

IPU Document No 29 (116th IPU Assembly)

*circulated in the 62nd session of the General Assembly, in accordance with resolution A/57/47, under
agenda items 12, 72 and 88 of the preliminary list*



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Resolution adopted unanimously by the 116th IPU Assembly

(Nusa Dua, Bali, 4 May 2007)

**PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL THROUGH
UNIVERSAL DEMOCRATIC
AND ELECTORAL STANDARDS**

The 116th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Convinced that diversity and equal rights for all can be protected and promoted through universal democratic standards, including free and fair elections,

Further convinced that universal democratic electoral standards are an effective guarantee of diversity and equality rights,

Believing that protection of diversity by means of scrupulously framed laws that guarantee equality of basic rights is the *sine qua non* condition for democratic and parliamentary polity,

Convinced of the economic and social benefits of strengthening political and electoral rights,

Recognizing that all individuals belonging to different religious, ethnic and cultural segments of society have an equal right to participate in the process of development and to enjoy the fair distribution of benefits resulting from development,

Reaffirming that all individuals are equal in society and have the right to participate in all aspects of the electoral process of their country, and thus to express their free will irrespective of race, colour, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, birth, creed, religion, gender, ethnic group or other status,

Aware of the continuous need to ensure that women enjoy their political rights in parity with men, such as the right to vote, to be elected and to assume strategic roles in their country's decision-making processes,

Acknowledging the role played by the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and national parliaments in promoting equality and diversity,

Further recognizing the concepts and ideals of diversity and equality as enshrined in international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Convention No. 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO),

concerning indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries, the Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, the Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice and other core international human rights instruments upholding the right to take part in public affairs, to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections without discrimination,

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the IPU,

Recalling the Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections adopted by the 91st Inter-Parliamentary Council (Paris, 1994) and the Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the 98th Inter-Parliamentary Council (Cairo, 1997),

Emphasizing that, as long as the principle of democracy is enshrined in laws that ensure respect for universal standards of equality in political and electoral rights, it may be applied differently, according to the culture, history and constitution of each nation,

1. *Urges* governments and parliaments not yet having done so to implement in earnest the international treaties they have ratified with respect to promoting diversity and universal equality;
2. *Invites* parliaments and governments to pursue their efforts to fulfil the objectives set out in the IPU Universal Declaration on Democracy, in particular:
 - Ensure that there is a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of public affairs;
 - Fully respect human rights, as defined in the relevant international conventions;

- Ensure that parliament is representative of all components of society;
- Provide parliament with the requisite means to express the will of the people by legislating and overseeing government action;
- Hold fair elections at regular intervals, on the basis of universal, equal and secret suffrage, thus enabling the people's will to be expressed;
- Ensure compliance with civil and political rights, such as the rights to vote and to be elected, the rights to freedom of expression and assembly, the right to have access to information and the right to organize political parties and carry out political activities;
- Regulate party activities, funding and ethics in an impartial manner;
- Regulate individual participation in democratic processes and public life impartially, in order to avoid any discrimination or the risk of intimidation by State and non-State actors;
- Ensure access by all to administrative and judicial remedies and guarantee respect for administrative and judicial decisions;
- Pledge to satisfy the economic and social needs of society's most disadvantaged, thus ensuring their full integration in the democratic process;

- Accommodate the participation of all people in order to safeguard diversity, pluralism and the right to be different in a climate of tolerance;
 - Foster decentralized government and administration;
3. *Calls upon* governments and parliaments to ensure that countries give all individuals, in accordance with international obligations, equal opportunities to participate in the electoral process, and to encourage civil society, cooperate with it and promote its active involvement in the electoral process;
 4. *Calls upon* governments to include parliamentarians in election observer missions and encourages parliaments to send independent election observer missions to other countries;
 5. *Urges* national parliaments, parliamentarians and the IPU to heighten people's awareness about the exercise of their rights and duties in a democracy;
 6. *Encourages* parliaments and parliamentary bodies such as committees to promote, monitor and evaluate the participation of minority groups and vulnerable members of society in the electoral process;
 7. *Calls upon* governments and parliaments to ensure strict compliance with the 1994 IPU Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections;
 8. *Urges* governments to provide a level playing field and give equal opportunities to all candidates and political parties taking part in the democratic and electoral process, and to give them fair access to the media;

9. *Calls upon* parliaments and governments to ensure transparency in election funding and expenditure;
10. *Calls upon* parliaments to enact legislation to ensure the security and freedom that are conducive to a free, fair, transparent and peaceful multi-party election process that is free of violence, undue influence and corruption, and to ensure free and secret suffrage;
11. *Urges* governments and parliaments to take active measures, namely to provide access to information and voters lists, with a view to enabling all individuals to participate in the electoral process without pressure of any kind;
12. *Urges* parliaments to prevent interference by foreign governments in other countries' elections and democratic processes, and *stresses* the responsibility of the international community to ensure respect for the outcome of free and fair elections.