of the people, and where unimaginable inequality and human suffering would prevail.

Throughout the meetings, open debates and informal discussions, Members confronted difficult issues and expressed diverging opinions, but also found common ground and ultimately focused on finding humane and innovative solutions to challenges worldwide.

Putting human development first

With just months to go before the SDGs were finalized, the new sustainable development agenda and parliament's role in supporting it took centre stage at the 132nd Assembly in Hanoi. Through the [Hanoi Declaration](#), our Members reaffirmed our vision of sustainable development based on human rights, poverty reduction, and peace and security. Parliaments would contribute to implementing the SDGs by holding governments accountable to their commitments and make sure adopted laws and budgets were in line with national sustainable development plans.

Opposite page:
Finding fair and humane solutions to migration and refugee crises was a major IPU concern in 2015.
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IPU Assemblies continue to serve as a unique forum for global parliamentary diplomacy.
© IPU/Lucien Fortunati, 2015

With the increasing scarcity of water undermining peace, coupled with the absence of effective water management, our Members also adopted a resolution in Hanoi on [water governance](#). It calls upon national parliaments to implement international treaties on water management as two thirds of the world's population is expected to face water shortages by 2025. The human right to water and sanitation, which would go far in improving the health and well-being of communities the world over, was stressed.

Peace, security and countering terrorism

Conflicts in the Middle East and Africa and the unprecedented surge in terrorist attacks in many countries and regions across the globe in 2015 ensured peace, security, counter-terrorism and the protection of human rights remained high on our political agenda throughout the year.

A resolution on [international law relating to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights](#) reaffirms a commitment to democracy and an equitable international order based on the rule of law.

The adoption of resolutions at both assemblies on [cyber warfare as a serious threat to peace and global security](#) and [democracy in the digital era](#) underlined the increasingly complex challenges our world is facing. Whilst acknowledging the need to strike a balance between security concerns and the respect for privacy, the cyber warfare resolution calls for parliaments to ensure the law of armed conflict is applied to cyber warfare to fill any legal loopholes. Other action points include the development of a cyber strategy, a clear definition of cyber warfare and provisions for national laws to ensure cyber technology is not used to foment international conflict. The ground-breaking resolution



on digital freedoms has set new standards on protecting our rights and digital freedoms in an age of mass surveillance.

With terrorist groups increasingly operating across borders and characterized by interconnectedness, and attacks occurring across regions and countries – from France to Nigeria and Tunisia – our Members expressed concern at the ongoing threat terrorism posed to international peace and security. In an [emergency item resolution](#) adopted at the 132nd Assembly, we condemned all acts of terrorism committed by organizations such as Boko Haram and Daesh and called for the protection of civilians, particularly women and girls. Members also affirmed support for UN counter-terrorism initiatives.

This political statement of intent was followed through at the 133rd Assembly with a high-level panel discussion featuring heads of relevant UN organizations and MPs from countries experiencing terrorism first-hand.

Working to protect migrants and refugees

With an estimated 250 million migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in the world today, including one million whose dramatic arrival in Europe by sea in 2015 put an intense spotlight on the vulnerability of people on the move, our Members sought to find solutions to the [moral and economic imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration](#) and to the protection of refugees in the wake of an unprecedented global displacement crisis at our October Assembly in Geneva.

The tragedy surrounding the millions of people fleeing violence and conflict led to questions on how parliaments and the international community could provide the necessary protection and support to refugees according to the principles of international humanitarian law and international conventions.

The resolution underscores the role and responsibility of all countries to share the burden of hosting refugees and asylum-seekers. It calls on host countries to not deport refugees or expel them to the border of another country where their life would be threatened for any number of reasons. Root causes for displacement, including conflicts in the Middle East, which have led to the worst refugee crisis since World War II, need to be addressed.

Despite the complex nature of migration and concerns at national and local levels, there was nevertheless recognition of the need to maximize the full potential of the world's oldest phenomenon. In a Declaration, our Members committed to working towards the ratification of various international conventions that protect the rights of migrants and refugees. There was acknowledgement of the need to lead by example by communicating better and rationally on migration and to promote safe and regular channels for migration.

To help parliamentarians everywhere to tackle the challenges of migration and better protect the human rights of migrants, a new Handbook for Parliamentarians was launched at the Assembly. Published by IPU, the International Labour Organization and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Handbook on ["Migration, human rights and governance"](#) provides not only information on the issues

but also the tools and policy responses to the international movement of people.

A unique global community

As always, our Assemblies provided a unique forum for parliamentary diplomacy and bilateral engagement. At least 210 bilateral meetings took place in Hanoi and Geneva, resulting in agreements, fresh initiatives, and the establishment of new relationships and friendships between parliamentarians and nations that build bridges and open channels for peace.

The 133rd Assembly also marked a significant moment for the Pacific island nation of Fiji. Parliamentary elections in 2014, which had ended an eight-year transition period following a military coup and the dissolution of parliament in 2006, had paved the way for Fiji to take its place again in the global parliamentary community. Our membership had now grown to 167 national parliaments.

International humanitarian law and forced migration

How should States respond to large flows of asylum-seekers? What should be done to reduce risks faced by asylum-seekers? Was the "offshore processing" of claims a solution? What were the long-term solutions for the resettlement or return of refugees? These questions were part of an open session of our Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law at the 133rd Assembly in Geneva on the humanitarian dimension of current forced migration flows.

Parliamentarians underscored the importance of supporting and protecting refugees, as well as local host populations. They stressed the need for more shared responsibility, especially among European countries, for refugee populations in and heading to Europe. They also reaffirmed that refugees are not a burden but a responsibility.



"Turning words into action"
- An interactive debate on
child rights during the 132nd
Assembly in Hanoi.
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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD



© United Nations

Bringing parliamentary voices to global talks

World leaders made ground-breaking commitments in 2015 to address disaster risk reduction, sustainable development and climate change.

Early on in 2015, the 15-year Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction became the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda. It set seven targets and four priorities for action and recognized a specific role for parliaments.

The set of 17 SDGs formally adopted at a UN summit in September 2015 included targets and indicators, also set over 15 years, which aimed to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty, reduce inequalities, and secure both prosperity and the planet for future generations.

The UN Climate Change summit in December reached an historic agreement uniting the world's nations to limit the rise in global temperatures to below 2 degrees Celsius. Collaborating closely with the United Nations for the past 20 years, we at IPU made important contributions to these landmark agreements.

Inputs and action on SDGs

Although much of the work to define the new sustainable development agenda with its 17 goals was done in previous years, our three-year campaign on the role of parliaments in the implementation and oversight of the SDGs continued to the end. The Hanoi Declaration and the Declaration from the Speakers Conference both fed directly into United Nations discussions and decision-making processes. Our parliamentary input helped to shape the outcome of the global talks – the SDGs are the first major UN agreement to include specific action on governance.

Goal 16 focuses on the promotion of peaceful, inclusive societies and the building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. The need for parliamentarians to be fully engaged in the implementation of Goal 16 and all SDGs was clearly acknowledged in the outcome of the UN Summit.

Addressing the UN SDGs Summit in September, IPU President Saber Chowdhury reiterated the commitment of parliamentarians to ensure success in achieving the SDGs. He pledged to continue our work in making sure parliamentarians were part of the national sustainable development planning processes, fully engaged in adopting and implementing legislation, appropriating budgets to achieve specific goals, and effectively monitoring governments to ensure they fulfilled their commitments.

Parliamentary work to transform the new SDGs into reality got rapidly under way with a number of initiatives in 2015. Prior to their formal adoption, the Romanian Parliament hosted the first regional seminar on their implementation in June. Parliaments from central and eastern Europe examined ways to ensure

they were fit for purpose in tackling the complex agenda ahead. The Trinidad and Tobago Parliament in turn introduced a parliamentary resolution on the implementation of the SDGs.

Working to ensure effective development overall

Real change on development will only occur if everyone works together. IPU continued to represent the parliamentary community on the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). In addition to attending the meetings of the Committee, we supported the GPEDC monitoring exercise against the global commitments on development cooperation made at Busan in 2011 by urging parliaments to identify focal points within their institution on this effort. Work has also begun on preparations for the Second High Level Meeting of the GPEDC that will take place in Kenya in 2016. As a matter of course, IPU will lead the parliamentary inputs into that process.

Expanding engagement with the United Nations

2015 was a landmark year for the United Nations for other reasons also. It celebrated its 70th anniversary and we marked it too. We not only took part in official celebrations, but also took stock of the challenges ahead for the institution. UN officials heard our Members express their desire to become more engaged in improving accountability and effectiveness in international decision-making processes. This included the process for selecting the next UN Secretary-General, and their hopes for a reformed Security Council.

Our Members expressed appreciation for the United Nations' field presence in their countries. United Nations assistance in cooperation with IPU made a real difference to parliaments, empowering Members and staff alike with technical knowledge and policy advice, ensuring they were better equipped to hold their governments to account. Going forward, parliamentarians hope to ensure continued good relationships through focal points in each of the UN Country Teams.

In 2015, our Committee on United Nations Affairs reviewed the work of the Peace Building Commission on its 10th anniversary, and examined the work of the International Court of Justice, one of the six principal organs of the United Nations.

Parliamentarians considered how effective the Peace Building Commission had been in stabilizing post-conflict countries, and there was agreement that peace building needed to be better integrated throughout the UN system. Parliaments also needed to be more closely involved in peace-building initiatives at the national level.

President Saber Chowdhury reiterated IPU's commitment to achieving the SDGs before the UN Summit.
© United Nations/Kim Haughton, 2015



In looking at the overall effectiveness of the International Court of Justice as a conflict prevention tool, our Members underscored that bringing a case before the Court was an act of peace, as it signaled to the international community that the parties were respectful of international law.

We reinforced our cooperation with the UN Security Council and its Committees on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors (Committee 1540) and on Counter-Terrorism (CTED). Our Secretary General Martin Chungong addressed both bodies in 2015. In turn, the Executive Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee engaged directly with our Members during the 133rd IPU Assembly in Geneva. In both cases, we have sought to assist in bridging legislative gaps in these critically important areas.

Our presence in New York through our Permanent Observer office continues to serve as a critical continuous and direct interface with the United Nations. It facilitates the engagement of parliamentarians in several UN processes, including meetings at the Commission on the Status of Women, the High Level Political Forum, the Development Cooperation Forum and the ECOSOC Youth Forum.

For the second year, IPU partnered with the United Nations on the Perception Change initiative. Through innovative and user-friendly communications, we aim to enhance awareness and understanding of the remits of our organizations and the impact of our work.

Promoting international trade

At the time when the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations was confronted with multiple difficulties and the entire World Trade Organization (WTO) machinery seemed to be stalled, the importance of the political impulse given by

the Parliamentary Conference on WTO in February was hard to overestimate.

WTO Director General Roberto Azevêdo acknowledged the importance of parliamentary support to his organization's work, including through the ratification of agreements and in applying parliamentary pressure on governments to engage on key trade tissues. In particular, he stressed the important role parliamentarians play in connecting WTO with the people.

Although the 2015 session of the Parliamentary Conference was held under the overall theme of "WTO at the age of 20", it was not a moment solely to look back. Instead, the meeting focused on the challenges faced by multilateral institutions and the need to promote an open, rules-based and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system.

A concrete example of how parliaments can contribute to that work was the campaign IPU carried out during the year to speed up the ratification of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. Expected to benefit the global economy by up to US\$ 1 trillion per year, the Trade Facilitation Agreement focuses on improving border procedures and updating antiquated customs rules. In 2015, OECD estimated that the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement could reduce worldwide trade costs by between 12.5 and 17.5 per cent.

Two-thirds of WTO's 162 Members need to ratify the Trade Facilitation Agreement for it to enter into force. At IPU, we undertook a number of measures to mobilize our Members. This included organizing a special awareness-building event during the Parliamentary Conference on WTO, distributing relevant information materials and holding a thematic parliamentary panel on the Trade Facilitation Agreement during the Public WTO Forum on "Trade works" in September. By the end of 2015, 50 states had ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement.



The WTO Parliamentary Conference in 2015 gave new political impulse to multilateral trade negotiations.
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The attack on parliament and democracy in Burkina Faso in 2015 led to street protests around the country and global condemnation. © AFP/Sia Kambou, 2015

Laying the groundwork for peace

IPU's fundamental goal for more than 125 years has been a world without conflict. Democracy cannot function and be effective without peace. However, peace cannot come without engaging all levels of society in reconciliation and the construction of democratic institutions. This process of peace-building and conflict prevention is one of the pillars of our work. IPU activities to achieve these crucial objectives include supporting parliamentary action in peace processes, promoting political dialogue, and monitoring ongoing or potential crises to be able to respond rapidly.

Supporting national reconciliation

Although it has been more than five years since post-election violence in Côte d'Ivoire divided and devastated the country, the need for national reconciliation remains. During 2015, we continued to support the Côte d'Ivoire Parliament in efforts to rebuild peace and security as part of our pledge to implement recommendations from a 2013 regional conference on conflict prevention and management in West Africa.

IPU sponsored three outreach visits to divided communities by Ivorian parliamentarians, building on those from 2014. Focusing on issues such as insecurity, land, xenophobia, selective compensation for victims of the 2010 violence, women's lack of empowerment, youth unemployment and social injustice, the outreach visits aimed to help rebuild social cohesion. With presidential elections due to take place later in the year, progress on national reconciliation and social cohesion was critical.

The visits also serve to bridge the gap between parliamentarians and the people. Constituents learned more about the work of their representatives and gave feedback on how to improve co-existence. Concrete recommendations from the visits included the creation of a permanent exchange mechanism between parliamentarians and their constituencies, the setting up of an early warning platform to address discontent before it turned to violence, and a social cohesion observatory.

During talks in Geneva with the IPU Secretary General, the Speaker of the Ivorian Parliament, Guillaume Soro, committed to continuing national reconciliation efforts in response to the many remaining challenges.

A dialogue for peace

In another year marred by horrific violence and assaults on democracy across the world, IPU has been vociferous in condemning such developments. Whether it is the attacks on parliament in Afghanistan and Burkina Faso, the political violence in Burundi that has left hundreds dead and continues to spiral out of control, the ongoing political crisis in the Maldives, or the numerous terrorist attacks in Cameroon, France, Nigeria and elsewhere across the world, we have been active both publicly and behind the scenes. We have also closely monitored events in the Central African Republic and Libya.

Nelson Mandela once said that conflicts are resolved through shifts that were unimaginable at the start. It is by initiating or supporting these shifts through dialogue that IPU aimed to promote peace in troubled areas. IPU is engaging with authorities in Burundi and Thailand on carrying out missions in 2016 aimed at promoting dialogue and political participation or the drafting of a new constitution.

On an older, apparently more intractable issue, the IPU Secretary General carried out a mission to the two Koreas at their invitation to meet parliamentarians from both countries. It was a first step towards fostering parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, and in creating an environment conducive to building trust and laying the groundwork for inter-Korean relations.

The Secretary General also made his first visit to Jerusalem and Ramallah in the West Bank to prepare the ground for a mission by the Committee on Middle East Questions in 2016. There were a series of high-level contacts, including with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, and the Speaker of the Knesset. The visit facilitated ongoing work to develop a new approach to bringing peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Issues that would normally spark tensions could be transformed into dialogue on coexistence through round-table talks on water, health and food. IPU intends to give impetus to these initiatives in 2016.

The decision in 2014 to broaden the remit of the Committee on Middle East Questions beyond the Israeli-Palestinian conflict began to be implemented with an exploratory IPU mission to Syria and Lebanon. It was to lay the ground for a full fact-finding parliamentary mission to Syria and to demonstrate parliamentary support and solidarity with its people who continued to suffer from years of conflict. IPU reiterated an unwavering commitment to help a post-conflict Syria to establish a parliament that would be representative, transparent, accountable, accessible and effective, ready and able to meet difficult reconciliation and reconstruction challenges.

Raising awareness on a forgotten issue

2015 saw a continued effort by IPU and our partners to work on addressing a much neglected issue. Although the ongoing exodus of refugees from conflict zones such as Syria and Iraq in 2015 may have embedded the plight of refugees more firmly on to public consciousness, statelessness remains both an underreported and growing issue. Affecting 10 million people worldwide, with one child born every 10 minutes without a nationality, the factors that cause statelessness are varied.

Most stateless people live in the territory in which they were born, but the dramatic rise in forced displacement across national borders is making an already complex issue much tougher to address. Not “belonging” anywhere means stateless people are also denied basic rights such as access to education and health. But the issue can be resolved with relatively simple changes to laws and practices, as the *Handbook for Parliamentarians on Nationality and Statelessness* produced in 2014 with the United Nations refugee agency UNHCR showed.

Practical efforts to engage parliamentarians on the issue included a global conference organized by IPU, the South African Parliament and UNHCR in November. Parliamentarians from 40 national parliaments resolved to review legislation, advocate reforming laws that discriminated on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion or gender and to strengthen parliamentary oversight of government policies on statelessness. They also agreed to work towards accession to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions and called for more regional initiatives to end the phenomenon.

Participants at the Conference also highlighted the need for greater parliamentary awareness of the issue, committing to forming a group of parliamentary champions to end statelessness.



Opposite page:
Tens of thousands of people saw six decades of virtual statelessness end when Bangladesh and India swapped disputed land enclaves.
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The need for peace and security in Paris, which suffered two terror attacks during the year.
© AFP/Eric Feferberg, 2015



Fit for purpose parliaments

The historic but ambitious development and climate commitments of 2015 mean it has never been as important for parliaments to play their full part in ensuring good governance in a bid to ensure welfare for all.

As engines of democracy, effective parliaments are also agents of change. Supporting parliaments to become more effective institutions has been the foundation of our work for many decades. Our work to develop benchmarks for democratic parliaments remains unique and is now accompanied by newly developed standards on how we and the parliamentary community as a whole provide support to parliaments.

During 2015, we helped build the capacity of parliaments on governance, human rights, gender equality, youth, health and development.

Applying common principles to our work

The adoption in 2014 of the *Common Principles for Support to Parliament*, now the central reference point on effective parliamentary development, was followed in 2015 by efforts to have them widely endorsed as well as applied. By the end of 2015, more than 100 parliaments and organizations had signed up to them, with IPU actively reaching out to encourage support.

With nine specific and one general principle, the far-reaching Common Principles will take some time to implement thoroughly. A field mission to Palestine in May to help the Palestinian Legislative Council identify priority needs was the

first opportunity for IPU to apply the Common Principles. Focus was put on enabling the Palestinian Legislative Council to identify what priorities could be addressed with existing resources and capacity, and which would need external support. It identified three areas for support, with the exercise also resulting in improved internal communications. By November, we had completed training on public administration, protocol and etiquette.

We also began applying the Common Principles in our work in Myanmar and Egypt, which elected its first parliament since the crisis of 2012. Our work in Egypt focused on strengthening the support services in parliament by developing human resources. General and specialized training benefited more than 900 staff members. Improving access to information for parliamentarians was initiated with training on new technologies for more than 150 staff members, 69 per cent of whom were women. Infrastructure upgrades included the purchase of essential information and communications technology (ICT) equipment.

In Myanmar, where we carried out our fourth successive year of assistance, the Common Principles were applied in supporting parliamentary staff to draft a handbook and guidelines for new MPs. Working together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), we limited our involvement to providing technical and managerial guidance while staff took ownership of the structuring and writing of content. This proved to be a highly effective learning and empowering process, whilst simultaneously developing institutional memory in a young parliament.

In addition, an ICT development plan for the Myanmar Parliament was completed and information management infrastructure updated. Ongoing work on the Library, Research and Information Service focused on the

The number of parliaments and organizations to formally endorse the Common Principles passed the 100 mark by the end of the year.
© IPU, 2015



development of a library resources policy and processes for dealing with queries from parliamentarians with training for improved human resource management also taking place.

In Afghanistan, where we were again cooperating with UNDP, IPU facilitated the evaluation of the administrative departments of the secretariat of both houses of parliament using self-assessment tools. We also carried out assessments on ICT, the functioning of committees and plenary sessions as well as human resource audits.

We continued our work with the National Assembly of the Seychelles on outreach and communications by organizing a workshop for journalists on media coverage of parliamentary business. A roadmap on what needed to be done to avoid unbalanced media coverage was drawn up with journalists identifying key areas for improvement. This included better access to parliamentarians and parliamentary information, and the need to build the skills and motivation of local journalists to cover parliament.

In Togo and Tunisia, IPU provided expertise to parliamentarians on standards for democratic parliaments, and legislative and representation functions.

We also renewed our cooperation with the Parliament of Equatorial Guinea, signing a new agreement to continue supporting the parliament on areas such as legal framework, working methods, human resources and commissions work.

Measuring effectiveness

Extensive consultations with our Members in 2015 have revealed that parliamentary oversight and parliaments' power to hold governments to account were a major preoccupation. This role has grown in importance in response to the growth in the power of executive government. In addition, while the public demand for oversight over parliaments has been increasing across the world, how individual parliaments are responding to that demand differs enormously. The

outcome of these consultations was the decision to focus on oversight and accountability as the theme of the next Global Parliamentary Report.

To be jointly published with UNDP, the report will address how effective parliaments are in carrying out its role to hold governments to account and how they could become more so. With a launch due in 2016, several research activities got under way, including carrying out surveys and interviews with parliamentarians. Thematic panel discussions were held at the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and the 133rd IPU Assembly, some of them in partnership with the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament.

Providing access to information

The importance of access to quality information for parliaments cannot be underestimated. Our decade-long partnership with the Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) ensures the expertise provided to our Members on this critical issue is always up-to-date. In 2015, IPU and IFLA published *Guidelines for Parliamentary Research Services* that represent best practice in the field. Prepared by a group of heads of parliamentary research services, the guidelines will be of benefit to all parliaments that are either seeking to set up or develop their existing research services.

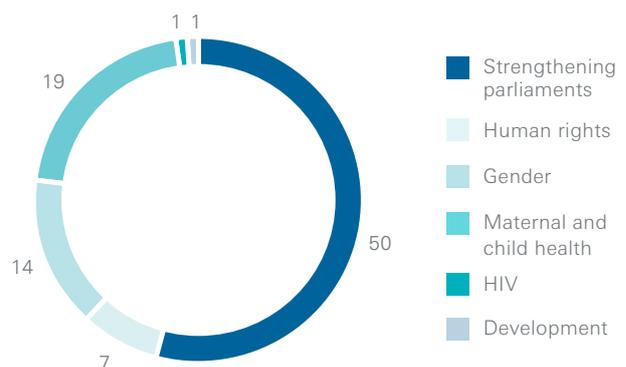
IPU's PARLINE database continued to be a unique source of reference information on national parliaments, covering every parliament in the world. A new, upgraded version of the database is in preparation, with more data points and enhanced features for comparing information.

IPU also continued to support parliaments in making effective use of information and communications technology. Preparations are under way for the next edition of the World e-Parliament Report and World e-Parliament Conference, both scheduled for mid-2016.

Growing support for Common Principles

The number of parliaments and other bodies to formally endorse the *Common Principles of Support to Parliaments* had reached 102 by the end of 2015. Elaborated on the basis of decades of experience, the principles highlight the importance of diversity and equality. They stress that parliaments must play a central role in their own development and set out ways to ensure more effective cooperation with partners, including those from the UN system. Each new endorsement lends weight to the value of the Common Principles, but the real test is in how widely and effectively they are applied.

92 national and regional activities by theme







IPU data on women in politics continues to be a unique reference point to raise awareness and inform policy responses across the world. © IPU, 2015

Innovating for gender equality

New global milestones for women's rights and gender equality were defined in 2015 with the setting of a specific SDG on gender equality and women's empowerment.

IPU, a global leader in the promotion and involvement of women in politics and parliament, had made significant contributions in the discussions that defined SDG 5. We had called for a stand-alone goal on gender equality, but we had also provided input on developing indicators on women's political participation.

2015 was also a year in which to take stock of what progress had been made on the issue since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action 20 years previously. Then, the Fourth World Conference on Women reaffirmed the principle that the rights of women and girls were an inalienable and indivisible part of universal human rights. Governments had pledged to achieve gender equality and empower women everywhere. So how far had gender equality advanced in the intervening two decades?

Tracking women's representation in parliament

As part of our efforts to measure the progress since the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action, IPU looked at women's representation in parliament over 20 years.

The outcome of our analysis included several new resources that help to raise awareness among policy-makers, activists and the general public about women's political participation. Our *Women in Parliament: 20 years in review* found that women parliamentarians had gained ground in nearly 90 per cent of the 174 countries for which data were available in 1995–2015. However, the news had to be tempered. The percentage of women parliamentarians in the world had nearly doubled since 1995, but the global average had increased from 11.3 per cent to just 22.1 per cent at the start of 2015. This figure had grown to 22.7 per cent by the close of the year.

The 2015 edition of the *Women in Politics Map*, published jointly with UN Women and based on IPU data, showed a mixed picture on women's representation in executive government and in parliament, as well as at regional and national levels. The number of women government ministers had increased over the previous 12 months to account for 17.7 per cent of all ministers. But since 2005, the percentage of women ministers had only increased by 3.5 percentage points. Figures for women parliamentary leaders were also low. At the start of 2015 women Speakers of Parliament made up only 15.8 per cent of all Speakers, though by December there had been some historic developments.

Clearly ambitious and concerted political action was required to overcome the slow pace of progress on equality. This was acknowledged by 160 men and women parliamentarians at a review meeting organized by IPU and UN Women that took place in parallel to the annual session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Dr. Amal Qubaisi (UAE), a trailblazer for women MPs in the Arab world.
© IPU/Pierre Albouy, 2015



Progress on women Speakers

History was made at the end of 2015 with the election of Dr Amal Al Qubaisi as the first female Speaker of the United Arab Emirates National Council and the first woman to hold the position in any Arab national parliament.

Firsts are not new to Dr Al Qubaisi. In 2006, she was the first woman elected to the Federal National Council.

Her commitment to IPU is unwavering. She is a long-standing contributor, particularly on gender, youth and peace issues.

In neighbouring Oman, another milestone was reached when Dr Suad Mohammed Al Lawatiar became the first female Deputy Speaker after a vote by members of the State Council.

In yet another first, Margaret Mensah-Williams, President of IPU's Coordinating Committee of Women MPs, was named as Speaker of Namibia's upper house of parliament, the National Council. She is the first woman to hold the post. Her election took the global total of women Speakers of Parliament in the world at the end of 2015 to 49, representing close to 18 per cent of all Speakers, according to IPU figures. Mensah-Williams has demonstrated strong leadership in combating violence against women, boosting women's rights and empowering women, and has for many years played an active and leading role in IPU's work.

Gender equality in a generation

The slow pace of change has been particularly frustrating for women parliamentarians, and in particular women Speakers of Parliament. Having dwelt on the issue at each of their annual gatherings in recent years, their meeting in 2015 put the emphasis on innovation to speed up progress. They have set an objective to achieve gender equality within one generation, using unity of thought and action as a powerful agent for change.

Harnessing collective action is also critical to the success of a new campaign and action plan launched by IPU in 2015. [I am an MP, My Power for Women's Power](#) is a call to action on gender equality with parliamentarians pledging to use their role and powers to empower women and girls and advance equality. Hundreds of parliamentarians, both men and women, have already signed up to the campaign.

Pushing forward on full participation

Ongoing IPU efforts to support women's participation in parliaments continued in 2015 with an emphasis on post-conflict and transitioning countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mali and Mauritania.

A two-year initiative launched in Mali will support parliamentary efforts to develop the legislative and political framework required to improve women's status.

In June 2015, we provided support to women members of Tunisia's first parliament since the Arab Spring. Partnering with International IDEA, we provided training on developing and supporting synergy among women parliamentarians from different political parties. A session on women's parliamentary caucuses also provided guidance, facilitated experience-sharing among women parliamentarians and identified steps for the establishment of a women's caucus.



Training for women MPs in Mali aimed to develop their leadership skills.
© IPU/Brigitte Filion, 2015

Working with IPU support, the newly established caucus of women parliamentarians in Mauritania defined its strategic direction and plan during a four-day workshop in Nouakchott. Along with a fresh strategy, the caucus now also has a multi-year action plan to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as to combat all forms of violence against women and girls.

In Kenya, an IPU mission recommended the introduction of formal mechanisms including a constitutional provision that would ensure women would account for at least a third of all parliamentarians. With both sexes expressing their satisfaction with IPU's support, a bill drawing on those recommendations was tabled in the summer of 2015.

Milestone for women parliamentarians at IPU

2015 was also a landmark year for women parliamentarians at IPU. The Hanoi Assembly and an opinion editorial published in the Huffington Post officially marked the 30th anniversary of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. Created to give women parliamentarians a formal space and platform to share thoughts, experiences and ideas to find common solutions to shared problems, the remit and impact of the meeting has gone much further. From the 22 women parliamentarians who attended the first gathering in Lomé, Togo, to the more than 200 who regularly participate now, the Meeting feeds into the formal decisions of IPU Assemblies. The international experience gained has empowered many women parliamentarians, with many having gone on to become leaders in their parliaments.

Ending violence against women by 2030

The growing awareness and reporting of violence against women in recent years has helped to put the issue on the global agenda as never before. SDG 5 on gender equality includes targets to end all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres by 2030. This includes the elimination of female genital mutilation, and ending child, early and forced marriage.

Our work to stop violence against women, which began in 2008, continued apace in 2015 and built on the political commitment made by our Members on the issue the year before.

In Bangladesh, we supported parliamentary efforts to end child marriage by keeping girls in school, creating employment opportunities for them, strengthening and implementing laws on child marriage, and most importantly working to change social norms. Training and outreach efforts by parliamentarians resulted in 100 local officials, representatives from law enforcement, birth and marriage registrars, non-governmental organizations and thousands of young girls and boys having a better understanding of the harmful consequences of child marriage and the need to enforce laws prohibiting it.

Around the world an estimated 700 million women and girls are living with the debilitating consequences of female genital mutilation, and child, early and forced marriage. Millions more are at risk from both. In Mali, we helped strengthen a parliamentary network through the provision of logistical support and training for male and female parliamentarians in advocating an end to female genital mutilation.



Lebanese men show their solidarity in efforts to end violence against women.
© AFP/Anwar Amro, 2015

More than a third of Burkina Faso's female population are believed to experience physical violence, most of it committed by spouses or other family members. To combat this, a law on all forms of violence against women, drafted with IPU support, was adopted in 2015. The law seeks to provide a comprehensive response to physical, sexual, psychological, economic and cultural violence against women and girls. It includes provisions to punish perpetrators and provide protection and support to victims.

Globally, violence against women and girls, including in conflict situations, was one of the primary calls for action on gender equality during the Women Speakers of Parliament meeting. The commemoration of the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on women, peace and security was an opportunity for the women Speakers to lead efforts on appropriate national responses to implementing the resolution.

The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians at the 132nd IPU Assembly also called for the adoption of National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 to be speeded up. Other recommendations included increasing women parliamentarians' engagement on work involving peace and security and ensuring that 15 per cent of peace and security funding is dedicated to gender-related issues.

In cooperation with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA), IPU was also active in promoting the women, peace and security agenda in the Arab world. In a region affected by conflict and violent extremism, we reinforced the capacities of parliaments to implement UNSCR 1325 through legislation, policy-making, budgeting and partnerships.

IPU also raised awareness on the safety of women and girls on the Internet in a resolution adopted at the 132nd Assembly and called on parliaments to take legislative action to address and provide avenues of redress for cyber violence against women.

Ending discrimination against women

IPU has been a strong promoter of parliamentary engagement in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). We work to strengthen parliamentary understanding of the Convention, promote parliaments' involvement in periodic reporting to the CEDAW Committee, and advocate for parliamentary follow-up to Committee recommendations on improving compliance.

The role of parliamentarians in promoting implementation of CEDAW was discussed at the annual parliamentary meeting held in parallel to the Commission on the Status of Women. In 2015, members of the CEDAW Committee also engaged in interactive debates at our Meeting of Women Parliamentarians during the 133rd assembly.

A gender champion

IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong pledged his support for an initiative on gender equality that builds on his personal commitment and our Organization's ground-breaking work in the field. The initiative – International Geneva Gender Champions – invites organizations to specify practical steps they will take to break down gender barriers, and sign a "Gender Parity Pledge", committing them to work for equality in all Geneva-based discussions. His promises include putting equality at the heart of our Organization's work and assessing IPU's work environment from a gender perspective in 2016.

Forging ahead on youth political participation

Nearly half of the global population – 3.5 billion – are young people. Yet youth representation and participation in formal politics remains staggeringly low. In 2015, our efforts to increase youth engagement in politics went up a gear.

IPU's Forum of Young Parliamentarians, established in 2013 to help redress the situation, continued to work hard to bring young voices to global policy-making and international debates, and to enhance the quantitative and qualitative participation of young people in parliaments. In its second full year of operation, the Forum contributed to inject a youth perspective into our Organization's work and decisions at our Assemblies. It provided youth-related recommendations on cyber warfare, water governance, migration, democracy in the digital era and counter-terrorism.

Forum members also contributed to the UN ECOSOC Global Youth Forum 2015 on youth engagement in the transition from MDGs to SDGs, our Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations on ensuring a people-centred approach to the new SDGs, and to the Global Youth Peace and Security Forum in Jordan.

Regional and national Forum initiatives

A network of Inter-American Young Legislators was established at a meeting organized by the Organization of American States and the Peruvian Congress in Lima, Peru in June. In his speech to the meeting, the President of IPU's Forum of Young Parliamentarians emphasized the importance of building partnerships between the Forum and regional and national networks of young legislators.

In July 2015, the British Group of IPU organized a discussion among young British parliamentarians on our Organization's work to advance youth political engagement.

In October 2015, a Nigeria chapter of the Forum was launched in the Nigerian Parliament in an initiative spearheaded by the representative of the Africa geopolitical group on the Forum's Board.

More than 200 young MPs from 66 countries attended the Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians.
© Japanese Parliament, 2015



Involvement in these activities helped establish the Forum as an influential platform on the international scene on topics pertaining to youth participation. It also provides the win-win benefits of infusing international discussions with a parliamentary perspective, while connecting members of the Forum to a wider range of perspectives and processes that can only enrich their experiences and empower them as young leaders.

A global youth-led political platform

The 2015 edition of the annual IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, hosted by the Japanese House of Representatives in Tokyo in May, provided yet again a unique platform for young politicians from across the world to define youth-led solutions to global challenges. The young parliamentarians called for radical responses to counter youth alienation and disengagement by tackling unemployment, discrimination and conflict.

Working to the theme of democracy, peace and prosperity, more than 200 young parliamentarians from 66 countries underlined the need for a comprehensive rights-based framework of action against radicalization. This included guaranteed free education, laws to criminalize hate speech, and involving young people in all decisions relating to counter-terrorism. They recommended wide-ranging measures to counter the worrying levels of youth unemployment, including quotas and better adapting education to the job market, and ensuring young entrepreneurs have access to financial loans.

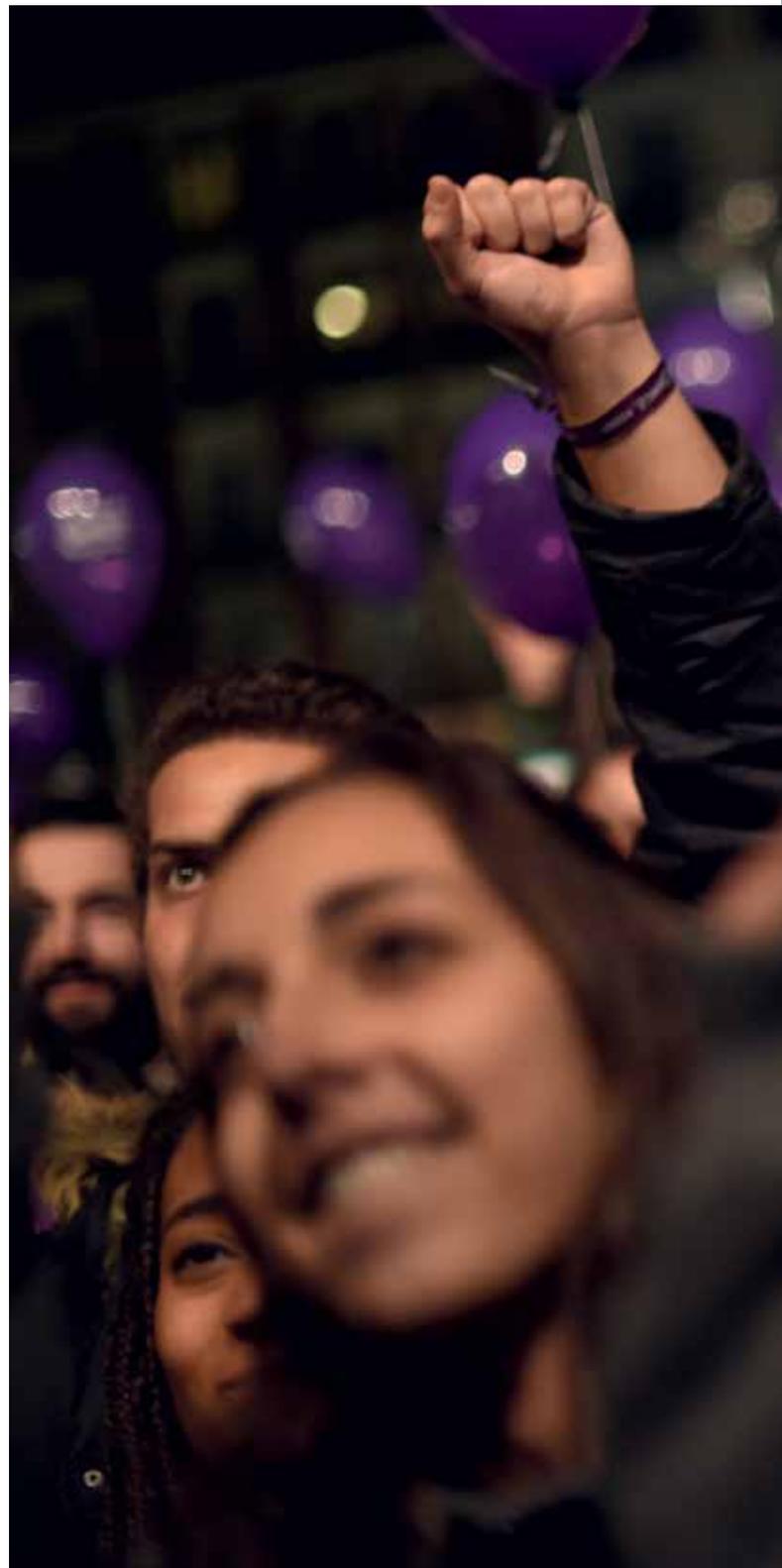
Youth ideas on improving development cooperation

Following on from the global conference, a group of 50 young parliamentarians brainstormed on how development cooperation could better respond to young people's needs at a meeting organized by IPU and [Worldwide Support for Development](#). In a landmark year for global development, the event offered an opportunity for young politicians to contribute new ideas on the issue, in particular through job creation and training. By opening the event to the Japanese public, including 1,000 young people, the parliamentarians and IPU leaders were able to directly connect with the public.

Connecting with young people on democracy

How to get young people more involved in politics was the key question at an event at our headquarters to mark International Day of Democracy in September. Twenty-one national parliaments marked the occasion with various activities around the world. Under the theme of Public Participation for Democracy, the event in Geneva brought together parliamentarians from several countries with nearly 50 Geneva-based students, representatives from youth wings of political parties, and members of Geneva's Youth Parliament. In a lively exchange of views and experiences, there was agreement on the need to promote youth engagement through modern and innovative civic education.

The discussion was part of a week of events to celebrate International Day of Democracy by the Geneva authorities in partnership with Geneva University and IPU. It was the first time Geneva marked International Day of Democracy and the successful experience has laid the ground for future collaboration on this.



Youth engagement in politics is essential to democracy.
© AFP/Pedro Armestre, 2015



Human rights for all

Ending abuses against parliamentarians

Parliamentarians in 2015 remained the target of a wide range of human rights abuses, including assassinations, intimidation and threats, arbitrary detention, lack of fair trial and violations of the right to freedom of expression or assembly.

Throughout the year, our Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians spearheaded our Organization's efforts to protect parliamentarians against potential or imminent violations of their human rights, promote redress when such abuses have occurred, and stimulate the necessary reforms to address their underlying causes.

During 2015, the Committee worked on 320 cases in 43 countries – up from 311 cases in 40 countries in 2014 – and IPU adopted 57 decisions. Overwhelmingly the targeted parliamentarians are men (283) and more than two thirds of all cases (71 per cent) are from the political opposition (228).

The Committee was able to close cases involving 54 parliamentarians in 2015 – 38 of them satisfactorily. These included the case of nine parliamentarians excluded from the National Assembly of Togo. The parliamentarians obtained compensation for their wrongful exclusion and the National Assembly amended its Standing Orders to prevent similar situations in the future.

There was also progress on several murder cases. In Kenya, three people were convicted of murdering the parliamentarian Melitus Mugabe Were in 2008. IPU believes the conviction in Russia of one of the organizers of the 1998 murder of Galina Starovoitova offers great potential for identifying all those who instigated her death. And in Sri Lanka, there was significant development on the killings of Joseph Pararajasingham and Nadarajah Raviraj in 2005 and 2006 respectively, with the arrest of those allegedly responsible. Nevertheless, the identity of those arrested confirms the concerns originally voiced by complainants and a UN investigation about State responsibility and collusion with paramilitary groups in the murders.

On-the-ground action

Our Committee carried out several on-site missions and visits to acquire a better understanding of the issues on specific cases, share its concerns with relevant national authorities, and identify satisfactory solutions in line with international human rights standards.

In May, a mission was carried out in Oman concerning the case of former Omani MP Talib Al-Mamari, who is serving a three-year prison sentence for his involvement in a demonstration. His continued imprisonment led to the Committee adopting a decision in November under its emergency procedure in which it denounced the justification for his prosecution and conviction. The Committee considered Al-Mamari was merely exercising his rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, and called for his immediate release.

Violations of the human rights of MPs – 2015

Number of cases currently examined by IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

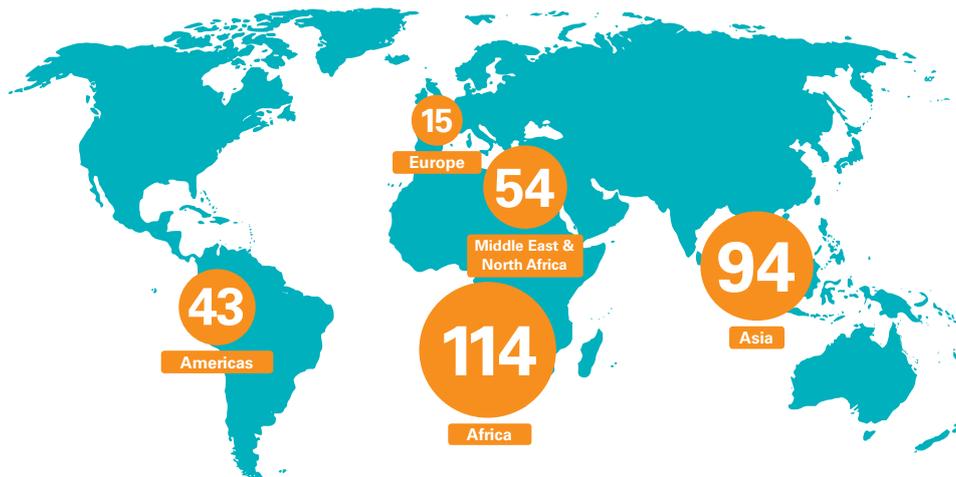
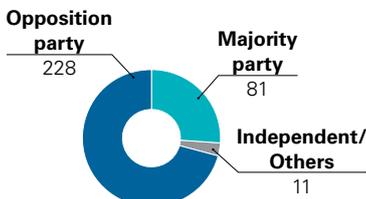


Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

320 MPs
in **43** countries

Most common violations

- 1 Arbitrary detention
- 2 Lack of fair trial
- 3 Violation of freedom of expression
- 4 Unlawful suspension and loss of parliamentary mandate



IPU's Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians is a unique source of protection and redress for MPs killed, attacked, intimidated or jailed for their political views or differences.

If MPs cannot do their job safely or without fear, they cannot ensure parliament does its job of protecting the human rights and

political freedoms of society as a whole. Without respect for fundamental human rights such as freedom of thought and expression, the right to life, liberty, equality and the right to take part in government, there can be no democracy.

IPU works with parliaments to ensure they deliver on their human rights responsibilities.



www.ipu.org
<http://www.ipu.org/iss-e/hr-law.htm>
postbox@ipu.org



President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and British MP Ann Clwyd.
© IPU/Pierre Albouy, 2015

The situation of jailed former opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim and 11 opposition parliamentarians, including his daughter Nurul Izzah Anwar, continues to concern IPU. A Committee mission in late June concluded with calls for Anwar Ibrahim to receive prompt medical attention and for a judicial review of his case to offer him proper redress. The Committee also called for the dismissal of charges and investigations against the other parliamentarians under a previous version of the Sedition Act as they ran counter to the parliamentarians' rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

Serious concerns about the amended Sedition Act also remained, with the Committee mission concluding that it continued to challenge fundamental freedoms. It called on the authorities to review the Act and bring it into line with relevant international human rights standards.

In September, a Committee mission to Mongolia aimed to get a better understanding on why those responsible for the 1998 assassination of Zorig Sanjasuuren, viewed by many as the father of democracy in Mongolia, had not been brought to justice. Mongolian authorities were urged to redouble their efforts to resolve the crime and to declassify the case in order to counter eroding confidence in the investigation.

A Committee delegation also visited the Organization of American States to explore ways to accelerate the examination of cases of Latin American parliamentarians. There was particular focus on cases in Colombia which raise concern about lack of fair trial for parliamentarians, the pursuit of justice regarding assassinations in the 1990s, and more recent death threats against current parliamentarians, including Senator Ivan Cepeda.

Throughout the year, the Committee brought a number of very serious cases before our Members. In particular, there is deep concern at the fate of two former Iraqi parliamentarians,

Ahmed Jamil Salman Al-Alwani and Mohamed Gatof Mansour Al-Dainy. Both were sentenced to death at first instance. Although Al-Dainy's conviction was quashed in 2015, he remains detained at a military intelligence detention centre in Baghdad. Al-Alwani, a prominent critic of former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki and of the persecution of Sunni Muslims, is allegedly in solitary confinement without access to medical treatment. IPU urged the Iraqi authorities to release Al-Dainy, to lift the death sentence against Al-Alwani and to immediately initiate an appeal process that respects fair trial guarantees.

Increasing understanding of human rights

Building parliamentarians' understanding of human rights and the UN mechanisms that ensure their full respect remains a fundamental part of our work to promote and protect the human rights of all people across the world. In 2014, we began to carry out a more targeted and region-specific approach by holding human rights seminars for African, European and Latin American parliaments.

In 2015, IPU continued to pursue this approach begun in 2014. We held a regional seminar involving 60 parliamentarians from 19 Asian and Pacific countries to help increase parliamentary understanding of the work of the UN's Human Rights Council and human rights norms. It also identified ways the parliamentarians could better promote these norms. There was wide agreement amongst the parliamentarians to address human rights challenges in the region as next steps by working more closely with national institutions and creating a constructive human rights environment in parliaments.

Promoting child rights

Nearly half of all deaths among children under five are attributable to malnutrition, according to the UN's children's agency, UNICEF. This translates into the unnecessary loss of about three million young lives a year. How can parliaments contribute to better child nutrition and guarantee a child's right to a decent life? These questions were addressed during an IPU-organized seminar that focused on the problem in the Southern Africa Development Community countries. More than 100 participants, including 40 parliamentarians from 10 countries, called for a review of existing legislation using a nutrition-sensitive approach, holding governments to account for high child mortality and harmonizing regional efforts to tackle the problem.

Honouring children's rights initiatives

For the second consecutive year, an IPU Assembly featured the [Future Policy Awards ceremony](#), which in 2015 focused on the world's best laws and policies to secure children's rights. Organized jointly with the World Future Council and UNICEF, the ceremony highlighted visionary new approaches and achievements in defining policies on children's rights and in their implementation. The overall winner, [Zanzibar's 2011 Children's Act](#), was given the award for its effective response to child abuse and violence and for its promotion and protection of child rights that have led to a marked societal change in attitudes towards children there.

Other awardees were Maryland USA's 2011 Environmental Literacy Standards, Finland's 1998 Basic Education Act, Sweden's 1979 Children and Parent Code to prohibit all corporal punishment and other humiliating treatment of children, and Argentina's 2008 Supreme Court decision on environmental rights.

Zanzibar 2011 Children's Act won the Future Policy Award for its effective protection of children and the promotion of their rights in the community.
© AFP/Gabriel Bouys, 2013







Improving the health of people

The adoption of the SDGs with specific goals and targets on health, nutrition and well-being has reinforced our commitment to ensure the right to good health is a reality for people across the world. Since 2008, we have focused our efforts on ending HIV/AIDS and promoting maternal, newborn and child health over the past four years.

Our work on maternal, newborn and child health saw a continued growth in activities at national, regional and global levels during 2015. IPU concluded agreements with Bangladesh, Lesotho, Rwanda and Uganda to advance the work and contribution of parliaments to improve legislation, financing and accountability.

A partnership with the Bangladesh Parliament will help develop the capacity of the country's parliamentarians to promote maternal and child health, including by ending child marriage. The practice has devastating short and long-term health consequences on the health of the child bride. The children of young mothers are also at significantly greater risk of death during birth or during infancy.

Bangladeshi child bride, Sonamoni with her baby daughter. IPU is working with the Bangladesh Parliament to raise awareness of the devastating health consequences of child marriage.

© UNICEF/Kiron, 2013

In Lesotho, where health is a priority in national development plans, our agreement will support parliament to review its actions on the Millennium Development Goals in order to learn lessons and improve its performance on the SDGs.

The focus in Rwanda continues to be on sexual and reproductive health, giving priority to community outreach and citizen engagement with parliamentarians.

In Uganda, the current advocacy strategy on maternal, newborn and child health has been reviewed and a wide range of recommendations made for parliamentary action during 2016–2021. These include amending the constitution to include the right to health care for women and children, tabling bills on health and a national health insurance scheme, and improving birth registration.

At the regional level and together with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) and other partners, IPU carried out two budget advocacy workshops in Southern Africa and Asia. Bringing together parliaments, media, civil society

and government representatives, these events were a continuation of our work on budget advocacy that began in 2013. They aim to help parliaments fulfil their oversight role and ensure national budget plans allocate the necessary resources to meet the health priorities of the country. Each of these countries is now implementing a joint advocacy plan to increase budget allocations and accountability for maternal, newborn and child health.

At the global level, IPU provided a parliamentary contribution to the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health 2015–2030. The strategy recognizes the vital role of parliaments in delivering improvements in this area. The Organization subsequently made a strong commitment to the Strategy, pledging to continue to support our Members and parliaments everywhere to ensure effective legislation and oversight, and in strengthening budget advocacy capacity.

The impact that parliaments and parliamentarians can have on health was underlined by WHO Director-General Margaret Chan. In her first ever address to our Members during the 133rd Assembly, she called for parliaments to step up efforts to improve the health of citizens the world over. In a new generation of complex health challenges, she

called for parliamentary support for WHO efforts to meet the health-related SDGs and in turn offered to strengthen her organization's collaboration with IPU by providing technical support to our advisory bodies.

Joining forces with UNAIDS

2015 saw the successful completion of a series of activities on HIV/AIDS funded through an agreement with the UN's joint programme, UNAIDS. The agreement had provided a roadmap for parliamentary engagement on the AIDS response. The highlight of this work was the launch of joint IPU/UNAIDS guidelines for parliamentarians, *Fast tracking HIV treatment: Parliamentary action and policy options*, at the 133rd IPU Assembly. The guidelines define a range of measures parliaments can take to ensure all citizens with HIV have access to treatment. HIV treatment is a cornerstone of the AIDS response, helping prevent deaths and new infections, but is still not accessible to all who need it.

The completion of one agreement between the two organizations was followed by immediately putting in place another. A new framework for cooperation for the post-2015 period focuses on supporting parliaments to meet one of the targets of SDG 2 – ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.



UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé and Secretary General Martin Chungong jointly launched guidelines on fast-tracking HIV treatment at the 133rd Assembly.
© IPU/Pierre Albouy, 2015

Securing the future of our planet

2015 saw the intensification of global efforts to identify solutions to some of the most urgent environmental challenges of modern times, including climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Together with the Japanese Parliament, IPU organized a Parliamentary Meeting in parallel to the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai in March. The Meeting helped parliamentarians increase their understanding of key elements of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and identify a set of legislative actions needed to implement the framework.

The UN Conference in turn explicitly recognized the role of parliamentarians and IPU as an organization in supporting and advocating disaster risk reduction efforts.

At the end of the year, our focus and that of the world was on how the future of our planet could be secured. When Paris hosted the all-important session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21/CMP11) in December, a joint IPU and French Parliament high-profile Parliamentary Meeting held in parallel to the UN Conference underscored yet again why parliaments and parliamentarians are so crucial to the successful implementation of international agreements. Attended by close to 650 parliamentary delegates from 90 countries, the two-day parliamentary event was one of the largest specialized meetings ever organized by IPU and spotlighted the growing engagement of our Members on the issue.

“It is important [...] to encourage parliamentarians to support the implementation of disaster risk reduction by developing new or amending relevant legislation and setting budget allocations.”
“[...] The Inter-Parliamentary Union and other relevant regional bodies and mechanisms for parliamentarians, as appropriate, [should] continue supporting and advocating disaster risk reduction and the strengthening of national legal frameworks.”

*Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
2015–2030*



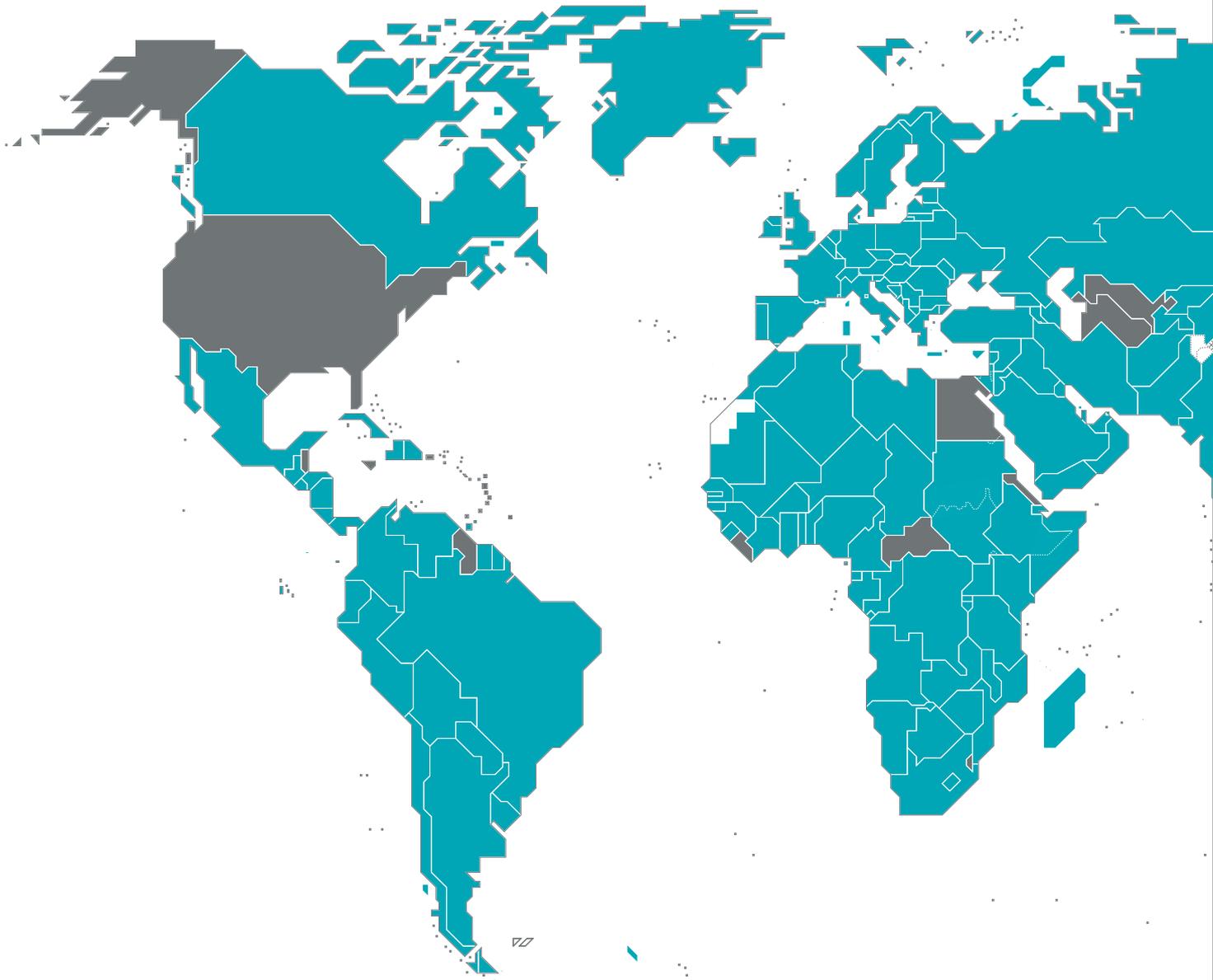
Record temperatures and floods in 2015 increased the urgency for vital disaster risk reduction measures.
© AFP/Yoshikazu Tsuno, 2015



The UN Secretary-General, heads of UN agencies, prominent climate scientists and public figures engaged with our Members and enriched the debate with their insights into the urgency of the situation. The consensus outcome document adopted at the end of the Parliamentary Meeting reflected the need for effective climate action, including through legislative means. Parliamentarians committed to using their powers and responsibilities to vigorously fight climate change and to be vigilant in the implementation and oversight of the Paris Agreement that came out of COP21/CMP11.

IPU, in turn, was called on to step up our climate-related work. The Parliamentary Action Plan on Climate Change, due to be formally adopted by our Members during the 134th Assembly in Lusaka in March 2016, should provide an appropriate forward-looking framework for this work. The Action Plan places special emphasis on building up partnerships and coalitions. And so it was fitting that an agreement on common action was signed during the Parliamentary Meeting between IPU and former Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger, in his capacity as the Founding Chair of R20 – Regions of Climate Action. The two organizations are teaming up on projects that aim to strengthen the capacity of parliaments to tackle climate-related problems.

An agreement between IPU and Arnold Schwarzenegger's Regions of Climate Action will work to strengthen the parliamentary response to climate change.
© French National Assembly, 2015



IPU at a glance

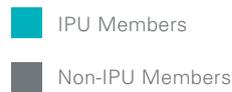
Membership

In 2015, the Parliament of Fiji was readmitted to IPU. Observer status was accorded to Liberal International and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.

IPU currently comprises 167 national parliaments and 10 Associate Members.

Members (167)

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman,



Associate Members (10)

Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Andean Parliament, Arab Parliament, Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), European Parliament, Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO), Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

Composition of the Executive Committee on 1 February 2016

	Members	Expiry of term
Ex-officio President	Mr. S. Chowdhury (Bangladesh)	October 2017
Members	Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola)	October 2019
	Mr. R. del Picchia (France)	October 2018
	Ms. G. Eldegard (Norway)	October 2019
	Mr. E. Ethuro (Kenya)	October 2019
	Ms. A. Habibou (Niger)	March 2019
	Mr. K. Jalali (Islamic Republic of Iran)	October 2019
	Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation)	October 2019
	Mr. I. Liddell-Grainger (United Kingdom)	October 2017
	Mr. A. Lins (Brazil)	October 2019
	Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia)	March 2016
	Mr. N. Schrijver (Netherlands)	October 2017
	Mr. S. Suzuki (Japan)	October 2018
	Mr. Tran Van Hang (Viet Nam)	October 2019
	Mr. D. Vivas (Venezuela)	October 2016
	<i>Vacancy</i> (Algeria)*	October 2018
	<i>Vacancy</i> (United Arab Emirates)*	April 2017

* The member of the Executive Committee from this country has ceased to be a parliamentarian. In accordance with Article 25-6 of the Statutes, an election shall be held at the next session of the Governing Council. If the newly elected member is from a different parliament than the outgoing member, he/she will serve a full term. Otherwise, the new member shall complete the term of office of his/her predecessor.

Standing Committees: composition of the Bureaux as of 1 February 2016

		Expiry of term
Peace and International Security		
President	Mr. J.R. Tau (South Africa)	March 2016
Vice-President	<i>Vacancy</i>	
African Group	<i>Current President</i>	
	Mr. P. Nzengué Mayila (Gabon)	March 2018
	Ms. E. Banda (Zambia)	March 2019
Arab Group	Ms. S. Hajji Taqawi (Bahrain)	March 2018
	Mr. A. Al-Ahmad (Palestine)	March 2018
	<i>Vacancy</i>	
Asia-Pacific Group	Ms. S. Barakzai (Afghanistan)	March 2018
	Mr. M. Hosseini Sadr (Islamic Rep. of Iran)	March 2018
	Mr. R.K. Singh (India)	March 2019
Eurasia Group	Ms. K. Atshemyan (Armenia)	March 2018
	Mr. M. Ashimbayev (Kazakhstan)	March 2018
	Mr. A. Klimov (Russian Federation)	March 2018
Group of Latin America and the Caribbean	Ms. G. Fermín Nuesi (Dominican Republic)	March 2018
	Mr. Y. Jabour (Venezuela)	March 2018
	<i>Vacancy</i>	
Twelve Plus Group	Ms. J. Durrieu (France)	March 2018
	Mr. A. Neofytou (Cyprus)	March 2018
	Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal)	March 2018

Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee to the 134th Assembly

Ms. C. Guittet (France)
Dr. K. Hari Babu (India)

Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

President	<i>Vacancy</i>	
Vice-President	Mr. O. Hav (Denmark)	March 2018
African Group	Mr. A. Cissé (Mali) Mr. F. Musendu Flungu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) <i>Vacancy</i>	March 2018 October 2019
Arab Group	Mr. K. Abdullah Abul (Kuwait) Ms. Z. Ely Salem (Mauritania) <i>Vacancy</i>	March 2018 March 2018
Asia-Pacific Group	Ms. N. Marino (Australia) Mr. N. Singh (India) Ms. S. Tioulong (Cambodia)	March 2018 October 2019 October 2018
Eurasia Group	<i>Vacancy</i> <i>Vacancy</i> <i>Vacancy</i>	
Group of Latin America and the Caribbean	Mr. L.A. Heber (Uruguay) Mr. J.R. León Rivera (Peru) Ms. C. Prado (Panama)	October 2019 October 2019 October 2019
Twelve Plus Group	<i>Current Vice-President</i> Ms. S. de Bethune (Belgium) Ms. J. Mijatovic (Serbia)	October 2018 March 2017

Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee to the 134th Assembly

Mr. A. Destexhe (Belgium)
Mr. H. Kouskous (Morocco)

Democracy and Human Rights

President	<i>Vacancy</i>	
Vice-President	<i>Vacancy</i>	
African Group	Mr. J.-A. Agbré Touni (Côte d'Ivoire) Mr. D.P. Losiakou (Kenya) <i>Vacancy</i>	March 2018 March 2018
Arab Group	Mr. M.N. Abdrabbou (Iraq) Ms. J. Alsammak (Bahrain) Ms. F. Dib (Syrian Arab Republic)	March 2018 March 2019 March 2018
Asia-Pacific Group	Ms. Lork Kheng (Cambodia) <i>Vacancy</i> <i>Vacancy</i>	March 2018
Eurasia Group	M. V. Senko (Belarus) <i>Vacancy</i> <i>Vacancy</i>	March 2018
Group of Latin America and the Caribbean	Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname) Mr. G. Rondón Fudinaga (Peru) Ms. K. Sosa (El Salvador)	March 2018 March 2019 March 2018
Twelve Plus Group	Ms. A. King (New Zealand) Ms. S. Koutra-Koukouma (Cyprus) <i>Vacancy</i>	March 2017 March 2018

Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee to the 135th Assembly

Ms. L. Markus (Australia)
To be appointed

		Expiry of term*
United Nations Affairs		
President	Mr. A. Avsan (Sweden)	March 2019
Vice-President	Mr. M. El Hassan Al Amin (Sudan)	March 2018
African Group	Mr. D.G. Boko (Botswana) Mr. S. Chiheb (Algeria) Ms. C.N. Mukiite (Kenya)	March 2019 October 2018 March 2018
Arab Group	<i>Current Vice-President</i> Mr. A.O. Al Mansouri (United Arab Emirates) Ms. R. Benmassaoud (Morocco)	March 2018 March 2018
Asia-Pacific Group	Mr. A.K. Azad (Bangladesh) Mr. J. Jahangirzadeh (Islamic Rep. of Iran) Ms. E. Nursanty (Indonesia)	March 2019 October 2018 October 2018
Eurasia Group	Ms. A. Bimendina (Kazakhstan) Mr. I. Dodon (Republic of Moldova) <i>Vacancy</i>	October 2019 October 2019
Group of Latin America and the Caribbean	Mr. J.C. Mahía (Uruguay) Ms. I. Montenegro (Nicaragua) Ms. G. Ortiz González (Mexico)	March 2018 March 2018 March 2018
Twelve Plus Group	<i>Current President</i> Mr. D. Dawson (Canada) Ms. A. Trettergstuen (Norway)	March 2018 October 2019

* In accordance with Rule 8.1 of the Rules of the Standing Committees as amended in October 2013, Members of the Bureau shall be elected for a term of two years and may be re-elected for a further period of two years. The date featuring in the column "Expiry of term" corresponds to the maximum theoretical duration of the mandate.

Association of Secretaries-General of Parliaments

More than 100 parliamentarians and Secretaries-General of parliaments took part in a panel debate on "Powerful parliaments: building capacity for effective parliamentary oversight". Organized jointly by IPU and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) at the 133rd Assembly in Geneva, the debate was part of the ASGP's contribution to the second Global Parliamentary Report due to be launched in 2016. Participants shared experiences on strengthening the capacity of parliaments to oversee government policies, expenditure and activities.

The ASGP brings together secretaries-general and other senior office holders in charge of parliamentary services. It studies the law, procedure, practice and working methods of different parliaments and proposes measures for improvement and for securing cooperation between the services of different parliaments.

It is a consultative body of IPU, and the ASGP President reports annually to the IPU Executive Committee on the Association's activities.

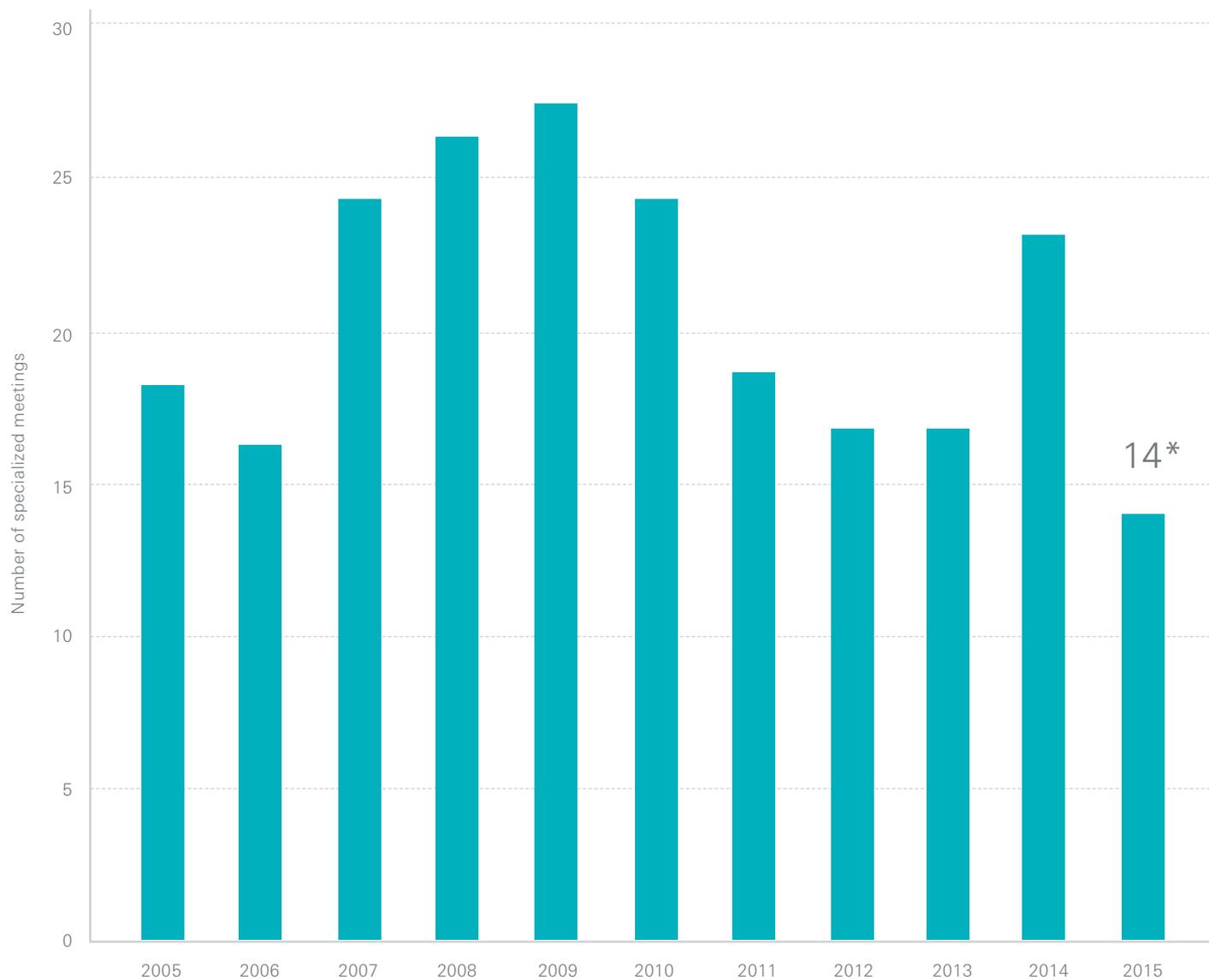
The ASGP assists IPU on subjects within the scope of the Association. Studies carried out by IPU relating to parliamentary laws and practices are routinely shared with the ASGP and benefit from its input.

In 2015, the ASGP also provided substantial support to many of the parliamentary capacity-building projects carried out by IPU. Several of its members also provided expertise during assessment and training missions to Afghanistan, Equatorial Guinea, Myanmar, Palestine and Tunisia.

Specialized meetings in 2015

- Annual 2015 session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO
Geneva (WTO Headquarters), 16–17 February 2015
- Regional seminar on “Translating international human rights commitments into national realities: The contribution of parliament to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council”
Manila (Philippines), 26–27 February 2015
- Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women
New York, 11 March 2015
- Parliamentary meeting at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
Sendai (Japan), 13 March 2015
- IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Tokyo
Tokyo (Japan), 27–28 May 2015
- Regional seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals for the parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe
Bucharest (Romania), 15–16 June 2015
- Twelfth workshop of parliamentary scholars and parliamentarians organized by the Centre for Legislative Studies at Hull University and sponsored by IPU
Wroxton (United Kingdom), 25–26 July 2015
- 10th Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament
New York, 29–30 August 2015
- Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament
New York (UN Headquarters),
31 August–2 September 2015
- Regional seminar for Southern African parliaments on promoting child nutrition
Windhoek (Namibia), 28–29 September 2015
- Parliamentary session within the framework of the annual WTO Public Forum
Geneva (WTO Headquarters), 30 September 2015
- 34th session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO
Geneva (IPU Headquarters), 1 October 2015
- Conference on “Ensuring everyone’s right to nationality: The role of parliaments in preventing and ending statelessness”, organized with UNHCR
Cape Town (South Africa), 26–27 November 2015
- Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21/CMP11)
Paris (France), 5–6 December 2015

Ten-year evolution in IPU meetings



* As the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament took place in 2015, the number of other specialized meetings was exceptionally lower.

Financial results

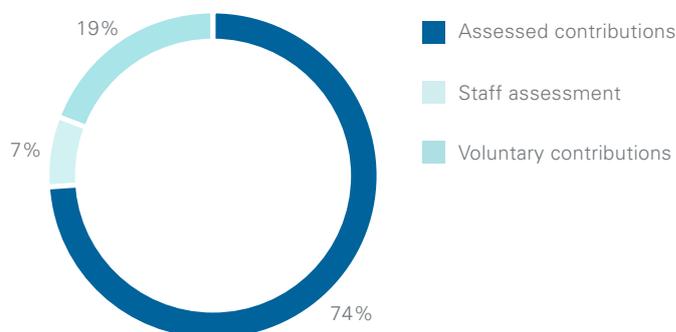
Financing

IPU is financed primarily through the annual assessed contributions from Member Parliaments. Additional revenue is derived from the internal staff assessment, programme support cost charges, interest, fund income and meeting room rentals. In line with International Public Sector Accounting Standards, IPU no longer recognizes the staff assessment element as either income or expenditure in its Statement of Financial Performance but utilizes it for budgetary purposes.

In addition, IPU also solicits bilateral and multilateral donors for voluntary funding that is used to finance technical cooperation projects and activities. A summary of revenue sources for 2015 is presented below, including staff assessment for expenditure comparison.

IPU revenues by source (budget basis)

	CHF (Swiss francs)	%
Assessed contributions	10,601,676	74%
Staff assessment	981,136	7%
Voluntary contributions	2,711,755	19%
Investment and other income	12,751	0%
Total revenue	14,307,318	



Expenditures

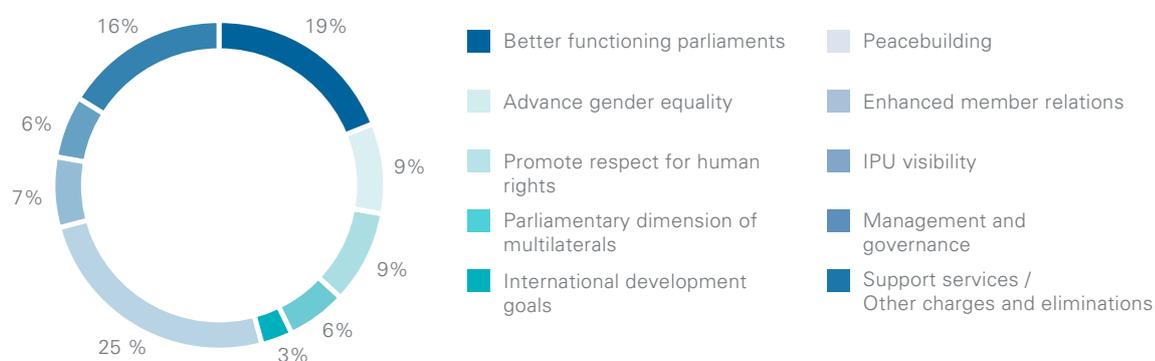
IPU expenditures are dedicated to achieving the strategic objectives of the Organization. A breakdown of expenditures by strategic objective is shown in the following chart, which includes staff assessment for comparison.

IPU expenditures by strategic objective (budget basis)

	CHF (Swiss francs)	%
Better functioning parliaments	2,650,422	19%
Advance gender equality	1,216,889	9%
Promote respect for human rights	1,344,134	9%
Parliamentary dimension of multilaterals	834,393	6%
International development goals	450,634	3%
Peacebuilding	70,298	0%
Enhanced member relations	3,543,556	25%
IPU visibility	932,600	7%
Management and governance	806,947	6%
Support services	2,522,167	17%
Other charges and eliminations	-86,878	-1%

Total expenses

14,285,162



Financial statements

The consolidated financial statements of IPU and its legacy Pension Fund for 2015 are prepared in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) on a full accrual and going-concern basis. The organization's financial statements are audited annually by IPU's external auditor under mandate from the Executive Committee. The external auditor is appointed from a national audit office for a term of three years, renewable once.

This is the fourth year in which the IPU financial statements have been consolidated with the legacy Pension Fund and prepared in full compliance with IPSAS.

Further information on IPU's financial processes, including its annual financial statements and consolidated budgets, are available at: www.ipu.org/finance-e/overview.htm.

IPU and closed Pension Fund

Statement of financial position at 31 December 2015 in CHF (Swiss francs)

	2015	2014
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash on hand	9,122	8,675
Cash in current accounts	5,777,679	8,638,737
Cash held by investment fund manager	261,344	331,575
Term deposits and savings accounts	4,738,412	1,568,085
Subtotal cash and cash equivalents	10,786,557	10,547,072
Accounts receivable		
– From Members	605,120	719,794
– From donors	332,440	38,760
– From tax reimbursements	62,813	172,664
– Others	23,144	59,114
Subtotal accounts receivable	1,023,517	990,332
Investments	9,230,735	10,335,248
Other current assets	224,884	255,670
Subtotal current assets	21,265,692	22,128,323
Non-current assets		
Fixed assets		
- Building and grounds	8,737,880	8,984,809
- Furnishings	43,271	53,084
- General equipment	–	286
- IT equipment	80,448	91,302
- Vehicles	28,975	18,046
	8,890,573	9,147,527
Intangible assets	–	–
Subtotal non-current assets	8,890,573	9,147,527
Total assets	30,156,265	31,275,850

	2015	2014
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued payables	225,432	211,400
Advances from Members	521,621	257,421
Deferred revenue	2,050,007	2,194,915
Loans	189,600	189,600
Subtotal current liabilities	2,986,660	2,853,336
Borrowings long term	5,497,881	5,620,663
Closed Pension Fund	11,073,299	11,793,777
Other employee benefits	1,534,570	1,449,623
Subtotal non-current liabilities	18,105,750	18,864,063
Total liabilities	21,092,410	21,717,399

	2015	2014
Net assets		
Restricted funds	477,335	532,510
Accumulated fund balance (working capital fund after contribution)	8,586,520	9,025,941
Net assets	9,063,855	9,558,451

IPU and closed Pension Fund

Statement of financial performance at 31 December 2015 in CHF (Swiss francs)

	2015	2014
Revenue		
Assessed contributions	10,601,676	10,952,900
Voluntary contributions	2,711,755	2,562,058
Investment income	(190,306)	655,641
Other income	31,860	66,172
Total revenue	13,154,985	14,236,771

	2015	2014
Expenses		
Personnel expenditure – permanent staff	8,099,255	8,165,396
Personnel expenditure – temporary staff	2,564,088	2,162,423
Change in closed Pension Fund provision	-691,416	-660,216
Travel expenditure	1,175,341	1,464,232
Contractual services	855,768	960,090
Operating expenses	792,562	871,371
Supplies, materials and equipment	142,765	174,109
Allowance for doubtful accounts	143,097	-65,277
Grants and honoraria	157,035	127,285
Depreciation	308,970	325,849
Amortization of loan	66,818	68,214
Loss on foreign exchange	35,298	-
Total expenses	13,649,581	13,593,476
Operating surplus/(deficit)	(494,596)	643,295

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Inter-Parliamentary Union

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