



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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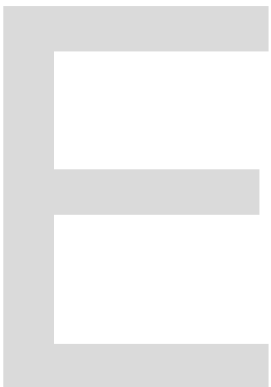
## Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings

### (d) Fourth World Conference of Speaker of Parliament (UN Headquarters, New York, 31 August – 2 September 2015)

The Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, on 31 August – 2 September 2015. The Conference was organized in close cooperation with the United Nations, as part of the series of high-level meeting leading up to the UN Summit on the post-2015 development agenda.

The Conference was attended by some 140 Speakers of Parliament, 30 Deputy Speakers, and the Heads of some 20 regional and other parliamentary organizations. The Conference also benefited from the participation of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the President of the UN General Assembly and the heads of various UN specialized agencies, and featured a keynote address by Mr. Forest Whitaker, artist, humanist and UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation.

The Conference allowed for a very rich and substantive general debate on the overall theme of ***Placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development: Building the world the people want.*** It also included two panel discussions on parliamentary oversight and translating the SDGs into action. The outcome Declaration and the reports from the two panel discussions ([Annexes I to III](#)) have been formally submitted to the United Nations, as a parliamentary contribution to the 2015 UN Summit that adopted the SDGs. Members are encouraged to reflect and make proposals on how these can guide the work of the IPU in the months and years to come.





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# Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

United Nations Headquarters, New York  
31 August to 2 September 2015



## Declaration

### ***Placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development: Building the world the people want***

- (1) We live in extraordinary times. We need equally extraordinary efforts to build a world where every man, woman and child is safe from war and conflict, free from poverty and hunger, where they are able to meet their needs and realize their human potential while preserving our planet for future generations, and where their rights, freedoms and dignity are fully respected.
- (2) Parliament is the central institution of democracy through which the will of the people is expressed. We, the Speakers of the world's parliaments, have convened at the United Nations in New York to give voice to their concerns and demonstrate our resolve to play our part in meeting the global challenges before us.
- (3) As we adopt this Declaration we are mindful of the unique responsibilities and constitutional mandates of our parliaments to make the laws that implement international agreements and to hold governments and international institutions to account for their full realization. Cognizant of our diverse traditions and unique parliamentary histories and practices, it is our ambition to provide a concrete democratic dimension to collective efforts aimed at creating a better world.

#### *Our world today*

- (4) In spite of progress in the areas of democracy, peace and development, we continue to live in an unstable world. War and conflict, often characterized by extreme brutality, are a daily reality in many places. Millions of people, primarily women and children die, are injured and displaced or forced to flee in dramatic conditions. In some regions of the world, we still witness democratic backsliding.
- (5) Peace and security are prerequisites for democracy and sustainable development. We call for much greater efforts to be deployed in solving conflicts through political dialogue and negotiations, with full respect for international law and by addressing the root causes of the conflict. We offer to place more emphasis on parliamentary diplomacy, which has demonstrated its ability to provide impetus to efforts aimed at resolving differences and conflicts.
- (6) We witness horrendous terrorist acts in every part of the globe. New terrorist groups are emerging with substantial resources at their disposal. Unfortunately, many of these terrorist acts are perpetrated by fundamentalist groups purporting to act in the name of religion. We condemn all forms and manifestations of terrorism, irrespective of their perpetrators and motives, as well as radicalization, violent extremism and their means of financing.
- (7) Our parliaments will do their utmost to enhance effective cooperation and support implementation of all relevant UN resolutions and international conventions and agreements to combat terrorism and contribute to the adoption of a coherent security policy at the international level. We pay tribute to the innocent victims of barbaric terrorist acts throughout the world and express our solidarity with them.

(8) Much more needs to be and can be done to prevent and reduce the risk of violence. We call for greater efforts to achieve a nuclear weapons free world. We want to see a real reduction in the proliferation of all weapons. We call for urgent action, including robust legislation, to tackle new security threats and to combat organized crime linked to human trafficking, drugs and the illegal arms trade, kidnappings and extortion, and associated money laundering and corruption.

(9) Millions of women and girls in every region of the world are subjected to all forms of violence, including physical, sexual and domestic violence, every day. We call on all countries to prioritize the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence now. There is an equally urgent need to put an end to widespread hatred and discrimination in all forms. We urge all countries to foster intercultural dialogue and to focus on promoting and tolerant and inclusive societies where people are respectful of each other's culture, religion and traditions. This should not run counter to efforts aimed at combating gender-based discrimination.

(10) Migration, whether forced or voluntary, is a fixture of today's world. People can and will move to other places in search of a better life. When they are forced to do so because their life is under threat the international community has an obligation to provide support. We are appalled at the countless human tragedies unfolding as people flee wars, conflict, natural and human disasters. We call on all States to protect refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants and to help build stable and prosperous societies in their countries of origin. In this context, it is important to work together to curb human smuggling and trafficking, as well as to strengthen cooperation to address the root causes of migration.

(11) Despite global advances in technology, health, knowledge and material wealth, longstanding economic and social disparities are increasing. There are vast inequalities in terms of income and living conditions in the world and billions of people are living in poverty, which erodes the social contract that is essential for democratic life and human progress everywhere. We are witnessing a steady degradation of our environment and climate change is today a reality. We urge our countries to reach agreements that take fully into account the Rio principles, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

(12) These agreements should ensure a shared prosperity while protecting our environment and effectively addressing climate change. They should focus on both adaptation and mitigation and be coupled with sufficient resources for effective implementation. Our parliaments stand ready to support the implementation of these agreements, as we do with respect to the commitments on disaster risk reduction and promoting a culture of prevention and risk resilience.

(13) The Internet is strongly influencing our world, spurring innovation and communication within and between countries. It is also a vital tool to foster citizens' participation in the democratic process. Cooperation between all stakeholders – Internet users, the private sector, civil society, the technological community, governments and international organizations – has helped foster an online environment in which all societies stand to benefit. However, too many people, especially women, still lack access to the Internet and more must be done to bridge the digital divide and ensure our citizens are able to harness the benefits of connectivity. We must also strive to ensure that rights are respected on the Internet and that it remains a space for debate and discussion, free from excessive commercialization and undue regulations aimed at limiting fundamental freedoms agreed internationally.

(14) In all of this, we need to rededicate ourselves to the rule of law. Our parliaments should assist in ensuring that the rule of law is upheld and all have equal access to justice. We call for greater commitment to international law and propose to pay particular attention to respect for human rights and international humanitarian law while supporting international justice mechanisms and efforts to end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes.

#### *Democracy*

(15) We reaffirm the principles of the *Universal Declaration on Democracy*. In this sense, our parliaments are sovereign and independent national institutions. They are marked by the history and cultural heritage of our countries and each one is different. Yet, they share the same ambition to ensure that the will of the people forms the basis of government. Participation in political life and public decision-making is an entitlement and is crucial to development. When people are left voiceless or excluded, their well-being is undermined and democracy is left wanting.

(16) We call for greater efforts to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls with a view to achieving their empowerment and making gender equality a reality. Development of our societies and economies hinges on the enjoyment, by women and men, girls and boys, of full and equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. We must rededicate ourselves to the full realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2030. We deplore the excruciatingly slow progress in securing a greater presence of women in parliament and commit to redoubling our efforts to reach, as a global average, the internationally agreed target of 30 per cent of women members in parliament by 2020.

(17) There is an apparent disconnect between the way we do politics and the way people live today. The connectivity and immediacy that characterize their lives seem far removed from national political processes. Young people in particular are calling for greater engagement, openness, transparency, accountability and effectiveness in politics. We must be ambitious and halt the tide of young people opting out of civil society and democratic institutions; we must better harness their energy and creativity in the service of communities and societies as a whole. We have seen how young people have been at the forefront of many pro-democracy movements.

(18) We pledge to do our utmost to make politics genuinely open to young people and to facilitate their election to parliament in greater numbers. We also pledge to address youth marginalization by engaging youth in politics and facilitating their access to education throughout their lifetime and to the job market. These may prove to be effective ways of also preventing them from turning to violence and conflict and from being recruited by terrorist groups.

(19) Minorities and indigenous peoples are the most vulnerable members of many of our societies and remain excluded from making decisions that affect their lives and the future of our countries. We affirm that they have an inalienable right to full and equal membership of each of our nations, which has to be translated into public policies that are sensitive to their situation, needs, and aspirations and accompanied by sufficient resources. We call for measures to be taken to ensure their effective participation at all levels of public life.

(20) We recognize the multiple challenges facing many of our parliaments today. We are concerned by public scepticism and a disconnect with politics, an unequal power relationship with the executive, difficulties in influencing decisions that are increasingly taken in international forums or outside government, and limited means at our disposal to increase institutional capacity in parliament. Supporting the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, we commit to working to tackle these challenges, respecting the role of traditional media, making greater use of social media and modern information and communication technologies (ICTs), and rendering our parliaments fit for purpose for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

(21) We will do our utmost to bring parliament closer to the people and we renew our pledge to make our parliaments ever more representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective, enabling the diverse components of society to participate in politics. To this end, we reiterate the importance of free and fair elections held at regular intervals, on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. We also reiterate the importance of creating and maintaining, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment for civil society. We recognize the progress that is being made by many parliaments towards democratization, as well as the setbacks experienced in several other countries, and we commit to continuing to assist each other in further promoting parliamentary democracy. We commend the recently adopted *Common Principles for Support to Parliaments* and recommend that all parliaments and relevant organizations endorse and be guided by them.

(22) We encourage the constitutional and institutional reforms underway in countries in transition to democracy. We underscore the importance of providing political and economic support to these countries in order to ensure that democracy, good governance, respect for human rights and social justice take root in a sustainable manner. Supporting economic development is indispensable for fledgling democracies to succeed, including through the conversion of these countries' debts into investments.

#### *Sustainable development*

(23) The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have provided a welcome focus for global efforts to improve peoples' lives. However, progress has been uneven between regions and countries and wide gaps remain. Some countries have reached many of the goals while others have for a variety of

reasons fallen short of the targets. Many peoples' lives have been saved and improved, data has been collected, techniques and tools developed and many important lessons learned. Today, the global community is poised to launch a post-2015 development agenda that is broader in scope and that builds on the experience of the MDGs, tackling both poverty eradication and sustainable development, and applied universally to all countries.

(24) We welcome the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that has emerged with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Poverty eradication is the overarching objective of this new agenda, alongside the promotion of economic, social and environmental development. These objectives can only be achieved by changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, building resilient infrastructure, fostering innovation, protecting and better managing natural resources, as well as revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development.

(25) We applaud the ambition of this agenda to be transformative and leave no-one behind, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. Indeed, to be successful, sustainable development has to place human beings at the centre of decisions. It has to aim at achieving their well-being with full respect for environmental limitations. It needs to be owned by the people and it requires their full participation. People are individuals endowed with rights and responsibilities towards each other and towards the environment. We must all invest in them as our most important resource.

(26) We welcome the goal and call for greater efforts to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, as well as the goal to address inequalities. We applaud the inclusion of a goal calling for urgent action against climate change that also encompasses disaster risk reduction. We welcome the broad-based goal on the means of implementation - finance, trade, technology, capacity building and systemic reforms - that must be mobilized in support of the new agenda.

(27) We commend the inclusion of a goal to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Good governance at all levels is an enabler of development and an objective in its own right for all countries. We commit to reach this goal in our countries and in our parliaments. In the process, parliaments will need to enhance their ability and capacity to ensure accountability for results, including in terms of promoting greater financial responsibility and transparency.

(28) While governments are finalizing the new agreements on sustainable development, financing for development, climate change and disaster risk reduction, we underscore the importance of achieving one harmonious global agenda. It is fundamental to the success of the endeavour. Without it we will not be able to achieve coherence and complementarity among the many actors who will be called upon to take part in the implementation process at the local, national and global levels or guarantee the most optimal use of available resources.

(29) We recognize the important responsibilities that are incumbent on parliaments to ensure implementation of the new SDGs. As Speakers, we are ready to do everything in our power to facilitate the consideration of relevant legislation and allocation of budgetary resources, and to hold governments accountable for the attainment of the goals. We will draw from a vast catalogue of actions to help build public awareness and national ownership, strengthen coherence within and between national and local administration and parliament, facilitate citizen involvement and evaluate and report on progress.

#### *International cooperation*

(30) We are convinced that the United Nations must remain the cornerstone of global cooperation and we take this opportunity to renew our solemn pledge in support of the Organization as it celebrates its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the victory of the world over fascism and Nazism. The UN embodies the ardent hope of people around the world for peace and development. Its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary therefore provides an important opportunity for the international community to reflect on its history, look ahead to the future and move forward, in order to turn the vision of the UN Charter into reality.

(31) We call on UN Member States to equip their Organization for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We commend the many reforms that have taken place over the past decade. Important challenges remain, however, that require urgent action. We remain concerned over the ability of the Security Council to better deliver on its primary responsibilities of maintaining international peace and security under the UN Charter. We believe that the effectiveness of the Security Council can only be improved through urgent reform to reflect contemporary global realities.

(32) Fifteen years ago, our First Speakers' Conference took place on the eve of the Millennium Summit. On that occasion we presented our vision for providing a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation. We take pride in the considerable progress that has been achieved since then; clearly, there is today growing interaction between the United Nations and the world of parliaments.

(33) We remain convinced that parliaments can do more to help bridge the democracy gap in international relations and secure global democratic accountability for the common good. We reiterate the recommendations we formulated at our conferences in 2005 and 2010. We regard the post-2015 development agenda as a unique opportunity to enhance substantially the cooperation between parliaments and the United Nations. We encourage UN Member States to set out an ambitious vision for this cooperation in the final documents.

(34) We reiterate that our cooperation must be firmly rooted in the work we carry out in our national parliaments, much of which relates to ensuring accountability. Our parliaments must be more active in international affairs by contributing to and monitoring international negotiations, overseeing the enforcement of agreements that have been reached by governments and ensuring national compliance with international law. Similarly, parliaments must be more vigilant in scrutinizing the activities of international organizations and providing input into their deliberations.

(35) We take pride in our Organization - the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We reiterate that, as the world organization of parliaments, the IPU is the international body best suited to help build the relationship between parliaments and the United Nations. We have confidence in the IPU, which is playing this role increasingly. We recommend that its capacity be strengthened to cope with the substantial responsibilities that come with the post-2015 development agenda.

(36) We encourage the IPU and the United Nations to continue to expand their cooperation, particularly in implementing the agreed Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the post-2015 development agenda to be adopted in September 2015 and the Climate Change Agreement to be concluded in December 2015. These interlocking and mutually reinforcing processes, coupled with respective means of implementation, are critical for the future the people want. We express the hope that both organizations can conclude a new cooperation agreement that reflects the gains that have been made since our first Conference and provides a firm footing for our future work together.

(37) We remain optimistic about the road ahead. The negotiations to secure agreement on a new development agenda are ample proof of a shared global commitment to address today's global challenges. Here is a unique opportunity for all of us to work together. We will support strongly in each of our countries the necessary action by all relevant authorities to establish mechanisms for tracking and monitoring progress and we call on the IPU to facilitate the achievement of this objective and ensure reporting.

(38) We, in our parliaments, will do our part by placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development for the world the people want.



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United Nations Headquarters, New York  
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## Report of the panel on *Parliamentary oversight: Challenges and opportunities*

The panel was moderated by Prof. Robert Nakamura of the University at Albany, State University of New York and featured the Speakers of the Parliaments of Barbados, Belgium, Chile, Kenya, Indonesia and the United Kingdom.

The panel allowed participants to exchange experiences, drawing on their own knowledge of oversight in their individual systems. The discussion would contribute to the second IPU-UNDP Global Parliamentary Report on *Parliament's power to hold government to account: Realities and perspectives*.

The panel and audience discussants touched upon many of the different dimensions of oversight - probity, remaining faithful to the intent of the law, equity (distributional fairness), efficiency and effectiveness and adequacy.

In opening statements on the role of the Speaker of Parliament in oversight, it was noted that in the United Kingdom the Speaker was a "referee" whose role was to ensure a level playing field for all parties and members. The Speaker has powers to shape what is discussed by controlling access to the floor and by ruling on member requests to put urgent questions to ministers or to suspend regular business for urgent considerations. Similarly, in Kenya, the Speaker grants members permission to make personal statements, brings public petitions to the House, and decides on requests for emergency debates.

It is the right, role and responsibility of parliament to hold government to account. However, parliament's oversight role varies from country to country. In Belgium, the Senate plays a role in monitoring the impact of federal policies on the regional authorities, linguistic groups, women and other constituents. In Barbados, the Senate has limited oversight powers and capacity, as this role is performed principally by the House of Assembly. In Indonesia, the political culture tends to encourage parties that have competed in presidential elections to approach decisions in a non-adversarial, consensus-building way and to avoid confrontation.

Differences in political systems also account for the varying oversight powers and arrangements. Common to many countries with presidential forms of government, the parliament in Chile has the power to impeach ministers; in practice this power is more widely used when parliament is dominated by opponents of the President. In Trinidad and Tobago, ministers can be members of the same committees that oversee the government, limiting their effectiveness, while in Kenya - where ministers cannot be members of parliament - a procedure has been devised for ministers to come before committees for weekly hearings.

The challenges to effective oversight are numerous. The poor image of parliament in the public eye acts as a constraint, since a lack of public confidence can undermine parliament's legitimacy to carry out its basic functions. Many parliaments are using methods such as codes of conduct for members that are intended to enhance public confidence.

Relations with the executive can be problematic. There may be difficulties in obtaining appropriate and timely information from government or in ensuring ministers appear in parliament to answer questions. In some parliaments the opposite is true, notably in Small Island Developing States, where the presence of a large number of ministers limits parliament's ability to exercise oversight. The executive may sometimes seek to ignore the findings of parliamentary oversight committees, or demonstrate a basic mistrust of parliamentary motivations and competence in its oversight role.

A shortage of time and limited staff support are common issues, as oversight of the effectiveness and efficiency of complex budgetary and policy matters requires expertise that is often unavailable to parliament.

Participants underlined the frequent gap between the existence of parliament's oversight powers and their use and effectiveness in practice. Parliaments often have real powers but may not use them to the fullest extent. Ministerial question time often becomes a political theatre rather than a meaningful exchange of information. Oversight tools may be misused, for example to gain visibility or for personal advantage, or to prevent ministers from doing their job. The debilitating use of oversight tools can damage democracy.

Ultimately, much depends on the vigilance and enthusiasm of individual members of parliament to carry out their oversight role. There is a balance to be struck between members' representative roles as advocates for constituents and collective oversight concerns about equity and efficiency. Members have competing incentives to serve their constituents, their party and the institution of parliament. It was pointed out that in order to exercise oversight, members need to have a certain independence of spirit and political will.

There was broad agreement on the need to involve the public more closely in oversight activities, but an acknowledgement that public participation remains underdeveloped in most parliaments.

Many examples of good practice were shared. Pakistan's Public Accounts Committee has recovered US\$ 200 million through investigations into misappropriations. It is very common for public accounts committees to be chaired by a member of the opposition, and this has been found to be effective.

The UK House of Commons has dealt with the problems that stem from committee chairs being picked by majority party whips, which tended to limit their ability to be critical of the government. Committee chairs and members are now elected by secret ballot from among all members of parliament, enhancing their legitimacy and independence. Several members of the audience expressed their interest in such a mechanism.

There have been some positive outcomes from India's Assurances Committee, which keeps track of commitments made by ministers during questioning and follows up subsequently to see if the executive has kept its word. Similar mechanisms have been adopted in Bangladesh and Kenya.

Efforts are being made to improve the reputation of parliaments by removing them from decisions that directly benefit members. Members' salaries and benefits in the United Kingdom are set by an independent commission, and Kenya has adopted a similar mechanism. Once again, others in the audience expressed an interest in that practice.

The representative of Barbados invited the IPU to develop benchmarks for effective parliamentary oversight. A number of participants supported the proposal, arguing that while all parliaments have their own systems, the existence of a set of neutral benchmarks would allow parliaments to measure themselves against international good practice.





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# Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

United Nations Headquarters, New York  
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## Report of the panel on *Translating the SDGs into action*

This panel was moderated by the President of the IPU and featured the Speakers of Parliament from Germany, El Salvador, Jordan, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tanzania and Viet Nam, as well as the President of the Latin American Parliament and the Deputy Director of the UN Millennium Campaign.

The panel was organized in two parts each addressing a cluster of issues. The first part focused on the relationship between parliaments and citizens and how it can help build national ownership of the goals while the second considered the institutional mechanisms for parliaments to mainstream the goals and track progress.

The following salient points emerged from the discussion:

National ownership is key to implementation of the goals. It is a process that must involve all sectors of society at all levels, from local to national. In its deepest sense, national ownership comes from the people, not just from the institution of government. The extent to which people understand and believe in the goals will be key to national ownership.

It is important for people to see the goals as their own, and not as an agenda handed down to them from the government or the United Nations. Parliaments should not attempt “to teach” the goals to the people but rather help translate the language of the goals into people’s daily concerns. In their interaction with constituents, members of parliament should focus more on the principles and ideals that are embedded in the goals, all of which were designed from the start to be “people-centred”.

Parliaments have a key role to play in monitoring progress on the goals. Reliable data is critical to monitoring, particularly when it comes directly from citizens. Generally, citizens do not think of success in terms of percentages or other technical measurements. Their monitoring of the goals tends to be based on first-hand impressions of whether public services are improving, job opportunities are expanding, the environment is healthier, to name a few.

Parliaments should ensure that monitoring of progress captures both the quantitative and qualitative aspects. For example, more teachers do not necessarily lead to better education if the teachers are not well trained. What matters in implementation, as far as people are concerned, is the actual impact of public policy on their lives.

Another way in which citizens can help monitor the goals is by participating in the implementation of government-sponsored programmes. The practice of allowing citizens to participate in the delivery of government services is a promising one. Parliaments can support this practice through legislation that requires the government to include communities in the design, delivery and assessment of public services.

Each country will need a sustainable development plan to apply the global goals to the national context. In many countries, parliaments are not able to participate in the crafting of the national plan because of a lack of capacities or legal authority. As a result, the executive branch is often in control of the process. This need not be the case in all instances, however. Several parliaments around the world do have the authority to contribute to the national plan and to demand regular progress reports through one or more committees.

A major hurdle regarding the institutionalization of the SDGs in parliament is the high turnover of MPs. The current generation of MPs will likely be replaced more than once over the next 15 years. One way to address this problem is by training the permanent staff of parliaments as well as strengthening support structures, such as the Office of the Clerk that will preserve the institutional memory of the SDGs.

There are different ways for parliaments to mainstream the SDGs in their work. Constituting a dedicated committee or advisory council for the SDGs may support policy coherence between portfolio committees. Still, no single committee should be responsible for the entire SDGs framework. Each portfolio committee must be in the lead in advancing the one or two goals that may come under its purview.

Ultimately, what matters most to advancing the SDGs is that each goal is championed by a number of MPs. Parliaments can also institute a regular debate of the plenary to review progress on the basis of a report provided by the government. The budget process, common to all parliaments, provides another important opportunity for a comprehensive assessment of the SDGs.

Parliaments will have a key role to play in mobilizing sufficient resources for the SDGs. Among other things, they can impose tax increases and close tax loopholes. They can also adopt laws to induce private investments in key sectors of the economy or to forge innovative partnerships between public and private sectors.

In the final analysis, the implementation of the SDGs by parliaments will not be easy. There will be many successes as well as failures. What is certain is that the SDGs are here to stay and that governments are now accountable for the goals year after year. Parliaments must seize this opportunity to strengthen their legislative, oversight, and representative roles. The IPU, for its part, must continue to provide guidance to parliaments and facilitate an exchange of best practices among its members.