

Inter-Parliamentary Union

Information brochure

What is the IPU?

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is the international organisation that brings together the parliaments of sovereign States. As such, it is the sole organisation that represents the legislative branch of government on a global scale. The membership of IPU currently stands at 144 national parliaments.

The mission of the IPU is defined in Article 1 of its Statutes: to strive for peace and cooperation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative institutions. Within this broad mandate, the organisation works to strengthen the sinews of parliamentary democracy throughout the world.

The IPU year revolves around the biannual assemblies. These are large conferences that bring together hundreds of MPs to discuss the most salient issues on the international agenda. The members express the parliamentary view on the questions of the day in the form of resolutions. Although these meetings were being held many decades before today's multilateral institutions were even dreamed about - the first conference was held in Paris in 1889 - they have recently acquired new significance. This is because, one year ago,

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The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) took possession of its new Headquarters, the *House of Parliaments*, in December 2002. In the words of the IPU Council President, Chilean Senator Sergio Páez, "the *House of Parliaments* is open to all parliaments of the world. These new premises will enable the IPU to bring members of parliament together more frequently to exchange experiences and advance the cause of peace and democracy".



Photo IPU/H.Salgado

IPU Council President Sergio Páez: *"The recent changes in the IPU will help provide a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation"*

Q : WHY HAS THE IPU UNDERTAKEN A REFORM PROCESS?

S.P. : The IPU is a unique political organisation that has stood the test of time. During more than 100 years of its history it has significantly contributed to peace and security and to advancing democracy. Like all organisations, the IPU has to adapt to rapidly changing times. In saying this, I am not only referring to globalisation and the latest information technology, but also to political changes in the world and upheavals in the global system for multilateral cooperation. Against that backdrop, the Union's Members have set some basic objectives for reform of the organisation. They want to make the IPU more relevant, topical and visible and to enable it to bring a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation. The reform under way will enable them to do so by giving the IPU structures and working methods that will allow it to respond more rapidly to world events, work in greater depth, have more inter-active debates and produce outcomes with more specific and substantive content.

Q : IT SOUNDS AMBITIOUS. HOW DO YOU INTEND TO DO ALL THAT?

S.P. : It is ambitious, but it can be done. First, we will bring our work-

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the United Nations granted observer status to the organisation and in so doing, awarded it the additional (and highly exceptional) right to circulate its documents in the General Assembly. For the IPU, this was a milestone in its campaign to bring a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations.

Looking back into the history of the last century, the IPU assemblies have also served to provide the backdrop for parliamentary diplomacy. Because it is a discreet activity, parliamentary diplomacy can never be assessed at its full value. Suffice to say that on numerous occasions, when relations between the executive branches of government have reached a standstill, the parliamentarians have managed to negotiate a way out of the impasse. Often, the solutions found have been more forward-looking and imaginative than the governments themselves could have envisaged.

Recent history has also seen the institution of parliament taking some harsh blows from its opponents. In any democracy, the parliamentary mandate should be seen as sacrosanct. Yet many countries fear the freedom of expression that is meant to prevail in the debating chamber, and often MPs have to fight to assert their rights. As part of the IPU's work to invigorate and defend representative institutions, its Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians takes up cases of breaches of individual MPs' rights, covering the entire range of abuses, from unlawful revocation of parliamentary privilege to outright murder.

Fortunately, not all of the IPU programmes to defend democracy have to contend with such gloomy aspects. The organisation is also busily involved in helping fledgling parliaments to find their feet. Assistance with the nuts and bolts of the day-to-day running of a parliament is one of the services for which the IPU members are particularly grateful. Currently, there are a dozen parliaments benefiting from IPU technical assistance projects.

A tenet that is central to the life of the Inter-Parliamentary Union holds that the voice of national parliaments must be heard within multilateral institutions if the latter are to take democratic decisions that echo the concerns of the ordinary citizen. This means that parliaments must be effectively able to influence government policy relating to those concerns. Mention has already been made of the relations between the IPU and the United Nations. The IPU members are aware that the principle applies to other organizations, such as the one that wields the greatest influence in the sphere of globalization and multilateral trade, the World Trade Organization. Consequently, this year has seen the second global parliamentary meeting on international trade. Once again MPs from throughout the world gathered in Geneva to put the concerns of their constituencies directly to the leaders of the WTO. Rightly or wrongly, the WTO is often criticized as being undemocratic, and the IPU is currently at the forefront of discussions to endow the trade organization with a parliamentary dimension.

Convinced that MPs should represent the entire electorate, the IPU is also deeply committed to improving the way women are represented in parliament. At the moment, barring the Nordic countries and one or two others, women MPs are in a depressingly small minority. As well as serving as a worldwide source of statistical material on this subject, the IPU runs a dynamic programme of seminars and activities designed to advance the interests of women politicians throughout the world.

There are many other activities that could be mentioned here. This brochure attempts to provide a broad description of what it is that the IPU does. It is also hoped that, as the Inter-Parliamentary Union inaugurates its new headquarters, the general public will increasingly see the *House of Parliaments* as a centre of parliamentary life at the heart of international Geneva. □

ing machinery more into line with the methods used by parliaments. We will work through standing committees with the help of rapporteurs. We intend to ensure that parliaments delegate members to these committees who are familiar with the subject and who are actively engaged in the same issues in parliament. Well-focused subjects will be assigned to the committees for study. The rapporteurs will prepare reports, draft resolutions and debates, so that the IPU can then adopt positions that will be submitted to international organizations and, more importantly, to parliaments for action. Finally, the committees will set up systems to check on how parliaments are following up IPU resolutions. Clearly, given present financial constraints, the reforms can only be introduced gradually. Even so, they should permit the organisation to play a more focussed and effective role at the centre of cooperation between national parliaments and multilateral institutions with the United Nations in the lead.

Q : WILL THE HOUSE OF PARLIAMENTS PLAY A ROLE IN THIS?

S.P : The IPU Headquarters - part of which dates back to the last century and part of which is highly modern - provides a visual symbol of the Organisation's efforts at reform: to bring an old institution into modern times. For the first time in its history, the IPU is now able to host parliamentary meetings at its own headquarters - a venue where members of parliament can meet in suitable meeting rooms. A place where future parliamentary committees can sit and work. The *House of Parliaments* will also help the IPU to enhance its profile within international Geneva, in particular by holding seminars on topics of prime interest to our organization, such as the promotion of peace and democracy. □

Frédéric Passy, Randal Cremer and Albert Gobat

Vindicated by History

Frédéric Passy and Randal Cremer, parliamentarians of France and Great Britain and joint founders of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1901 and 1903, have been proven right. Along with Albert Gobat of Switzerland, Nobel laureate for 1902, they have been vindicated by history.

At the close of the nineteenth century the major powers were busily manufacturing weaponry in the armaments race that culminated in the Great War. Against that backdrop, a few enlightened men and women were pleading for peace, arbitration and disarmament. Most have been forgotten in the sidelines of history, but the body that Passy and Cremer founded at the time with considerable foresight and scant funds is now the world organisation of parliaments. The IPU currently has a membership of 144 national parliaments and five

associate parliamentary assemblies.

Today, the organisation provides a forum where the elected representatives of the people, regardless of their political, cultural and religious persuasions, can come to grips with the conflicts which still afflict the planet, and bring the concerns of their electorates to the multilateral negotiating table.

From its beginnings as a non-governmental organization, the IPU has evolved into an inter-State body. In November 2002, after a long campaign, it obtained observer status with the United Nations. The status was granted along with the

exceptional right, hitherto only enjoyed by Palestine, to distribute its official documents in the General Assembly.

Peace and parliamentary diplomacy are two causes which Passy, Cremer and Gobat modestly advocated over a hundred years ago. Today, throughout the world, thousands of parliamentarians and many millions of the citizens they represent are standing up for the founding ideals of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. As Frédéric Passy wrote, "*The world is made of achieved utopias. Today's utopia is tomorrow's reality*". □

IPU Nobel Peace Prize Laureates

1901	Frédéric Passy (France)
1902	Albert Gobat (Switzerland)
1903	William Randal Cremer (United Kingdom)
1908	Frederic Bayer (Denmark)
1909	August Beernaert (Belgium)
1913	Henri La Fontaine (Belgium)
1921	Christian Lange (Norway)
1927	Henri Buisson (France)



(from left to right) French MP Frédéric Passy and British MP, Randal Cremer, co-founders of the IPU, and Swiss MP Albert Gobat, first Secretary General of the IPU

The new structure of the IPU

ASSEMBLY

Henceforth, the IPU will meet in plenary in the Assembly. It will hold one five-day session in the first half of each year, at the invitation of one of its members, and will meet for three days during the second half of each year. Initially, the shorter session will be held in Geneva.

The IPU Assembly will have three Standing Committees on (i) international peace and security; (ii) sustainable development, financing and trade; (iii) democracy and human rights. Each Committee will have a bureau composed of a president and five vice-presidents, thus representing each of the six geopolitical groups. At the Assembly session, the Standing Committees will each debate and prepare a report on one item and present a resolution for adoption by the Assembly.

Both sessions of the Assembly will be able to hold a panel discussion on a topic of general interest, including a hearing with the head of a major international organization.

The Assembly will be empowered to debate an emergency item. At the first and longer session of the year, there will also be opportunities for holding a general political debate with a thematic focus.

GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is the plenary policy-making body of the IPU. Each Council delegation is normally composed of three delegates, generally representing different political persuasions. Delegations must be mixed - all-male or all-female delegations are limited to two members.

The Council decides on all questions relating to the membership of



102nd IPU Conference in Berlin (Germany) 1999

Photo IPU/H.Salgado

the organisation and adopts the programme and budget. The Council also elects the members of the Union's governing bodies and, in particular, its President (to a single three-year term). It also elects the Secretary General (to a four-year renewable term). The current Council President is Chilean Senator Sergio Pérez (2002-2005).

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee is the chief administrative organ of the Union and prepares recommendations for action by the Governing Council. It is chaired by the Council President. Currently composed of 15 members, its rules provide for equitable geopolitical and geographical representation. The President of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians is an *ex officio* member.

MEETING OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians meets on the eve of

the first session of the Assembly. Its Coordinating Committee meets in conjunction with the two sessions of the Assembly. Established in 1978, the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians has been part of the Union's official structure since 1999. It reports to the Council. The meeting brings together nearly 150 women parliamentarians from around one hundred countries, who discuss topics relating to the status of women. They also debate the subjects on the Assembly agenda, thus bringing their perspective to bear on the work (see partnership programme below).

THE SECRETARIAT is based in Geneva. The Secretary General, Mr. Anders B. Johnsson (Sweden), is responsible for carrying out the IPU's programme of activities. The IPU is financed directly by its Members from public funds. The budget for the year 2003 totals 9.5 million Swiss francs. The IPU receives external financial support for certain special activities (in particular technical cooperation). □

Members

NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS OF THE FOLLOWING 144 COUNTRIES ARE IPU MEMBERS (MARCH 2003)

The IPU membership figures are never entirely stable. On the one hand, the Union regularly receives affiliation requests from non-member parliaments ; on the other hand, members whose democratic institutions cease to function can be suspended from the organisation.

Members (144)

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, 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, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden,

Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Associate Members (5)

Andean Parliament, Central American Parliament, European Parliament, Latin American Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

The Association of Secretaries General of Parliament (ASGP)

The ASGP is an IPU consultative body that brings together senior parliamentary officials to study parliamentary law and promote cooperation between the services of different parliaments. The ASGP works in conjunction with the IPU bodies responsible for the study of parliamentary institutions; activities are carried out in close cooperation. The ASGP, an autonomous self-managing body, meets during Inter-Parliamentary Conferences. It publishes a biannual review of *Constitutional and Parliamentary Information* and reports on the activities and functioning of parliaments.

Promoting principles of democracy

The IPU develops international standards and norms as part of its action to promote democratic and pluralist systems of representative government. In 1994 the

IPU adopted a *Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections* which was followed in 1997 by the *Universal Declaration on Democracy*.

THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION'S UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON DEMOCRACY

In 1995 the Inter-Parliamentary Union assembled experts from various regions and disciplines to develop an international standard on democracy. Building on this work, the Universal Declaration on Democracy was adopted in 1997. Democracy is a universally recognized ideal, based on values

common to people everywhere regardless of cultural, political, social or economic differences. As an ideal, democracy aims to protect and promote the dignity and fundamental rights of the individual, instil social justice and foster economic and social development. Democracy is a political system that enables people to freely choose an effective, honest, transparent and accountable government.

Democracy is based on two core principles : participation and accountability. Everyone has the right to participate in the management of public affairs. Likewise, everyone has the right to access information on government activities, to petition government and to seek redress through impartial administrative and judicial mechanisms. Democracy is always a work in progress, a state or condition that

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is constantly perfectible. Sustaining democracy means nurturing and reinforcing a democratic culture through all the means that education has at its disposal.

Anders B. Johnsson,
IPU Secretary General

GATHERING AND DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON THE FUNCTIONING OF PARLIAMENTS

The IPU improves understanding and knowledge of parliaments by collecting information on the powers, structure and working methods of parliaments, disseminating it through its publications and Web site, and providing the very latest information on parliamentary elections throughout the world.

The IPU maintains three bilingual (English/French) databases that are accessible directly through its Web site, <http://www.ipu.org>

- **Parline** (Parliaments on line) on the rule, structure and functioning of parliaments and the status of their members;
- **Parlit** on literature relating to the functioning of national parliaments and parliamentary elections;
- **Women in politics** on literature relating to all aspects of women's involvement in politics.

The IPU also publishes comparative studies on the functioning of parliaments and elections. The most recent ones are:

- Democracy: Its Principles and Achievement
- Codes of Conduct for Elections
- Presiding Officers of National Parliamentary Assemblies
- The Parliamentary Mandate

CHRONICLE OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Each year, the IPU publishes, in English and French, the Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections which reports on the national legislative elections held throughout the world during the previous year. It describes the electoral system, the circumstances and conduct of national elections and provides statistical details on the results and composition of parli-

ments. The 36th edition of the Chronicle reports on 50 national legislative elections held from 1 January to 31 December 2002. This represents a considerable increase over the 39 such elections reported on in the 35th Chronicle. The year 2002 was marked by positive developments in the parliamentary landscape. It saw the creation of a new parliament and the restoration of two others. A new parliament came into being in May 2002 following the accession to statehood of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. In October, Bahrainis voted for their first parliament in almost 30 years. Pakistan took significant steps to return to elected government by electing its National Assembly, the first elections to be held since the October 1999 coup.

The IPU runs a technical cooperation programme to assist parliaments in building up their capacity to discharge their constitutional responsibilities, which include oversight of government action. The principal beneficiaries of the programme are parliaments of emerging democracies and developing countries.

With the help of member parliaments, the IPU provides specialised technical advice and implements projects of assistance. In 2002, it ran projects in the following parliaments: Burundi, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Gabon, Rwanda, Uruguay. Projects are currently under way in the parliaments of the following countries: Albania, Argentina, Djibouti, East Timor,

Equatorial Guinea. Assistance is also being provided in Kosovo.

In conjunction with the different projects, the IPU also organises national seminars for MPs and parliamentary staff. The most recent seminars took place in the parliaments of Burundi, Cambodia, Gabon and Rwanda.

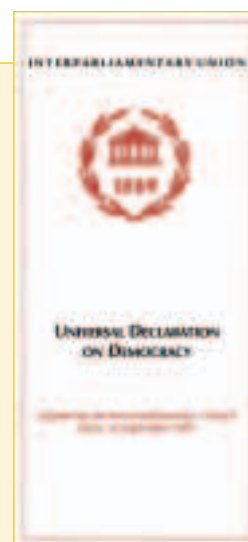
The IPU has also run meetings and workshops on the functioning of parliaments, of which the most recent include:

- African Parliamentary Conference on "The contribution of parliament to democracy in Africa", organised jointly with the African Parliamentary Union (Harare, Zimbabwe, 1998).
- Parliamentary Seminar on "Relations between Majority and Minority Parties in African Parliaments" (Libreville, Gabon, 1999), which also adopted model statutes for the opposition in parliament.
- Sub-regional North-East Asia Workshop on "Human Rights and Parliaments" (Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, August 2000)
- Regional Seminars on "Parliament and the budgetary process, including from a gender perspective" (Nairobi, Kenya, May 2000; Bamako, Mali, November 2001; Manila, Philippines, July 2002).

In 1998, the IPU signed an Agreement of Cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to boost technical cooperation activities and, in particular, to promote the participation of women in politics. □

Strengthening democratic institutions through technical assistance

"Democracy is founded on the right of everyone to take part in the management of public affairs; it therefore requires the existence of representative institutions at all levels and, in particular, a Parliament in which all components of society are represented and which has the requisite powers and means to express the will of the people by legislating and overseeing government action."
Universal Declaration on Democracy, para. 11 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1997)



Parity – Promoting partnership between men and women in politics

"The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences." ...

Universal Declaration on Democracy, para. 4 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1997)

This concept has served as the backbone of IPU's efforts to improve the status of women. The work covers many areas while focusing on women's participation in politics.

For over ten years, the IPU has encouraged women to participate in delegations to conferences. Their attendance has been growing and now averages 25 per cent. The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians provides an opportunity for women MPs to meet within the IPU statutory conferences (see section on the new structure of the IPU). In 1997, the IPU established a Gender Partnership Group, composed of two men and two women MPs, to ensure that the interests and views of both genders are equally reflected in all of the Union's activities. The IPU has amended its Statutes and Rules to remove language implying the pre-eminence of one sex over the other and to ensure that women are represented in national delegations to inter-parliamentary meetings, in the IPU Executive Committee and in all drafting committees.

PROVIDING INFORMATION, BUILDING AWARENESS

The IPU works on strategies to build better partnerships between men and women in politics. Its *Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life* was drawn up by a group composed of an equal number of men and women representing the world's

main political movements and cultures. Initially intended as a contribution to the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995), the Plan led to major progress in a number of countries and within the IPU itself.

Through its studies and surveys, and by monitoring what parliamentarians say in debates at its meetings, the IPU keeps track of global changes in women's rights to vote and stand for election and monitors evolving patterns of representation in political parties, parliaments and governments. Its most recent study in this field – "*Politics: Women's Insight*" – is based on a series of interviews with women who recount their experiences in political parties, parliaments and governments. The study charts the obstacles encountered by women in the unforgiving world of politics and assesses the changes that women have brought to the political arena.

Statistical and historical data on women in parliament can be found in the IPU's various publications which report on developments to have occurred since 1945. The data is also accessible on the IPU Web site (<http://www.ipu.org>) where the very latest information on elections can be found. In March 2000, data was published on women's representation in parliaments and governments worldwide in the form of a colour-coded map that was produced jointly with the United Nations Information Service.

The IPU Web site also features databases designed to help MPs find information on questions relat-



ing to women. The "*Women in Politics*" database has nearly 1200 bibliographic references (documents, reports and studies on women in politics). The site also contains a database on all existing legislation on female genital mutilation which is part of a broader IPU campaign to combat violence against women and children. The IPU has also encouraged parliaments to bring their national legislation into line with the United Nations *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*. In 1997, it made a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and children, and issued a statement on ways to eliminate all commercial and other forms of sexual exploitation of women and children. Furthermore, a handbook for MPs on the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol* is to be published shortly. Finally, the IPU is taking a close look at the impact of gender on the use of national resources. It has staged three seminars (in Kenya, Mali and the Philippines) in which national budg-

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ets have been scrutinised from the perspective of gender equality. There are plans for the seminar series to continue, and a handbook for MPs on the budget and gender questions is also being prepared.

PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The IPU also strives to improve the status of women and promote gender partnership by assisting women in the national context. Working through its technical assistance programme, the IPU has supported women MPs in Djibouti, Burundi,

Protection of children

At several past conferences the IPU has organised panel discussions on a series of topics linked to the protection of children: female genital mutilation, forced child labour and trafficking in children. On the occasion of the United Nations General Assembly special session on children, the IPU organized a day's meeting for the parliamentarians attending the UN session. The MPs debated the role of parliament in the protection of children and discussed the question of national budgets that give more consideration to children's needs.

Rwanda and East Timor, by executing a series of projects ranging from setting up documentation centres on women to running

awareness-building seminars for MPs or launching national awareness-building campaigns on new laws or constitutions. □

The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians celebrates its 25th anniversary

The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, composed of five parliamentarians representing the major regions of the world, was established in 1976. The Committee investigates complaints relating to violations of MPs' human rights; as such, it is the only body

of its kind in the world. Once a case has been declared admissible, the Committee does everything it can to nurture a dialogue with the authorities of the country concerned in its pursuit of a satisfactory settlement that meets human rights standards. To this end, it may also undertake on-site missions. The

Committee has contributed to the satisfactory settlement of a large proportion of the 1,538 cases in 104 countries that it has taken up. The Committee has been instrumental in resolving a number of notorious cases. Recently, it secured the release from prison of Mr. Alpha Condé, a former presidential candidate in Guinea. In 2001, it used its good offices to secure the release of a Czech MP and a former MP, detained in Cuba. It has stood up for the many imprisoned MPs-elect in Burma and is working to secure the release of the MPs kidnapped by the guerrilla movement in Colombia. It is striving to obtain the release of four former Turkish MPs, including Mrs. Leyla Zana, who are still imprisoned despite the ruling in their favour handed down by the European Court of Human Rights in July 2001. □



Members of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians with Mrs. Megawati Sukarnoputri, then Vice-President (and President after 2001) of Indonesia. The Committee examined Mrs. Megawati's case between 1996 and 1998.

SOME PERSONAL VIEWS:

Mr. Lim Guan Eng (Malaysian MP, October 1999)

"I am grateful for the IPU's efforts, and especially for the on-site mission here. I cannot adequately express how much the IPU efforts meant to me: it was the international recognition that I am still an MP even though it is not acknowledged by the Malaysian Parliament".

Mr. Ngarléji Yorongar (Chad, former presidential candidate, July 1999)

"The IPU mission to N'jamena played a decisive role in my release. I was heartened when the IPU took up my case. An institution like the IPU, which brings together all of the world's parliaments, can only act as a deterrent. I encourage you to pursue your efforts to help prisoners who, throughout the world, are still rotting in dictators' jails".

Mr. Alpha Condé (Guinea, former presidential candidate, May 2001)

"I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the IPU and to salute the struggle for freedom it has waged alongside us during all these years of suffering".

Mr. Yawovi Agboyibo (opposition leader in Togo, former Committee member)

"Without the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the situation would be disastrous. It is up to us to make the most of the mechanisms available to MPs".

IN THE WORDS OF THE FIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS (2003) :

Mr. Mahinda Samarasinghe
Minister of Employment and Labour and Chief Government Whip of Sri Lanka
President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

Safeguarding the human rights of parliamentarians is the very basis of democracy, for parliamentarians are the legislators who put in place the legal framework required for any democracy and who see to it that the laws they adopt are actually implemented. Working to ensure that parliamentarians enjoy freedom of speech without fear of retaliation as they perform their duties, and are able to exercise fully their fundamental freedoms is essential for democracy itself, for safeguarding the human rights of parliamentarians means safeguarding the rights of all citizens and, in the final analysis, the institution of parliament itself and with it democracy!

Mr. Mahamane Ousmane
Speaker of the National Assembly of Niger
Vice-President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

Given that parliamentarians are elected officials who carry the trust of the people who have appointed them, it is important that, as such, they enjoy the full range of immunities and prerogatives that are attached to their status of representatives of the people. It is therefore essential that institutions like the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians see to it that parliamentarians are able to enjoy their rights and privileges. If this is not the case, then we are all headed for disaster, for if an MP's human rights can be violated with impunity, what will become of the ordinary citi-

zen who has elected him, who has placed his faith in him and who is relying on him to defend his rights ?

Mr Juan Pablo Letelier
MP, Chile, Committee member

The IPU and its Human Rights Committee have proven their worth. Through the specific machinery and procedures, part public, part confidential, they have helped to stop many cases of violations of the human rights of parliamentarians and to increase awareness in parliaments as to how to defend MPs. Our Committee encourages representatives of IPU member parliaments to take urgent action in defence of parliamentarians all around the globe when their lives are endangered or their rights threatened.

Mrs. Ann Clwyd
MP, United Kingdom, Committee member

I have seen how the influence of this Committee has managed to assist members of parliament in trouble all over the world through its procedures. Helping elected representatives like ourselves to enjoy the same freedom that we ourselves have is a very important activity. The procedures have proved to be good procedures. And they have meant that people have been released from jail, from exile on occasion. Members of parliament talk a lot, but this is one case where talk leads to action.

Mrs. Veronika Nedvedova
MP, Czech Republic, Committee member

The Committee plays an important role in safeguarding parliamentary democracy. Each MP is a part of this, for violations of the human rights of parliamentarians endanger democracy, which cannot be taken for granted. This Committee, which knows how to employ parliamentary diplomacy at the right moment, is a good tool for defending the human rights of parliamentarians, and we must make extensive use of it.

International security and stability: IPU mechanisms for dialogue

THE MIDDLE EAST COMMITTEE FACILITATES MEETINGS BETWEEN ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN MPs

"The world is made of fulfilled utopias. Today's utopia is tomorrow's reality". Frédéric Passy

In 1987, the IPU set up a Committee on Middle East Questions to engineer dialogue between the Arab and Israeli delegations and encourage parliamentary support for the peace process. The Committee, which comprises six MPs from different regions, meets during IPU statutory meetings with the Arab and Israeli delegations. Some meetings are held outside the framework of the IPU statutory conferences: in 2001, a special meeting between Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians was held in Paris, on the premises of the French National Assembly.

The IPU, working with the Swiss Federal Council and the "Manifesto – Movement for a Just and Lasting Peace in the Middle East" has invited parliamentari-



Photo: B. Chalet/French National Assembly.

The IPU Committee on Middle East Questions meeting in Paris, in 2001, at the French National Assembly, with Israeli and Palestinian MPs.

From left to right : Mr. Zev Boïm (MP, Israel, Likud), Mr. Andreas Filippou (MP, Cyprus), Mrs. Oddbjorg Starrfelt (MP, Norway), Mr. Ziad Abu Amr (MP, Palestinian Legislative Council), Mr. Yves Tavernier, President of the Committee (MP, France), Mr. Anders B. Johnsson (IPU Secretary General, Sweden), Mr. Ofir Pines (MP, Israel, Labour), Mrs. Pensak Chagsuchinda (MP, Thailand), Mr. Raymond Ahouandjinou (MP, Benin).

ans from the Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council to meet in Geneva in 2003. □

SOME QUOTES FROM 2002:

"In the Middle East, the situation is what it is, but I believe that if members of parliament do not try to change the situation they are not fulfilling their mission. And therefore if we can help, we should ". **Mr. Avraham Burg, Speaker of the Knesset.**

"The IPU, which represents the peoples, is the institution that can preserve and protect international legitimacy and the UN resolutions. The IPU proves that it can support peace and the people who are still suffering from the Israeli occupation ". **Mr. Ahmed Qurei, "Abou Ala", Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council.**

MPs SAID IN 2001:

"The Paris meeting, for example, was very important and useful. It provided an excellent opportunity for an in-depth discussion on real issues. We also welcomed the opportunity for more informal encounters with the Committee members and with representatives of the Palestinian Authority". **Mr. Ofir Pines, Member of the Labour Party in the Knesset.**

"The fact that we met is important. If such a meeting cannot have a direct influence, it helps to create a good climate for the long term. When we are back, we can talk with our party colleagues who are close to the government". **Mr. Zeev Boim, Leader of the Likud group in the Knesset.**

"The Middle East Committee as well as the IPU should continue to be involved in Middle East issues, especially the peace process. The Committee can put the facts and the views to the IPU so it can articulate positions that help bring about a peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The IPU should use its political and moral weight to achieve that end. Due to its nature and composition, the IPU is uniquely qualified to play this role". **Mr. Ziad Abou Amr, President of the Political Committee of the Palestinian Legislative Council.**

THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (CSCM)

After holding seven Inter-Parliamentary Conferences on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, 1973-1991), the IPU launched a similar process for the Mediterranean. A first Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean was held in Malaga in 1992. This generated a permanent mechanism for dialogue and negotiation among all the Mediterranean partners in the form of twice-yearly meetings during IPU statutory conferences. A second CSCM took place in Valletta in 1995. The third, in Marseilles in 2000, advocated creating a Mediterranean parliamentary assembly, a concept that is still under discussion.

The CSCM is the only process which brings together all Mediterranean coastal States on an equal footing: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Monaco, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, along with two non-coastal States which are directly linked to the Mediterranean in economic, political and strategic terms, namely Jordan and Portugal. Palestine has observer status at IPU Conferences. Mediterranean women MPs also met on the occasion of the Third CSCM.

"COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES FOR GOVERNMENTS AND PARLIAMENTS"

"Peace, security and cooperation issues are first and foremost matters for governments. When it comes to matters such as respect for cultures, human exchanges or public understanding of endeavours to overcome antagonism, it is

essential for the message to be brought home to what we have come to call civil society. And parliaments are in an ideal position to do this. In a meeting like this, governments can give parliaments information. And at the same time they can listen to suggestions from parliaments and take account of them. Governments are always glad of good advice in complex situations. The give and take between the two creates useful synergy".

Mr. Hubert Védrine, French Minister for External Relations, on the occasion of the Third CSCM in Marseilles (April 2000).

GROUP OF FACILITATORS FOR CYPRUS

In 1991, the IPU established a mechanism to monitor the situation in Cyprus in support of the good offices mission of the United Nations Secretary-General. At present, a Group of three "facilitators" promotes dialogue during statutory meetings between representatives of existing political parties in the two parts of the island. The facilitators consider that the informal dialogue that takes place on such occasions helps to bring the parties concerned closer together.

COOPERATION IPU-DCAF

The IPU, working with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), has produced a handbook for MPs on *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector*. New types of armed conflict and growing ties between states have prompted innovative responses and new thinking about the very concept of security. The attacks of 11 September 2001 and their aftermath have only underscored this need.

Effective parliamentary oversight has thus become all the more crucial to ensure that these new responses are devised and implemented with full transparency and accountability. In its absence, there

is a danger of security services misinterpreting their mission and acting like a state within the state, either placing heavy strains on scarce resources, or exerting excessive political and economic influence. Given these challenges, the handbook offers a comprehensive set of practices and mechanisms which might shape parliament's contribution to oversight in the very sensitive and complex area of security.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

The IPU is keen to harness its resources to promoting respect for international humanitarian law (IHL). The subject has been debated at numerous IPU Conferences and in the Committee to Promote Respect for IHL, which cooperates closely with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The IPU campaigns for a total ban on anti-personnel mines. A survey of all parliaments is being conducted to ascertain their position on the subject, and chart the steps taken to ratify the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines, and ensure the destruction of existing stockpiles, demining and treatment for victims of such weapons. In 1999, the Committee to Promote Respect for IHL prepared a handbook for parliamentarians on respect for IHL, with input from the ICRC, and helped to organize a regional conference on international humanitarian law for African parliaments.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

A majority of the Union's members supported the establishment of an International Criminal Court, and the IPU encourages parliaments to ratify the Rome Statute and ensure that the Court has the human and material resources it needs to discharge its mandate.

Sustainable development, Finance and Trade, and the Environment

Photo: Neeran Naidoo



In 2002, MPs from 62 countries pledged action beyond the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. From left to right M. Walli Moosa, Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism of South Africa; Mrs Najma Heptulla, President of the IPU Council; Mrs Frene Ginwala, Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa; Mrs Naledi Pandor, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa; Mr. Nitin Desai, Secretary General of the World Summit on Sustainable Development; and Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, IPU Secretary General.

ENVIRONMENT

The Inter-Parliamentary Union stands up for the defence of the environment which it sees as being crucial to successful sustainable development. It brings together members of parliament to discuss the issues in order to influence international negotiations. For example, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg in 2002, the IPU and the South African Parliament staged a two-day parliamentary event on *Sustainable development: The role of parliaments in ensuring implementation and accountability*.

The meeting was open to all MPs attending the World Summit. The discussions enabled MPs to better understand the main issues at stake in the World Summit and gather information on the inter-governmental negotiations which led to the Programme of Action adopted by the Summit. At the end of its work, the Parliamentary Meeting adopted a final declaration enjoining participants to debate the WSSD Plan of Implementation in their parliaments and to speedily implement the provisions of the Plan that came within their purview.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The IPU seeks to mobilize parliamentary action on the socio-economic aspects of development. The

statutory conferences have carried resolutions and recommendations on questions with a direct bearing on the lives of citizens, such as HIV/AIDS, the problems of metropolitan areas, employment in a globalising world, the right to food, the situation of the heavily indebted poor countries, the consumption and illicit trafficking of drugs, child protection and sexual exploitation of children.

Within this sphere of interest, the IPU has organized parliamentary meetings on the occasion of recent UN summits such as the *Copenhagen+5 UN General Assembly Special Session*, the *Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries*, the *Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children*, or the *World Food Summit – Five years later*.

At these parliamentary meetings, parliamentarians devise recommendations for the follow-up of Summits, relating in particular to the adoption of appropriate legislation and the allocation of funds. The IPU is preparing to hold a parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the next *World Summit on the Information Society*, due to take place in Geneva in December 2003.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE

For several years, the IPU has taken an active interest in the activities of

the WTO, the Bretton Woods institutions and UNCTAD. The IPU organized a parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the *UNCTAD X* session in Bangkok, in January 2000, and a parliamentary forum at the *International Conference on Financing for Development* in Monterrey, in March 2002.

The IPU considers that transparency is essential to international trade negotiations and urges parliaments to take an active interest in the work of the WTO. Accordingly, it organized the first *Parliamentary Meeting on International Trade* in Geneva, in June 2001, and later held a parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the *Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference* in Doha in 2001. Working together with the European Parliament, the IPU has held a *Parliamentary Conference on the WTO* in Geneva, in February 2003.

FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

At the September 2002 session of the IPU Council, a special session was held to discuss Financing for Development, as a follow up to the United Nations Conference. Delegates discussed a report on the subject prepared by three MPs and held a hearing with Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, former President of Mexico, whom the UN Secretary-General had appointed to head the high-level panel that prepared the background paper for Monterrey. □

Cooperation with the United Nations and UN bodies

In November 2002, the IPU obtained observer status with the United Nations, along with a special authorization to circulate its documents in the General Assembly. Since the conclusion of the 1996 Cooperation Agreement, the IPU has worked closely with the UN and its various specialized agencies. Every year during the UN General Assembly, the IPU organizes a meeting at the United Nations in New York where MPs and senior United Nations officials meet and discuss subjects of common interest.

On the occasion of the United Nations Millennium Assembly, the IPU held the first Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments. Staged at the UN Headquarters in New York, the conference concluded with the adoption of a *Declaration* affirming parliaments' support for the United Nations and their commitment to

ensure that the voice of the peoples is heard more within that institution. The presiding officers pledged "commitment to international cooperation, with a stronger United Nations at its core. We resolve to ensure that our parliaments contribute more substantively to this cooperation by making the voice of the people heard, thereby introducing a more manifestly democratic dimension into international decision-making and cooperation". □

Group photo taken at the First Conference of Presiding Officers of Parliaments organised by the IPU in New York in 2000 on the occasion of the UN Millennium Assembly.



IPU Photo by Terry Delau for Eastman Kodak

"Parliaments are the principal repository of democratic legitimacy"

Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001 (on the occasion of the first Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, organised by the IPU in 2002).

"Parliaments are the principal repository of democratic legitimacy. Using your legislative powers and your democratic mandate, you can serve as genuine "tribunes of people" across traditional frontiers. You have a unique role to play in bringing global institutions such as the United Nations closer to the peoples they are meant to serve (...). Together, we at the United Nations and you, the parliamentarians, can do much to break down this wall of suspicion – by explaining the global changes to our peoples, and, above all, by ensuring that these changes redound to their benefit. To succeed in this critical effort, we need a United Nations that is effective and responsive. I am all the more grateful, therefore, for the strong support for the reform of our Organization expressed in your Declaration. I have over the last three years sought to strengthen the UN's bonds with IPU, because I believe we need to draw

renewed inspiration from the peoples we are meant to serve. I am grateful for your cooperation in this endeavour and look forward to making our United Nations even more responsive to your needs as representatives of the global public". (New York, September 2000, on the occasion of the Conference on Presiding Officers of National Parliaments).

- The Inter-Parliamentary Union has an Office in New York as Permanent Observer at the United Nations.
- The IPU has also concluded cooperation agreements with the ILO, the FAO, UNDP and UNESCO. It has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The IPU maintains close working relations with various regional parliamentary associations. Observers to the IPU include Palestine, various intergovernmental organizations such as the League of Arab States, the Organization of American States (OAS), the African Union, and humanitarian organizations including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Amnesty International. The IPU also works with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).

Publications

The following are some examples of the wide range of IPU publications:

HANDBOOKS FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS

- Handbook for Legislators on HIV/AIDS, Law and Human Rights, 1999, English and French
- Respect for International Humanitarian Law, Handbook N° 1, 1999, English, French, Spanish, Arabic, German, Russian, Portuguese, Swahili, Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Hebrew (in preparation).
- International Refugee Law, Handbook N° 2, 2001, English, French, Spanish, Japanese, Russian, German, Hungarian, Greek, Polish, Portuguese, Korean, Arabic, Croatian, Albanian, Bulgarian, Czech, Slovak, Mongolian, Italian (in preparation).
- Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour: A Practical Guide to ILO Convention N° 182, Handbook N° 3, 2002, English, French, Spanish, Russian, Japanese, Albanian, Arabic (in preparation).
- The Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and its Optional Protocol, Handbook N°4, 2003, English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Russian (in preparation).
- Parliamentary oversight of the security sector, Handbook N°5, 2003, English, French, Spanish (in preparation).



SPECIALIZED BROCHURES

- Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2003, English and French
- Parliament and the budgetary process, including from a gender perspective, 2002, English and French
- National Seminar on "The Process of Engendering a New Constitution for Rwanda", 2002, English and French.
- Women in Politics : 1945 – 2000 (information kit), 2000, English and French
- Politics : Women's Insight, 2000, English, French and Spanish
- Participation of Women in Political Life, 2000, English, French and Spanish

POSTER

- Women in Politics: 2000, English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

PERIODICALS

- The World of Parliaments, quarterly review of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, English and French
- Activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union – Annual Report of the Secretary General, English and French
- Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections, annual, English and French
- World Directory of Parliaments, annual, English and French

STUDIES

- The Parliamentary Mandate, by M. Van der Hulst, 2000, English, French and Spanish
- Democracy: Its Principles and Achievement, 1998, English, French and Spanish
- Codes of Conduct for Elections, G.S. Goodwin-Gill, 1998, English, French and Spanish
- Presiding Officers of National Parliamentary Assemblies, G. Bergougous, 1997, English, French and Spanish

What are Inter-Parliamentary meetings for?

Every year, the IPU holds two annual statutory meetings and various specialized meetings. These events offer MPs from all over the world, representing the entire spectrum of political currents and parties, an opportunity to discuss and to adopt resolutions which can directly affect the lives of citizens. They are the venue for committee meetings and

panel discussions on numerous political and social issues. They also provide a setting within which parliamentarians can negotiate with each other on issues that may divide their respective governments. IPU meetings also offer a forum at which the parliamentary opposition is also represented, a factor which can bring people together in unexpected ways.

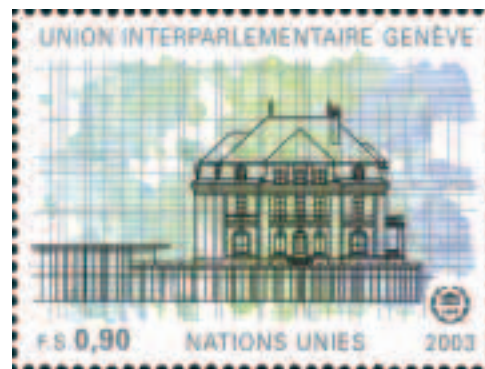
EXAMPLES OF RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT IPU CONFERENCES

- Support of parliaments for the rights of refugees and persons displaced by war and occupation, and assistance with a view to their repatriation, and for international cooperation to develop and implement strategies to combat the criminal activity of people-smuggling.
- The need to revise the current global financial and economic model.
- Promoting greater respect and protection of human rights in general and in particular for women and children.
- Securing observance of the principles of international law in the interests of world peace and security.
- The protection of minorities as a global issue and a prerequisite for stability, security and peace.
- Ten years after Rio: Global degradation of the environment and parliamentary support for the Kyoto Protocol.

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCES

1st	Paris (France) 1889	37th	Rome (Italy) 1948	73rd	Lomé (Togo) 1985
2nd	London (UK) 1890	38th	Stockholm (Sweden) 1949	74th	Ottawa (Canada) 1985
3rd	Rome (Italy) 1891	39th	Dublin (Ireland) 1950	75th	Mexico City (Mexico) 1986
4th	Berne (Switzerland) 1892	40th	Istanbul (Turkey) 1951	76th	Buenos Aires (Argentina) 1986
5th	The Hague (Netherlands) 1894	41st	Bern (Switzerland) 1952	77th	Managua (Nicaragua) 1987
6th	Brussels (Belgium) 1895	42nd	Washington (USA) 1953	78th	Bangkok (Thailand) 1987
7th	Budapest (Hungary) 1896	43rd	Vienna (Austria) 1954	79th	Guatemala (Guatemala) 1988
8th	Brussels (Belgium) 1897	44th	Helsinki (Finland) 1955	80th	Sofia (Bulgaria) 1988
9th	Christiania (Norway) 1899	45th	Bangkok (Thailand) 1956	81st	Budapest (Hungary) 1989
10th	Paris (France) 1900	46th	London (UK) 1957	82nd	London (UK) 1989
11th	Vienna (Austria) 1903	47th	Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) 1958	83rd	Nicosia (Cyprus) 1990
12th	Saint-Louis (USA) 1904	48th	Warsaw (Poland) 1959	84th	Punta del Este (Uruguay) 1990
13th	Brussels (Belgium) 1905	49th	Tokyo (Japan) 1960	85th	Pyongyang (D.P.R. Korea) 1991
14th	London (UK) 1906	50th	Brussels (Belgium) 1961	86th	Santiago (Chile) 1991
15th	Berlin (Germany) 1908	51st	Brasilia (Brazil) 1962	87th	Yaoundé (Cameroon) 1992
16th	Brussels (Belgium) 1910	52nd	Belgrade (Yugoslavia) 1963	88th	Stockholm (Sweden) 1992
17th	Geneva (Switzerland) 1912	53rd	Copenhagen (Denmark) 1964	89th	New Delhi (India) 1993
18th	The Hague (Netherlands) 1913	54th	Ottawa (Canada) 1965	90th	Canberra (Australia) 1993
19th	Stockholm (Sweden) 1921	55th	Teheran (Iran) 1966	91st	Paris (France) 1994
20th	Vienna (Austria) 1922	56th	Lima (Peru) 1968	92nd	Copenhagen (Denmark) 1994
21st	Copenhagen (Denmark) 1923	57th	New Delhi (India) 1969	93rd	Madrid (Spain) 1995
22nd	Bern (Switzerland) 1924	58th	The Hague (Netherlands) 1970	94th	Bucharest (Romania) 1995
23rd	Washington (USA)/Ottawa (Canada) 1925	59th	Paris (France) 1971	95th	Istanbul (Turkey) 1996
24th	Paris (France) 1927	60th	Rome (Italy) 1972	96th	Beijing (China) 1996
25th	Berlin (Germany) 1928	61st	Tokyo (Japan) 1974	97th	Seoul (Republic of Korea) 1997
26th	London (UK) 1930	62nd	London (UK) 1975	98th	Cairo (Egypt) 1997
27th	Bucharest (Romania) 1931	63rd	Madrid (Spain) 1976	99th	Windhoek (Namibia) 1998
28th	Geneva (Switzerland) 1932	64th	Sofia (Bulgaria) 1977	100th	Moscow (Russian Federation) 1998
29th	Madrid (Spain) 1933	65th	Bonn (RFA) 1978	101st	Brussels (Belgium) 1999
30th	Istanbul (Turkey) 1934	66th	Caracas (Venezuela) 1979	102nd	Berlin (Germany) 1999
31st	Brussels (Belgium) 1935	67th	Berlin (GRD) 1980	103rd	Amman (Jordan) 2000
32nd	Budapest (Hungary) 1936	68th	Havana (Cuba) 1981	104th	Djakarta (Indonesia) 2000
33rd	Paris (France) 1937	69th	Rome (Italy) 1982	105th	Havana (Cuba) 2001
34th	The Hague (Netherlands) 1938	70th	Seoul (R. of Korea) 1983	106th	Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) 2001
35th	Oslo (Norway) 1939	71st	Geneva (Switzerland) 1984	107th	Marrakech (Morocco) 2002
36th	Cairo (Egypt) 1947	72nd	Geneva (Switzerland) 1984	108th	Santiago (Chile) 2003

The UN issues a stamp dedicated to the *House of Parliaments*



After the United Nations decided to issue a (Swiss) stamp for the inauguration of the new Headquarters of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the IPU invited the students of the *Ecole romande d'arts et communication* in Lausanne to design the stamp that would symbolise the *House of Parliaments*. The winner, Mr. Cyril Wursten, aimed "to give a classy, peaceful and protective image of the IPU. In my mind, the coloured background represents the earth with its continents and its countries, composed of different colours and cultures, and in the foreground is the house which covers everything and which gives an image of protection, security and benevolence. This was one way of representing the work of the IPU, which strives to promote peace and security in the world. So I didn't want anything too graphic or too "off-the-wall", like you see nowadays, because that wouldn't have fitted in with the period architecture of the building or with the image which the IPU was trying to convey". □

Read in the press:

L'HEBDO (SWITZERLAND) – 05.12.02

THE NEED TO GLOBALISE DEMOCRACY

The first Swiss MP to address the United Nations General Assembly, Socialist Andreas Gross, called into question the absolute power of the nation-State. "For example, the Council of Europe, the pan-European organization of the 44 European countries, which also includes the less fortunate countries of Europe, is an example of how MPs delegated by their national parliaments become the driving force of a transnational organization – a model which I feel the UN should follow, and it is because of this model that I urge you to support the resolution of the IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union), which shares this point of view".

FEWER THAN TWO MPs OUT OF TEN AROUND THE WORLD ARE WOMEN YAHOO ACTUALITÉS – AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE (AFP) – 21.09.02

Women are still woefully under-represented in the world's parliaments, which have an average of 14.7% women members, i.e. fewer than two out of ten, as against 12.8% in January 2000, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which speaks of "democracy in the making". Five northern European countries (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland), with an average of nearly four women MPs out of ten, still lead in terms of women's representation in parliament, based on the latest IPU statistics, valid as of 20 September 2002. The information provided by 180 national parliaments puts Sweden in first place, with 45.3% of its parliament composed of women.

1927 – THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE – 18.02.02

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is the latest organization to throw its weight behind the movement for the breaking down of European customs barriers and the building up of "The United Economic States of Europe". This action, following the recent free trade manifest, means that virtually every great international organization and force in Europe is now behind the movement for creating a single European economic unit, similar to that of the United States of America.

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