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**INTERIM REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF
THE IPU SINCE THE 190th SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

ANNUAL REPORTING EXERCISE BY IPU MEMBERS¹

Article 7 of the Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union stipulates that it is the duty of all Members to submit IPU resolutions within their respective parliament, to communicate them to the government, to foster their implementation and to inform the IPU Secretariat, as often and as fully as possible, particularly in its annual reports, on steps taken and results obtained.

As part of the 2011 reporting exercise, 51 Member Parliaments and one Associate Member (PACE) met this statutory obligation. This corresponds to 31.48% of the IPU membership, a slight decrease compared to the 56 substantive reports received last year (39 reports in 2010). Overall, the response rate remains low, well below the expectations set forth in the new IPU Strategy, Better parliaments, stronger democracies, which underscores the need for enhanced follow-up and implementation of IPU recommendations. The IPU Secretariat proposes therefore to work more closely with Members with a view to making the reporting exercise a more relevant and worthwhile exercise.

The present document contains a summary of the reports submitted by IPU Members on how their parliaments have followed up and implemented the recommendations contained in the three resolutions adopted at the 124th Assembly, namely: (i) Providing a sound legislative framework aimed at preventing electoral violence, improving election monitoring and ensuring the smooth transition of power; (ii) The role of parliaments in ensuring sustainable development through the management of natural resources, agricultural production and demographic change; and (iii) Transparency and accountability in the funding of political parties and election campaigns.

¹ Algeria, Andorra, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Burundi, Chad, Chile, Congo, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Maldives, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
Reports from the Parliaments of Namibia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were received after going to print and, regrettably, could not be included.

Introduction

Owing to variations in length, content and level of detail of the reports submitted, the present report will be divided into two sections under each resolution: Legislative action and Other measures. A third section - Dissemination of information on IPU activities - appears at the end of the report.

The Parliaments of **Algeria, Costa Rica, Ghana, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Oman, Slovenia, Turkey and Viet Nam** submitted comprehensive reports on action taken in parliament in relation to all or some of the resolutions. Some of these - **Ghana** and **Kenya** - also indicated situations in which the IPU resolutions have prompted specific action. Certain parliaments - **Belarus, Congo, Mexico, Philippines** and **Uruguay** - detail each piece of legislation and, occasionally, the corresponding votes related to one or more recommendations contained in the resolutions.

Other parliaments reported that IPU resolutions were always transmitted to the ministries concerned by subject matter (e.g. **Denmark, India, Uganda** and **Zambia**), while the **German Bundestag** underscored that IPU resolutions were systematically submitted as official papers to parliament.

Several IPU Members (**Czech Republic, Iceland, Maldives, Serbia, and Switzerland**) reported on their activities within the framework of the Organization, including the practice of conveying the resolutions to the relevant parliamentary committees and ministries, as well as, in some instances, publishing them on the parliament's website (**Greece**). In **Chile**, a report containing a summary of activities conducted during the Assembly is published, along with a brief description of the work carried out by Chilean parliamentarians and the resolutions adopted.

It is to be hoped that the 2012 reporting exercise will see an even larger number of IPU Members sending information on steps taken within their national parliaments to implement, follow up and report on the recommendations contained in the IPU resolutions they have adopted.

1. PROVIDING A SOUND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AIMED AT PREVENTING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE, IMPROVING ELECTION MONITORING AND ENSURING THE SMOOTH TRANSITION OF POWER

This resolution was adopted by consensus in April 2011 at the 124th IPU Assembly in Panama City, Panama, with reservations expressed by 18 delegations on preambular paragraph 6 and by three delegations on preambular paragraph 8. It underscored the importance of preventing electoral violence through the enactment of legislation to restrict the use of firearms in countries with a history of electoral violence, prohibit attempts to destabilize electoral processes and guarantee women's participation. The resolution emphasized the importance of electoral monitoring, particularly through neutral observers.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The Parliament of **Algeria** passed a number of laws dealing with the electoral code, political parties, associations, women's political representation in elected assemblies, incompatibilities with the parliamentary mandate, the information code and the laws on *communes* and *wilayas*. This solid legislative framework has enabled the country to consolidate its democratic process. In particular, Article 9 of *Fundamental law No. 12-04 of 12 January 2012 on political parties* stipulates that political parties shall not resort to any form of violence or undue influence and under Section II, Article 11.9 underscores the promotion of human rights and values such as tolerance as one of the pillars of political parties.

The **Austrian** Parliament introduced new legislation in 2011 targeting potential abuse of absentee voting and in 2007 lowered the passive voting age to 16 years in order to provide better representation for the youth. Moreover, parliament not only endeavours to ensure the best possible conditions for national elections, but also works to raise awareness and hold debates so that the public can cast an informed ballot on election day.

In January 2010, a *law amending the Electoral Code* of the Republic of **Belarus** came into effect. The law aims to simplify the nomination and registration process for candidates in presidential and parliamentary elections, and to allow them greater access to the mass media.

During the reporting period, a **Costa Rican** MP tabled a private member's bill on the establishment of a dedicated prosecutor's office for electoral offences in order to combat populism and other ills of democracy, which was published in the *Official Gazette* of July 2012.

According to the **Czech Criminal Code**, electoral violence or forcible influencing of the electoral process is punishable by law. In 2011, the parliament adopted an amendment to Article 351 of the Criminal Code stipulating that "*any person(s) who offer(s) a sum of money or similar reward to another person to vote against his/her personal conviction shall be sentenced to prison for a term of between six months and three years.*"

In 2012, the **Indonesian** House of Representatives enacted a new law on the election of members to the House of Representatives, the Regional Representative Council, and the Provincial and District Legislative Council. This law adopts the popular vote as its voting system and endows the Election Monitoring body with the authority to monitor and conduct investigations into allegations of electoral fraud. A special law enforcement centre and electoral fraud court were established under this law to safeguard the integrity and transparency of the electoral process. Both the new *Law on general elections* and the amendment to the *Political Party Law* foresee a mandatory 30-per cent quota on women's participation in both general elections and elections to political party executive bodies.

With regard to operative paragraphs 4 and 26, part 6 of the **Irish Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012**, which was signed into law by parliament in July, provides that political parties will face a cut of half their State funding if they do not field at least 30 per cent women and 30 per cent men candidates at the next general election.

Following a March 2011 Supreme Court ruling, the Diet of **Japan** was instructed to take legislative measures to remedy the disparity in the values of votes in different constituencies and, to this end, a Council was set up within the House of Representatives. The Council inter alia rectified the disparity in the relative weights of votes, reducing the number of seats in the House and radically reforming the election system.

With regard to operative paragraph 2 of the resolution, on 5 July 2011, the National Assembly of **Kenya** enacted the *Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission Act*. The purpose of this Act is to provide for the operations, powers, responsibilities and functions of the Commission to supervise elections and referendums at county and national government levels.

On 2 December 2011, the *Election Act* was enacted, which addresses the use of force or violence during election period. The Act provides that any person who directly or indirectly in person or by any other person on his behalf, inflicts or threatens to inflict injury, damage, harm or loss on or against a person inter alia in order to induce or compel that person to vote in a particular way or refrain from voting, commits an offence and is liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding one million shillings or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or both.

With regard to operative paragraphs 24 and 27 of the resolution both Chambers of the **Mexican** Parliament have approved a *draft decree* to amend and add various provisions to the Constitution in areas such as political rights, the re-election of senators and deputies to the Congress, the powers of the parliament, the parliament's budget, the powers of the Senate, the designation of the pro tempore President, the powers of the President and the composition of the chambers by political party. It is now for the state legislatures to approve the proposed constitutional amendments.

Several bills were filed in the Senate of the **Philippines**, aimed at improving the election process, including a bill on the *Automated Election System*, which seeks to increase the security features of the system and enhance its reliability. Another bill was tabled by Senator Trillanes', Bill no. 2881, the *Fair Election Act*, which aims to relax and liberalize the limits on access to print space and air time on TV and radio for political parties and candidates during election campaigns.

On 5 January 2011, the Sejm of **Poland** adopted the *Election Code*, which replaced all previous regulations concerning elections in Poland. The Code introduced a quota of at least 35 per cent of either gender on candidate lists. It also provides for a variety of ways for citizens to cast their ballot, thereby facilitating the participation of voters, in particular disabled voters. Postal voting for the disabled and voters abroad was introduced, together with the use of Braille templates for blind voters.

The National Assembly of the **Republic of Korea** reviewed in February 2012 the *Act on Public Official Elections*, specifically the regulations governing election campaigning on the Internet and social networking services that provide online election campaigning prior to election day. Political fund-raising regulations were also reviewed so as to increase transparency and, in this regard, the period for issuing receipts for party membership fees and political donations was shortened.

The *Elections and Referendum Campaign Act* of **Slovenia** governs all issues relating to elections held in the country. In 2011, the National Assembly adopted a draft Act amending the existing one, in particular the section relating to the financing of the referendum campaign. In the same year, the National Assembly amended the *Deputies Act* concerning the incompatibility of offices. Thus, it is no longer possible to simultaneously be a parliamentarian and a mayor or deputy mayor.

The **Togolese** Parliament passed a number of amendments to the *Law on the Electoral Code* and the *Organic Law* determining the number of deputies in parliament. That number has risen from 81 to 91 in light of demographic changes in the country.

The Parliament of **Ukraine** passed the *Law on the Election of People's Deputies of Ukraine* on 17 November 2011. The basis of the new law is the mixed electoral system, by which 225 parliamentarians are elected from party lists and 225 in single-seat majority

constituencies. While candidates in each of the constituencies may be fielded by parties, they can also nominate themselves. Among other things, this gives independent candidates an opportunity to take part in elections. The proposed threshold for political parties to gain parliamentary representation is 5 per cent.

In **Uruguay**, a *bill on promoting the equal participation of men and women in elected office* is currently being examined by parliament.

In **Viet Nam**, the 13th National Assembly elected in May 2011 adopted a resolution on supplementary provisions and amendments to the Constitution of 1992, which set out guidelines for a National Election Commission to be established as an independent institution, while at the same time improving election procedures, ensuring greater transparency in supervising and verifying the status and conduct of elected members, and providing a mechanism for dealing with election-related complaints.

The Parliament of **Zimbabwe** recently passed the *Electoral Act*, which inter alia seeks to introduce greater transparency in the counting and collation of votes and establish new mechanisms to prevent politically-motivated violence and intimidation during elections.

OTHER MEASURES

As is the case of many Member Parliaments, in **Belarus, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia** and **Turkey**, the electoral law is enshrined in the Constitution and developed in electoral and referendum legislation.

Austria, Cyprus and **Hungary** indicated that their parliamentarians had regularly participated in election observation missions, organized either by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe or the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Austria reported that for many years it has been supporting numerous election observation missions and believes that they are a necessary and useful tool to further democracy. Recently, Austrian parliamentarians participated in an election observation mission to Armenia for the parliamentary elections held there in 2012.

At the most recent elections in **Andorra**, held in April 2011, 14 women were elected, accounting for 50 per cent of the seats in parliament.

Regarding recommendation 3, **Belgium** was one of the first countries in the world to use IT during the electoral process (since 1994). Currently, 44 per cent of voters use this electronic system. A dedicated supervisory body was set up to guarantee the reliability of the system. Concerning recommendations 4 and 26, the law provides for women's quotas on party lists. Furthermore, the first two candidates on any list may not be of the same sex (Art. 117bis of the Electoral Code). These measures have led to almost 40 per cent representation of women in the Federal Parliament. Before quotas had been introduced, the number of women hovered around 15 per cent.

The National Assembly of **Chad** reported that the current legislature has 28 women MPs out of a total of 188, accounting for 14 per cent. Following the communal elections, many women were elected as town councillors but still remain a minority in decision-making posts. Legislation is needed requiring political parties to field a minimum of 30 per cent women candidates on their lists with a view to reaching gender parity.

Cyprus reported that, as a Member State of the European Union, it has participated in several electoral observation missions, the most recent being the one organized during the legislative and presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in November 2011.

The **Ethiopian Parliament** reported that a Code of Conduct has been produced for political parties, candidates, members and supporters with a view to ensuring free and peaceful elections whose results could be accepted by all citizens.

In **Finland**, special emphasis is placed on inclusiveness in electoral education and communication, e.g. campaigns designed to motivate young voters. Moreover, printed electoral material uses plain language and key material is provided to immigrants with a view to ensuring inclusiveness in election education and communication for the disabled and the migrant community.

In its report, **Ghana** indicated that the Electoral Commission (EC) has recently undertaken a biometric registration of all voters using IT. Parliament duly voted a budget for the exercise. The House called on the EC to brief Members on the exercise so that they could become more involved.

The **Japanese Diet** reported that provisions are made for persons with serious disabilities who find it difficult to get to polling stations to vote by postal ballot. To encourage political participation by the disabled, the groundwork has been laid domestically for ratification of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Following a Cabinet decision in June 2010, from 2010 through 2011 the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications oversaw a *Commission of Inquiry on Improving the Voting Environment for Disabled Persons* that submitted requests to relevant parties and election boards on improving access to election information for voters with disabilities, including the use of closed captioning and sign language interpreters in campaign broadcasts, and on making polling stations barrier-free. At present, sign language interpreters can be assigned in certain elections at the discretion of the political parties making the campaign broadcasts.

The **Lebanese Parliament** reported that the Council of Ministers was currently drafting a bill on parliamentary elections. Once the parliament receives the bill, it will ensure that the first and third IPU resolutions are duly discussed and taken into consideration.

In **Luxembourg**, two parties have introduced quotas in their statutes to ensure a better gender balance among the candidates they field (CSV 33% and the *Green Party* 50%). In 2009, 15 women were directly elected (25% of seats). Currently, two out of three deputy chairpersons are women.

In the 2010 elections, the **Philippine** Commission on Elections conducted the country's first nationwide fully automated elections – from the counting of votes to the transmission of election results.

Regarding recommendation 22 of the resolution, the Forum of **Rwandan Women Parliamentarians** sensitized women to their civic duty to vote and encouraged them to run for office.

In the **United Kingdom**, the Electoral Commission and the Association of Chief Police Officers have issued a number of publications which provide guidance for the police and electoral administrators on the policing of elections and on the detection of electoral abuse. The most recent edition of the main publication, *Guidance on preventing and detecting electoral malpractice*, was issued in February 2012.

2. THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN ENSURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

This resolution was adopted unanimously at the 124th IPU Assembly. It calls upon parliamentarians to take immediate action to define targets for sustainable development, which should be viewed as a common interest and can only be achieved through a comprehensive approach to developing legislation and policy on finance, land use, women's empowerment, agriculture, water management and sustainable forestry. The resolution emphasized that an integrated approach to development was necessary to overcome the potential food shortages and pollution that could result from population growth.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

On 29 December 2011, the Parliament of **Andorra** approved the country's signature of the *European Landscape Convention* - also known as the *Florence Convention* - which seeks to promote the protection, management and planning of European landscapes and organizes European cooperation in this area. In April 2012, the parliament also approved ratification of the *Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat* - also known as the *Ramsar Convention*. The purpose of this Convention is to stem the loss of wetlands, promote their conservation and foster "wise use" thereof.

As at 2012, the Parliament of **Belarus** had adopted 19 laws on environmental protection and the efficient use of natural resources. Over the past two years, the parliament has adopted a series of laws approving amendments which aim to implement the resolutions adopted at the 120th and 124th IPU Assemblies, including amendments to the *Law on Protection of the Environment*, relating to the national ecological network and biosphere reserves. In order to create a legal basis for the implementation of national policy in the field of renewable energy, the *Law on Renewable Energy Sources* entered into force in 2011. Its provisions are intended to increase energy security, reduce the anthropogenic impact on the environment and climate, support the conservation of non-renewable energy sources for future generations and promote the production and use of efficient technologies designed to exploit renewable energy sources.

In July 2011, the **Belgian** House of Representatives, at the initiative of Mr. Patrick Moriau, Deputy and President of the Belgian IPU Group, adopted a resolution dealing with the monopolization of agricultural land and land governance in developing countries (cf. recommendation 4 of the IPU resolution).

The **Congolese** Parliament voted to adopt the *National Development Plan 2012-2016*, which includes inter alia a four-year programme aimed at developing the agricultural sector. As part of their oversight functions, MPs often question the Agriculture Minister on the ministry's policy, in particular measures taken to guarantee sustainable agriculture in Congo.

Several bills were submitted to the Legislative Assembly of **Costa Rica** concerning the subject matter of the resolution, including a *Bill on biomass-generated electricity* and another amending Article 50 of the Constitution on recognizing and guaranteeing the basic rights to food and food security based on the principle of food sovereignty.

During 2011, the House of Representatives of **Cyprus** approved the *Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)*. Cyprus has been using solar power for many years, mainly for heating water and buildings. In fact, Cyprus has the highest percentage of installed solar collectors per capita in the world.

The **Dutch Parliament** approved the new *Green Deals* approach on concluding agreements with various sectors of society and adopted the *Sustainability Agenda* presented by the Cabinet. In 2011, the Dutch Government sent a *Memorandum on Raw Materials* to parliament, at the request of the House of Representatives, stipulating that citizens would have to cut back on the use of raw materials in order to prevent resource depletion, and promoting recycling. The Dutch Government wants the Netherlands to become the gateway for organic raw materials for the production of fuel, energy and chemicals. In the debate about the Memorandum, the House of Representatives advocated a policy aimed at increasing recycling from 80 per cent in 2012 to 83 per cent in 2015.

Ethiopia has developed a *Climate-resilient Green Economy Strategy*, which includes plans to achieve zero net carbon emissions by 2050. All current and future hydropower plans are based on environmental impact assessments and aim to meet the growing needs of the country and its neighbours by creating development opportunities and supplying energy. An Environmental Protection Authority was set up.

The Parliament of **Finland** passed a new *Waste Act* in spring 2011, which came into effect on 1 May 2012. The new Act seeks to limit waste and looks into the possibilities of re-using waste materials.

Ghanaian MPs have been working to ensure an integrated and sustainable approach to the management of natural resources, agricultural production and demographic change. Members and Committees of the House have attended several workshops and forums on the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative. Parliament passed the *Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 2011* (Act 815) to regulate the use of revenue from the exploitation of the country's hydrocarbon resources. The House also passed the *Petroleum Commission Act, 2011* (Act 821) establishing a Commission to oversee the management and utilization of the country's crude oil and gas resources.

The crucial role of women in sustainable agricultural development is duly recognized by the House, which recently approved a loan of US\$ 9 million from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to support the Rural and Agricultural Finance Programme by assisting rural farmers and groups of farmers, most of whom are women.

As part of the *National Legislation Programme* of the **Indonesian** House of Representatives, land issues are at the centre of discussions, and recently, the *Bill on the acquisition of land for public development* became Law No. 2/2012.

The *Act on Special Measures Concerning the Procurement of Renewable Energy by Electric Utilities* was enacted by the **Japanese Diet** on 26 August 2011 to address the sustainable use of resources. This Act seeks to promote the use of sustainable renewable energy by electric utilities through a "sustainable energy fixed-price purchase system" whereby electric utilities purchase at set prices electricity produced by solar, wind, water, geothermal, biomass and other means of power generation.

In connection with recommendation 3, earlier this year in Japan, representatives of all-women *sanchoku* (direct-from-the-farm) groups were invited to provide real-life accounts of and field questions on improving social awareness of the role of women in rural villages and efforts to promote their skills. Prior to this initiative, the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of both Houses of the Diet had held discussions on the important role of women in agriculture.

The *Act on Promoting the Introduction of Sustainable Agricultural Production Practices* aims to ensure sustained agricultural production by having prefectures grant "eco-farmer" certification to farmers switching over to eco-friendly agriculture and reducing their use of chemical fertilizers, and offer special financial/tax incentives to certified farmers. At the end of March 2012, 216,287 farmers across Japan had been certified as eco-farmers.

With regard to recommendation 4, in August 2011, the *Environment and Land Court Act* was enacted by the National Assembly of **Kenya** establishing a superior court to hear and determine disputes relating to the environment and the use and occupation of, and title to, land, and to make provision for its jurisdiction, functions and powers.

Lebanon concluded an agreement with the OPEC Fund for International Development via *Law 143* of 25 August 2011, which was succeeded by an agreement with IFAD through *Law 209* of 31 March 2012. These have been complemented by water resources management laws for certain regions in the country. In addition, an important law on the management of offshore petroleum resources (132, 2/9/2010) was promulgated.

On 21 January 2010, the Chamber of Deputies of **Luxembourg** passed a law on the establishment of a new legislative framework on subsidies for environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources. The purpose of these subsidies is to encourage companies to become more energy efficient, stimulate the production of renewable energy and, in general, reduce their carbon footprint.

Further to a proposal by the **Mexican Parliament's** Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, International Organizations and the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries, a draft decree approving the *Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity*, adopted in Nagoya on 29 October 2010, was passed and sent to the Executive.

With regard to paragraph 12, the Committee on Agriculture and Livestock tabled a motion requesting the Environment and Natural Resources Secretariat and the National Water Commission to draw up a report on the impact of climate change on the country's rural sector.

The Majlis A'shura of **Oman** has taken a series of legislative measures to protect the environment from pollution, overgrazing and the exploitation of rare plant and animal species. Parliament has made a number of recommendations to the executive with a view to achieving the optimum exploitation of agricultural resources, such as increasing allocations to the agricultural sector in the next *Five-Year Development Plan* in keeping with its strategic importance as the main pillar of food security. Greenhouse agriculture will be encouraged as its yield is 12-fold compared with open agriculture and it consumes 30 per cent less water. Parliament has also recommended that the executive put in place a clear strategy for the date palm sector, removing all obstacles related to production and marketing, and preparing the ground for promoting the sector.

During the period under review, many legislative measures were taken by both Chambers of the Congress of the **Philippines**, including a House Bill entitled *An Act providing for the promotion of bio-organic farming in the Philippines*, which seeks to promote bio-organic farming, thus enriching soil fertility and improving agricultural output.

The Assembly of the Republic of **Portugal** considered the *Public Land Bank Bill*, which creates a public bank of agricultural land for agricultural leases.

In 2011, the Parliament of **Romania** enacted the *Law on the prevention and punishment of acts leading to environmental damage*, which establishes a series of measures aimed at effectively protecting the environment. A review was conducted of Law 82/1993, whereby the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation shall be managed under a protected natural area regime, being considered a biosphere reservation, a wetland of international importance and a natural world heritage site.

The **Turkish** Parliament passed several laws aimed at protecting biodiversity and ecosystems and ensuring bio-security and the supply of reliable and quality products to consumers, including the *Law on Bio-Security*. The purpose of this law is to set rules to limit risks caused by genetically modified organisms and products that are produced by using modern biotechnology, protect animal and plant health, the environment and biodiversity, and establish bio-security systems to ensure sustainability and the regulation, inspection and monitoring of these operations.

With a view to improving the mechanisms for the management of natural resources, water resources and forestry and the preservation of biodiversity, the Parliament of **Ukraine** recently adopted a number of laws, including the *Law on procurement in specific areas of economic activity*, which aims to establish a more flexible procurement mechanism for the production, transportation and supply of drinking water, the functioning of the centralized sewage system, the development of oil, gas and coal resources, the transportation and storage of natural gas and the transportation, storage and processing of crude oil and petroleum products.

A private member's bill was tabled in the Parliament of **Uruguay** on the conservation, protection and improvement of coastal woodlands located along the Río de la Plata and the Atlantic Ocean.

In order to establish a comprehensive framework for sustainable growth and "green development" in **Viet Nam**, the National Assembly has adopted a number of new laws, including the *Law on Water Resources* (July 2012), the *Law on Minerals* (July 2011) and the *Law on the Environment Protection Tax* (January 2012), all of which are designed to improve the protection, management and exploitation of natural resources. In June 2012, the National Assembly also adopted a Resolution on enhancing the effectiveness of public investment in agriculture, farming and rural development.

OTHER MEASURES

In **Algeria**, the *Five year Programme* (2010-2014) currently underway, for which parliament has approved a budget of US\$ 280 billion, is intended to strengthen the multisectoral and participatory approach to the planning and realization of integrated management of natural resources. It will facilitate the sustainable use of biodiversity, measures to combat soil degradation, the rational use of water and a reduction in greenhouse gases. As part of this Programme, special attention has been placed on the restoration of land and soil damaged due to natural or man-made causes. In addition, the living conditions of nearly 5 million persons will be improved and about 750,000 permanent jobs will be created in rural communities. Attention will be focused on modern agricultural methods and significant investments will be made in research, training and the dissemination of the results of agricultural research among farmers.

Austrian members of parliament are engaged in debates concerning the reform of the *European Common Agricultural Policy*. Recently, the Austrian Agriculture Committee of the National Council discussed how best to ensure the allocation of sufficient funds to further promote and tackle the challenges of organic farming and sustainable land use.

A *Day of the Forest* is organized annually in **Belarus**, with the participation of members of parliament and the general public. The event aims to raise public awareness of the importance of forestry resources to economic, environmental and food security.

The **Belgian Senate** set up under its Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs a Working Group on "New indicators of economic services, social advancement, quality of life and happiness". The group has already held several hearings and is currently examining a bill on complementary indicators to determine GDP.

The National Assembly of **Burundi** indicated that it has been and would continue to sensitize the population to development plans for regions and departments and for the utilization of water and agricultural lands. A number of relevant bills and laws were studied and passed, including the *Bill on the Water Code*, on 23 December 2011.

The National Commission on Sustainable Development of **Finland** has begun work on drafting an agreement committing all sectors of society to a long-term sustainable development programme by 2050 as part of its new strategy. The strategy will be developed in close cooperation with the government's foresight 2030 report and the Finnish Technology and Innovation Funding Agency's roadmap for sustainable development. The government report includes a section on "Making the most of scarce resources", which examines the possibilities of a future bio economy, clean technology, sustainable use of natural resources, energy and material efficiency and recycling of raw materials in Finland.

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development of the National Assembly of **Hungary**, during the reporting period, participated in the GLOBE Strategy Meeting on the European Union's sustainable development strategy. It adopted a report, which was then submitted in plenary, on gene technology in the agriculture and food industry in Hungary.

With regard to operative paragraph 10 of the resolution, **India** reports that 17 biodiversity-rich areas of India have been designated *biosphere reserves*, seven of which are listed in UNESCO's world network of biosphere reserves. Programmes are being implemented for the conservation and management of wetlands, mangroves and coral reefs.

Forest cover in India accounts for about 70 million hectares. While most developing countries have lost forest cover, India has added about 3 million hectares of forest tree cover in the past three decades and its forests neutralize nearly 11 per cent of its greenhouse gas emissions. Almost 200 million people depend on forests for their livelihood in India.

As part of its *National Action Plan on Climate Change*, India recently launched the *Green India Mission* with a budget of US\$ 10 billion over a 10-year period, with the objective of doubling the area of afforestation and eco-restoration to 20 million hectares, improving ecosystem services, biodiversity and carbon sequestration in 10 million hectares, and increasing forest-based livelihood incomes for 3 million forest-dependent households.

In February 2012, the Chamber of Deputies of **Luxembourg** invited the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Mr. Olivier de Schutter, to speak about the stakes involved and challenges to the right of every human being to food dignity.

Various initiatives have been taken by the **Slovenian** National Assembly's Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Food to increase food production and self-sufficiency, including the organization of a national consultation on the future policy on agricultural land and forests. Agricultural production in Slovenia depends on environmental protection and the designation of environmentally-sensitive areas. Water protection areas account for over 20 per cent of the national territory. In all, 36 per cent of Slovenia is designated as a *Natura 2000* area and included in the European network of special protection areas. Moreover, there are also protected areas (parks, natural reserves and monuments), which account for about 12 per cent of the territory, as well as ecologically important areas.

Sweden reported that it is of central importance that the EU's *Common Agricultural Policy* is reformed in order to enable trading that is more open and adapted to the market in the agricultural and food sectors. Sweden's general long-term goal for future reforms of the policy is a deregulated, market-oriented and competitive agricultural sector driven by consumer requirements and respect for the environment, including abolishing the limitation of supplies and market price support and the phasing-out of direct support.

Turkey is currently the seventh largest agriculture-producing country in the world and aims to be among the top five within the coming decade. Concerning the resolution, a law was passed on supporting the development of forest villages, protecting existing forested areas, creating new ones, and selling and converting to farmland State-owned forest areas that have lost their forest features.

According to its report, environmental damage has continued in the **United Kingdom** over the past decade and many species are still in decline. A key international target of halting biodiversity loss by 2010 was missed and a new 2020 target has been agreed. Two major reports set out how to address these problems in the UK. The first found that a fundamental reassessment of nature conservation was required that must include the expansion and recreation of natural areas. The second report assigned economic values to the environment so that its value can be factored into decision-making. This value was calculated in terms of provision of flood defence, carbon sequestration and recreational value.

3. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE FUNDING OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

This resolution was adopted by consensus at the 124th IPU Assembly in April 2011. It underscores the importance of accountability to democracy, particularly where the funding of political parties was concerned. While its intention was not to be prescriptive, the resolution noted the difficulty of establishing universal accountability mechanisms in the light of varying democratic and constitutional systems and political parties. As reflected in operative paragraphs 8 to 12 of the resolution, it further noted that political parties should form part of the solution by serving as agents of change and continuing to work for accountability and transparency.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The Parliament of **Algeria** passed a *fundamental law on political parties* intended inter alia to guarantee transparency in political party finances and combat all forms of corruption in political life. Its provisions on political party finances clearly stipulate that while registered parties with parliamentary representation may receive State funding in addition to donations and members' fees, they may not receive any financial or material assistance from any foreign party. The law prohibits political parties from conducting any commercial activity, places caps on donations and gifts and an obligation on parties to present an audited financial report to their general assemblies.

The **Austrian** Parliament passed several laws in June 2012 on party financing and lobbying, including limitations on funds spent on election campaigns and placing a cap on anonymous donations. There will also be stricter requirements for lobbyists and tougher sanctions for non-compliance. Moreover, parliament may set-up a commission of inquiry by a simple majority vote to ensure transparency and accountability, thereby exercising its oversight power.

In a bid to strengthen legislation governing State funding of political parties in respect of the 2009 Charter, the Government of **Chad** issued *Decree no. 029/PR/PM/2012* of 11 January 2012. The decree sets out strict conditions for political parties to be eligible for State funding and makes provision for transparency in the management of those funds. Furthermore, all political parties in receipt of State funds have an obligation to submit their annual accounts to the Audit Chamber of the Supreme Court by 31 March each year.

The *Political Parties Act* passed by the **Congolese** Parliament covers party funding, and became operational on 1 January 2012.

In February 2011, the House of Representatives of **Cyprus** enacted framework legislation on political parties, specifically the *Law on the registration and funding of political parties and related matters*. This law establishes a legal framework for political parties, their legal status and registration requirements, as well as rules concerning transparency in financial management. Moreover, oversight of political party funding has been entrusted to the Auditor General, an independent institution. Furthermore, a 30,000-euro threshold on donors' contributions for political party election campaign expenditure has been imposed. The law foresees sanctions for any violation of the rules.

Following the publication by the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption of its Evaluation Report on the transparency of political party funding in the **Czech Republic**, the government is preparing amendments to the *Electoral Law*, which should contain regulations on election campaigns, for example the need to make separate accounting entries for ordinary party activities and political campaigns.

In **Finland** a complete reform of electoral and party finance legislation was carried out in 2009 and 2010. A new *Electoral Funding Act* was passed in 2009 and the *Political Parties Act* was amended in 2010. The Government of Finland believes that the reforms of 2009 and 2010 have increased transparency in electoral and party finances and the current legislation fulfils the recommendations of the IPU resolution.

The **Indonesian** House of Representatives adopted a new *Law on Political Parties* that places an obligation on political parties and candidates registered for elections to submit their accounts to a public accountant and the State Audit Board through the General Election Committee. There is also an obligation to report all political party expenditure derived from public funds.

The *Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012* was signed into law on 28 July 2012, having been approved by both Houses of the **Irish** Parliament. The Act provides for significant reforms to political funding arrangements in Ireland. In addition, it contains a provision which will make State funding to political parties contingent on the achievement of greater gender balance in candidate selection for parliamentary general elections.

Japan has set a ceiling on expenditures for election campaigning via the *Public Offices Election Act* to ensure that prospective candidates have an equal opportunity to stand for public office regardless of their financial resources, and provides public funds to cover some of the costs of election campaigning. Harsh penalties, including suspension of the right to vote and invalidation of election victories, are imposed on candidates who exceed this ceiling. Although companies in Japan are not allowed to donate directly to individual politicians, they may make capped donations to political parties and political fund-management organizations. Donations from foreign organizations, governments, nationals, corporations and groups are forbidden. Severe penalties, including up to three years' imprisonment, have been introduced for violations of these restrictions.

Pursuant to operative paragraphs 1 and 4, on 1 November 2011, the National Assembly of **Kenya** enacted the *Political Parties Act* establishing the Political Parties Fund, administered by the Registrar. The monies allocated from the Fund to registered political parties shall be used for purposes compatible with democracy, including promoting the representation in parliament and in the county assemblies of women, persons with disabilities, youth, ethnic and other minorities and marginalized communities. The allocations may also cover political party election expenses and the broadcasting of their policies.

Lebanon does not have a law on political parties per se; the *Law of Associations (3/8/1909)* dating back to the Ottoman era is still in force. Under its provisions, the establishment of an association requires no prior authorization; mere notification to the government suffices. An *anti-corruption bill* is currently being debated by the relevant parliamentary committees. It includes provisions on the funding of political parties and electoral expenses. Amendments were passed to *Law 179* of 3 September 2011 concerning inheritance rights and *Law 180* of 3 September 2011 regarding taxation with a view to enhancing women's rights.

A **Mexican** parliamentarian tabled a motion in parliament on setting up a working group to review and appraise fulfilment of election promises by the executive and consequently, investigate any reports of financial mismanagement or misappropriation of funds for election purposes.

On 27 April 2011, the Government of the **Netherlands** introduced a bill in the House of Representatives containing rules on the funding of political parties and the supervision of their finances. This bill will replace the existing *Political Parties Funding Act*, which sets clear criteria for State funding of political parties, but leaves parties completely free to generate income from other sources at their own discretion. In order to avoid any possible conflict of interest, the government will be requiring political parties to divulge the sources of private contributions. The bill is currently under scrutiny in the Senate.

Several bills were considered during the reporting period by the Assembly of the Republic of **Portugal**, including a *Public Information Transparency Bill* and a bill on the *Incompatibility of Political Appointments*, which changes the legal regime of incompatibilities for senior politicians and public officials.

OTHER MEASURES

National electoral legislation in **Belarus** provides that the State shall bear the costs of organizing and holding elections from the funds earmarked for this purpose from the national budget. Funds are distributed among electoral commissions and to candidates on the basis of estimates calculated and adopted by the Central Commission of Elections and Referendums. No less than six months after elections are held, the Central Commission informs the House of Representatives of the level of expenditure allocated from the national budget.

In **Belgium**, the law goes beyond the IPU resolution, which makes provision for self-regulatory mechanisms (recommendation 8) as opposed to restrictive laws or purely internal financial controls of parties and candidates (recommendation 10). External control of election spending and party accounts has been assigned to a parliamentary committee, assisted by the National Audit Office. In essence, this is a system of peer review whereby parties control each other.

As part of the **British** Government's programme of political and constitutional reform, several multi-party substantive meetings have taken place with a view to securing a cross-party agreement to reform party funding. The Deputy Prime Minister has taken special responsibility for this programme and if a cross-party agreement is reached, it is expected that legislation would be required to implement the agreement. Among the provisions of the Law is an obligation on all registered political parties to prepare an annual statement of accounts and an auditor's report, which is to be submitted to the Standards in Public Office Commission for publication. State funding provided to political parties under the Electoral Act will not be paid in the event of non-compliance with this provision.

This resolution was sent by the Legislative Assembly of **Costa Rica** to the President of the Supreme Election Tribunal, all political parties, the Select Political Parties and Reform Committee and the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for information and possible action.

In **Ethiopia**, political parties receive State funding according to the number of seats held by the party in the national parliament and the state councils. Funds from foreign sources are prohibited. In addition to funding, the State provides free air time on State-run media. Among several measures taken to enhance accountability and transparency in political party funding, an Anti-corruption Commission was established. Political parties are bound by law to reveal the sources of their funding and submit audited accounts to the National Electoral Board within three months of the close of the financial year. The law also places caps on spending.

The funding of political parties in **Germany** is governed by the *Basic Law and Act on Political Parties*, which inter alia obliges political parties to submit an annual statement of accounts that is subsequently verified by the Bundestag President, submitted to parliament and published as a paper.

Ghana does not have a law requiring the State to fund political parties. Political parties are thus funded by member contributions. Spending on election campaigns is not capped. The independent Electoral Commission, however, sometimes receives donations in the form of equipment and material, which it distributes to political parties using an agreed formula. Although there is no cap on political party election campaign expenditure, parties are required by law to submit audited accounts to the electoral commission after every general election.

The **Hungarian Parliament** is expected to adopt additional laws on general elections and the financing of political parties during its autumn session.

The Electoral Commission of **India** has made a recommendation for political parties to audit their accounts and then place them in the public domain.

In **Luxembourg**, members of the Committee on Institutions and Constitutional Review met in January 2012 to discuss the development of a code of ethics for their peers.

According to the *Political Parties Act*, in **Poland**, parties that receive annual state subsidies are obliged to submit financial reports to the National Electoral Commission by 31 March each year. Moreover, political parties that register candidates for the Sejm and the Senate in all constituencies have a maximum spending limit for campaign purposes of approximately € 7 million. The law stipulates that details of all contributions made to electoral committees have to be published by political parties on their websites.

In **Rwanda**, the issues of political party funding and election campaigns fall under the purview of the National Forum for the Concerted Action of Political Parties. That body had been set up to promote a national political dialogue with a view to achieving consensus and national harmony. A fundamental law defines the modalities for establishing political parties, their structures and functioning. It also covers the ethics of political leaders and conditions for receiving State funding.

Talks are in progress in the **Swedish** Parliament between all parties represented in the Riksdag on how legislation on the financing of parties is to be formulated. Such legislation is expected to be ready before the parliamentary elections in 2014.

The **Turkish** *Law on Political Parties* provides that the finances of political parties shall be audited by the Constitutional Court, and that audit reports shall be submitted annually by the end of June.

The *Law on the election of people's deputies* of **Ukraine** contains provisions on equal access for all candidates and parties to the media regardless of ownership rights, except for parties or candidates in a single-seat constituency who own media outlets.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON IPU ACTIVITIES

The General Council of **Andorra** reported that, in December 2011, the Andorran delegation had submitted an annual report on its IPU-related activities during the year in plenary and before members of the government. All resolutions adopted by IPU Assemblies and decisions taken by the Governing Council are forwarded to the Head of Government. An information note on the delegation's activities was produced and posted on the parliament's website.

The Parliament of **Hungary** provided an overview of its activities, including information on the number of bilateral and multilateral friendship groups which have been created within the Hungarian IPU Group since the start of the current parliamentary term (May 2010), and in which almost 300 MPs participate. The report indicated that these groups have proved to be an important instrument of parliamentary diplomacy.

Resolutions adopted by IPU Assemblies are transmitted for information to the Chamber of Deputies of **Luxembourg** and concerned members of the government. Generally, the work done by the IPU is systematically mentioned in written reports produced by parliamentarians and disseminated to the wider public through the country's four major dailies.

The **Norwegian** Parliament's involvement in IPU matters is recapitulated in an annual report that is prepared during the first quarter of the year. It is usually considered initially by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, which subsequently submits it to the plenary together with a recommendation. In the plenary, the report is debated and approved.

The Parliament of **Uganda** sent information on its various activities during the reporting period linked to the work of the Organization, such as the self-assessment exercise for MPs it conducted in collaboration with the IPU and the establishment of a Committee on Human Rights.

The National Assembly of **Zambia** provided information on the range of activities it carried out on the *2011 International Day of Democracy*, including a talk on Parliament Radio by panellists from a cross-section of society invited to give their views on democracy.