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## Implementing Sustainable Development Goals through a human rights perspective

Seminar for the Pacific parliaments organized jointly by the Parliament of Fiji and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

**16, 17 and 18 November 2016, Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi (Fiji)**

### PROVISONAL PROGRAMME

In September 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets to guide their development agendas and policies over the next 15 years. The full text of the SDGs and targets are available online at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

The SDGs constitute a “plan of action for people, planet and prosperity”, with the overall concern to leave no one behind. Human rights and SDGs are integrally linked and mutually reinforcing. Human rights provide an important legal framework for the implementation of SDGs. In turn, the implementation of the SDGs will contribute significantly to the enjoyment of human rights.

Under the auspices of the IPU, parliaments have committed to translating the SDGs into enforceable domestic laws, to holding governments to account and to aligning budgets with national sustainable development plans. In order to deliver on this commitment, parliaments and decision-making processes have to be strengthened so that they are fit for purpose.

The seminar for the parliaments of the Pacific aims to promote greater awareness among parliamentarians about the SDGs and how parliaments can contribute to their implementation. The meeting will focus on SDGs that are of particular relevance to the region, such as those related to climate change and its effects, gender equality and social equity. Participants will also look at international human rights norms and mechanisms, in particular the work and procedures of UN Human Rights Council, to help ensure that the implementation of the SDGs is fully respectful of human rights.



## Wednesday, 16 November 2016

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8 a.m.	<b>Registration</b>
9 a.m.	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Representatives OHCHR</b></li><li>- <b>Representative UNDP</b></li><li>- <b>Representative of IPU</b></li><li>- <b>Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji</b></li></ul>
9.45 a.m.	<i>Coffee Break</i>
10 a.m.	<b>Key note address on the Sustainable Development Goals and human rights: two sides of the same coin</b> <p>This keynote address will highlight the link between the SDGs and human rights, and set the course for the seminar.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To be identified</li></ul>
10.45 a.m.	<b>Session I: The SDGs and why they matter to the region</b> <p>This session will present both a comprehensive view of the SDGs and highlight the targets which are critical for the region. It will also draw links with human rights commitments, current challenges faced in the region and how overcoming them will contribute to advancing the SDGs.</p> <p>Discussion</p>
12.30 p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>
2 p.m.	<b>Session II: The role of parliaments in implementing the SDGs</b> <p>As representatives of the people committed to defend their rights, parliamentarians can use their constitutional powers to adopt legislation, oversee government action and adopt the national budget to ensure the effective implementation of the SDGs.</p> <p>During this session, parliamentarians will explore how they can use their powers to advance the socio-cultural, economic and environmental pillars of the SDGs and their countries' human rights commitments.</p> <p>Discussion</p>
3.30 p.m.	<i>Coffee break</i>
3.45 p.m.	<b>Session III: Governance and the SDGs</b> <p>This session will introduce SDG 16, which highlights the importance of effective institutions, governance, inclusion, participation, rights and security in order to achieve sustainable development. Strong democratic institutions, that have the power to act on behalf of the people, are needed to secure an inclusive decision-making process and advance the SDG and human rights agenda.</p> <p>The session will focus on strategies to enhance governance and democratic parliaments. It will also discuss ways to enhance citizen engagement and establish effective partnerships to further strengthen parliamentary contributions towards implementing the goals.</p>
5.15 p.m.	<b>Regional Launch of the IPU Self-Assessment toolkit on SDGs</b> <p>The IPU toolkit is designed to help parliaments to assess the extent to which they are fit for the purpose of helping to implement the SDGs in their country. The toolkit is relevant to all parliaments. It can be used to identify means and processes available to each legislature, as well as the institutional gaps that need to be filled to support SDG implementation.</p>
7 p.m.	<i>Dinner</i>

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## Thursday, 17 November 2016

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9 a.m.

### **Session III: Ensuring the right to a healthy and protected environment to mitigate climate change in the Pacific**

The Pacific islands live on subsistence agriculture which ensures local food security and the exportation of cash crop for foreign exchange. However, ocean warming, tropical cyclones and other manifestations of climate change negatively impact their economy and threaten the existence of some. This session will present prevention and mitigation measures included in the SDGs and other relevant cross-sectors frameworks, namely the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Paris agreement on climate change.

Discussion

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11 a.m.

*Coffee break*

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11.30 a.m.

### **Session IV: Women's rights and gender equality, and their impact on the achievement of SDGs**

In the Pacific region, as in many other regions, gender-based disparities disadvantage women, impede their development and that of their societies. This session will bring attention to the need for gender equality and the protection of women's rights (SDG 5) and place a particular focus on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Discussions will include strategies to eliminate violence against women and girls, and empowering and involving them in all stages of decision-making processes.

The session will also discuss how to mainstream gender equality in the implementation of the SDGs.

Discussion

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12.30 p.m.

*Lunch*

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2.30 p.m.

### **Session IV: (cont'd)**

Discussion

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4 p.m.

*Coffee break*

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4.15 p.m.

### **Session VI: Social equity as a critical factor for sustainable development**

The commitment to 'leave no one behind' is a key feature of the SDGs. The idea that 'no goal should be met unless it is met for everyone' cuts across all goals and is clearly addressed through SDG 10. This session will introduce the impact of social and economic inequalities on achieving the SDGs in the region. It will discuss how a fair distribution of resources, equitable access to services, including education and health, and the involvement of all segments of society in the decision-making process are at the heart of achieving the SDGs for all. In so doing the session will pay particular attention to the Human Rights Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights.

Discussion

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5.30 p.m.

**End of Day 2**

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## Friday, 18 November 2016

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9 a.m.	<b>Introductory remarks on the international norms and mechanisms for the promotion and the protection of human rights</b>
	Discussion
9.45 p.m.	<i>Coffee break</i>
10 a.m.	<b>Session VII: Oversight and monitoring – parliaments’ role</b>
	Without parliamentary action - be it passing laws or overseeing government action - very few commitments and recommendations - whether human rights or others - would actually be implemented. Parliaments can play a critical role in the implementation phase, as well as in review and implementation mechanisms.
	This session will examine the various roles that Parliaments can play in major processes such as the UPR, other United Nations human rights mechanisms and the recently developed High Level Political Platform aimed at reviewing progress in the implementation of the SDGs.
	Discussion
12 p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>
1.30 p.m.	<b>Session VIII: National case studies on involvement in the UPR</b>
	The Executive - often together with national human rights institutions - is in the driver's seat in preparing the UPR reporting cycle and ensuring implementation of its recommendations. Parliaments are often largely unaware of this process, although this is slowly changing.
	This session will look at three or four interesting national case studies of how the UPR report was prepared and how UPR recommendations have been implemented. It will examine in particular the involvement of parliament in the process and its interaction with other human rights stakeholders.
	Discussion
3 p.m.	<i>Coffee break</i>
3.15 p.m.	<b>Session IX: Next steps – what do parliaments need?</b>
	<b>The seminar will conclude with a session dedicated at identifying strategies and needs</b>
	This session will examine what parliaments need to act and what practical steps they can take to advance integration of the goals nationally and to monitor progress.
	It will also discuss opportunities to mainstream the goals into the work and functioning of parliaments and to make sure national policies and plans are consistent with them.
	Discussion
4.30 p.m.	<b>Presentation of the report of the seminar by the Rapporteur</b>
5 p.m.	<b>Closing session of the seminar</b>

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