



COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

This document provides a checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system between October 2012 and March 2013.

The United Nations

- The IPU began to engage with a major UN-led process to help redefine the current development framework in the light of new challenges and based on the experience of the soon-to-expire Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As a first step, the IPU made a contribution to the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda that met in Monrovia, Liberia, in late January. Much of the discussion centred on the need to include a goal on democratic governance among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), intended to replace the current MDGs. As an extension of this global drive, the IPU encouraged national parliaments to participate in national consultations and individual MPs to provide their views through a UN online survey facility.
- The IPU participated in meetings of the Open Working Group on the SDGs, recently established by the UN General Assembly. It also participated in the first phase of consultations about the creation of a new high-level forum for sustainable development by the end of this year, which will replace the current Commission for Sustainable Development. The forum is intended to be a more open structure, able to accommodate a variety of stakeholders, including possibly parliamentarians.
- A first preparatory meeting for the 2014 session of the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) took place in Vienna in December. The meeting focused on gender issues and how they should permeate the new post-2015 development agenda. As the sole parliamentary partner of the DCF, the IPU contributed actively to the discussion. The Speaker of the Austrian Parliament was among the high-level officials who helped launch the two-day meeting.
- The annual joint Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations was held on 6 and 7 December. Entitled A road less travelled: parliamentary approaches to conflict prevention, reconciliation and peace building, the Hearing brought together close to 200 MPs for an interactive discussion with UN ambassadors and other officials. The event experimented with a new format that proved very successful based on participants' evaluation forms. More importantly, the event helped highlight how parliaments can support peace around the world both in their own right and in cooperation with the United Nations.
- The IPU joined a new Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group of the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) together with representatives of civil society and the private sector. The purpose of this informal group, which met for the first time in January, is to help identify concrete ways to make ECOSOC more relevant and its decisions more actionable at the national level. At the same time, the IPU began consultations with the ECOSOC Secretariat to consider new modalities for interaction between ECOSOC and parliaments.

- In terms of substantive UN processes, the IPU was most active during the last three months of 2012 in the discussions concerning the reform of UN field operations (under the item Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review) by advocating for UN country teams to work directly with parliaments to support the implementation of national development plans. Important statements were delivered before the General Assembly on follow up of the MDGs, UN operations and sustainable development.

UN Women

- In cooperation with UN Women, a parliamentary meeting on violence against women took place on 5 March in the wings of the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The meeting provided an opportunity to drive home to UN decision makers some of the positions that parliaments and the IPU have long adopted on this sensitive issue. A summary of the conclusions was read before the plenary of the Commission.
- The IPU and UN Women provided joint support for mainstreaming gender into the Turkish Parliament's Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. In this framework, a gender self-assessment was organized in December 2012. The assessment helped the Committee to take stock of its impact on gender-related legislation, appraise the role it was playing in parliament and identify capacity-building needs.

UNDP

- A major review of the current Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the IPU and UNDP was conducted in late 2012, as provided for in the MOU. Representatives of key UNDP offices met with senior IPU management to review all areas of cooperation. The outcome was overwhelmingly positive but also highlighted the need to fine-tune some of the working modalities and extend cooperation to neglected sectors. Discussions on a revised MoU began early in the year. The IPU President met with the UNDP Associate Administrator to pledge his political support to the process.
- As part of its work in support of the MDGs, the IPU contributed to two subregional consultations with parliamentarians and civil society in Dhaka and Manila. The final Declarations of both events in turn fed into the on-going global process to redefine the development agenda after 2015, when the MDGs will expire.
- Together with UNDP's Democratic Governance Group (DGG), the IPU worked in the first quarter of 2013 on preparing a survey of parliamentarians on key questions of governance. The DGG assisted with preparations for a workshop on governance to be held at the Quito Assembly.
- An evaluation of the first Global Parliamentary Report was initiated. Published by the IPU and UNDP in April 2012, the Report has to date seen follow-up action in 14 parliaments and currently exists in eight languages.
- The IPU continued to work closely with UNDP country offices, providing technical assistance and capacity-building programmes to national parliaments. Over the past six months, it has conducted such activities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, and Palestine.

Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

- The IPU submitted reports to the 53rd and 54th sessions of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) on the level of parliamentary involvement in the reporting process and on the situation of women in politics in the countries concerned.
- The IPU participated in the 10th session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Ms. L. Meier-Schatz, a Swiss MP, made a presentation on the role of parliament in combating racial discrimination in which she showcased the IPU's untiring efforts since the 2001 Durban Conference to get parliamentarians involved in fighting against racial discrimination.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- The IPU submitted a report to the UN Secretary-General on progress made by the organization in honouring its commitment to the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health.
- The IPU supported several WHO events to implement the recommendations of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health. Support included the participation of IPU technical staff and senior management as well as efforts to facilitate the participation of parliamentarians in the meetings. The IPU contributed to the first report of the independent Expert Review Group on Accountability for Women's and Children's Health (IERG).
- With the financial and technical support of the WHO, the IPU's Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Project scaled up its work in terms of providing support to parliaments and adding a parliamentary perspective to global platforms. Some key activities include the production of an IPU handbook for parliamentarians on maternal, newborn and child health, assistance to the Parliament of Kenya in conducting a rapid assessment of the legislative environment for women's and children's health and support to the Parliament of Uganda in developing an advocacy strategy for women's and children's health. The WHO supported the efforts of the IPU in the area of women's and children's health by participating in the technical Reference Group set up under the IPU project.

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)

- UNFPA's Africa Regional Office provided financial, technical and logistical support for a planning meeting to consult with parliamentarians and other actors on the IPU's proposal to produce a handbook for parliamentarians on women's and children's health.
- UNFPA, along with UNICEF, lent their support to the IPU's efforts in this area by participating in the technical Reference Group.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

- The annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO took place in mid-November in Geneva. Entitled Back to basics: Connecting politics and trade, the meeting examined the current trade regime from the perspective of job creation and economic growth. It also featured a hearing with the Director-General of the WTO.