



REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS

(e) FOURTH PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON SHAPING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Geneva, 18-20 May 2011

The Parliamentary Forum was organized in partnership with the United Nations and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), with the support of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. It took place in the context of the annual follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society, which concluded in 2005. It attracted 135 participants in total, among them 53 parliamentarians from 37 parliaments. Many were members of the committee with responsibility for information and technology issues in their parliament.

Cyber security is one of the fundamental issues that underpin the development of the information society. It impacts on national security, economic development and individual rights and freedoms. In his opening remarks on behalf of the IPU, Mr. P. Martin-Lalande (France) underlined the role of parliamentarians in reconciling the sometimes divergent imperatives of security and fundamental rights in the search for cyber security.

The different facets of cyber security are generally well understood. In such a fast-moving environment, the role of the law is to establish the general principles, but not to enter into great detail, or it would become outdated in six months. Detailed implementation of the law should be the work of regulatory authorities, which already exist in about 80 countries. Industry self-regulation and close engagement with the private sector should be pursued.

International cooperation in the fight against cybercrime is a pressing issue. National legislation very rarely contains sufficient provisions for international cooperation on cybercrime, such as investigation and extradition. Consequently, criminal offences perpetrated outside the national territory are difficult and slow to prosecute. Organized crime networks have invested massively in the Internet. It is relatively easy for them to set up their activities in countries with little or weak legislation, which effectively become "cyber havens".

Greater harmonization of legislation was needed. If a crime in one country is also considered a crime in another, it should be possible for those two countries to work together to combat it, and vice versa. Nevertheless, harmonization rarely exists today. There are many practical and political obstacles to greater harmonization, and there is no international forum for achieving it. The development of model laws is one possible approach. The creation of international or regional instruments is another. However, progress at the United Nations towards an international instrument on cybercrime is very slow.

The Forum ended with the adoption of a brief Participants' Statement (see [Annex](#)). The Statement "deplore[s] the absence of an internationally agreed instrument that would provide a comprehensive framework for countries to coherently address cyber security issues in a coordinated manner". It calls for the Global Centre to set up a virtual working group of parliamentarians to examine ways to harmonize national cyber security legislation.



United Nations



Inter-Parliamentary Union



International
Telecommunication Union

**FOURTH PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON SHAPING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY
THE TRIPLE CHALLENGE OF CYBERSECURITY: INFORMATION, CITIZENS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**18-20 May 2011
Geneva, Switzerland**

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANTS

The Fourth Parliamentary Forum on Shaping the Information Society, held in Geneva on 18, 19 and 20 May 2011, highlighted that effective and harmonized legal frameworks are necessary to address the challenges of cybersecurity.

Confidence in cyberspace is vital for the development of the information society. As parliamentarians, we have the responsibility to enact legislation that promotes a safe and enabling environment for citizens, businesses and institutions to fully benefit from the Internet revolution, without constituting a threat to the peace and sovereignty of societies and in accordance with the principles of the World Summit on the Information Society.

Yet the Internet knows no borders. We recognize that cybercrime and the illicit use of ICT cannot be combated effectively without greater harmonization of our national legislation. The lack of harmonization creates an environment in which criminal activities can proliferate in relative impunity, and it is therefore urgent to act promptly.

While noting with satisfaction the regional and international initiatives to promote cybersecurity, we deplore the absence of an internationally agreed instrument that would provide a comprehensive framework for countries to coherently address cybersecurity issues in a coordinated manner.

We commend the organizers of the Fourth Parliamentary Forum for convening this meeting. We call upon the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament – a joint initiative of the IPU and the United Nations – to strengthen its engagement with parliaments on topics related to the Information Society. In particular, we request the Global Centre to create a working group of parliamentarians to explore ways to harmonize legislation on cybersecurity, and to report back on progress at the next Parliamentary Forum.