



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.



United Nations

Driving democratic change – IPU at 125 and beyond

30 June 2014



Background

Over the past 125 years, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has been the conduit and platform for national parliaments to work for peace and democracy across the globe and so make tangible differences to the lives of ordinary citizens. For nearly 70 of those years, the United Nations has transformed international relations through the involvement of its Member States. For both organizations, finding shared solutions to shared problems is the key to success.

IPU's fundamental tenet of "dialogue": bringing all voices to the table to prevent and resolve conflicts – espoused by its Founding Fathers – is as relevant today as it was back in 1889.

A world grounded in respect for human rights and equality for all is a major goal of both the IPU and the UN. As the entity that represents the people, parliament is critical to the successful translation of international agreements, particularly on these issues, into daily realities for citizens. The IPU, using its unique power of parliamentary collective thought, influence and action, has for 125 years been driving democratic change that has made a real difference to people's lives.

Objective

To mark its 125th anniversary year that begins on 30 June, a half-day event will take place at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

Bringing together the diplomatic, parliamentary, civil society and media communities, the event will chart and spotlight some of the many achievements made since 1889 in shaping a radically different world where peace, human rights, equality and human development underpin a desire for greater democracy. It will also discuss some of the many challenges that democracy faces.

The 30 June event will kick-start an initiative to make IPU, its work and its complementarity with the UN better known and understood in the lead-up to the 70th anniversary of the UN in 2015.

It is also the date on which the official handover from the outgoing to the incoming IPU Secretary General will take place, at a reception to be held at IPU Headquarters afterwards.

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Human Rights and Alliance of Civilizations Room (Room XX)
Palais des Nations Geneva

Provisional programme

Event moderator: Owen Bennett Jones, BBC World Service

15:00

Welcome addresses

Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, President, Inter-Parliamentary Union, and Mr. Michael Møller, Acting Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva

15:15

Democracy: Changing lives, making a difference

Debate with Mr. Pier Ferdinando Casini (Italy), Mr. Kenneth Marende (Kenya) and Ms. Dionysia Avgerinopoulou (Greece)

16:00

Personal testimonials

Mr. Mohamed Nasheed (Maldives) and Mr. Ivan Cepeda (Colombia)

16:10

Breaking the gender inequalities – women's political emancipation

Interactive debate with Ms. Margaret Mensah-Williams (Namibia), Ms. Fawzia Koofi (Afghanistan) and Ms. Elissa Golberg (Canada)

16:55

Personal testimonial

Ms. Tsedal Yohannes (Eritrea)

17:00

Will democracy survive the media?

Panel discussion with Mr. Ulrik Haagerup (Danish Broadcasting Cooperation) and Mr. Jimi Matthews (SABC TV, South Africa)

17:45

Personal testimonials

Mr. Kassoum Tapo (Mali)

17:50

Closing remarks

Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, IPU Secretary General, and Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General-elect

18:30

*Reception at the House of Parliaments, IPU Headquarters
5, chemin du Pommier, 1218 Le Grand-Saconnex*