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Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings

(b) Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21/CMP11)

5–6 December 2015 – Paris (France)

1. In keeping with past practice, the IPU organized a parliamentary meeting in conjunction with the annual negotiation session held under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Known as COP21/CMP11 (21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and 11th meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol), the UNFCCC session in Paris was a landmark event that culminated in the adoption of the Paris Agreement. It is the first ever universal greenhouse gas emissions-cutting regime and will be applied by all signatories to the Agreement from 2020 onwards.
2. Well before COP21/CMP11, the IPU invited all parliaments to ensure that their members specializing in the environment and climate change were included in their country's official national delegation to the UNFCCC session. As a result, there was an unprecedentedly high number of legislators at the Paris conference.
3. On 5 and 6 December, the IPU and the French Parliament jointly held a stand-alone Parliamentary Meeting for legislators who were in Paris during COP21/CMP11. The Meeting was attended by 684 participants from 90 countries and 24 international organizations, including 329 members of parliament. It was the biggest-ever event of this nature held in conjunction with a COP/CMP session. The Meeting was hosted by the French National Assembly on the first day and the French Senate on the second.
4. The inaugural session was addressed by the Presidents of the two chambers of the French Parliament, Mr. Claude Bartolone and Mr. Gérard Larcher, as well as by Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Laurent Fabius, Chairman COP21/CMP11 and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development of France, and Mr. Saber Chowdhury, IPU President.
5. One of the highlights of the opening day was a half-hour presentation by Mr. Arnold Schwarzenegger, former Governor of California, world-renowned proponent of climate action and founding Chair of R20 (Regions of Climate Action). After his speech, Mr. Schwarzenegger and Mr. Chowdhury co-signed an "Agreement on Common Action" under which the IPU and R20 undertook to work jointly on projects aimed at strengthening parliaments' capacities to tackle the threat of climate change.

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6. The programme of the Parliamentary Meeting included a series of debates, interactive panel discussions and keynote presentations dealing with diverse subjects such as: the transition to the green economy; the link between climate science and legislative action; gender, youth and behavioural aspects of climate policies; and priorities for global climate action after COP21/CMP11.

7. Numerous heads of international organizations and agencies addressed the Parliamentary Meeting, including: Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme; Mr. Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; Mr. Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization; Prof. Hoesung Lee, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO; and Ms. Mary Robinson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Climate Change.

8. After a presentation by the Rapporteur of the Meeting, Senator Hervé Maurey (France), the participants adopted by consensus an Outcome Document setting out several recommendations for action by national parliaments and the IPU (see *Annex*). The text of the Document was subsequently sent to the Chairman of COP21/CMP11 and the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC. The IPU President referred to the conclusions of the Parliamentary Meeting in his address to the high-level segment of COP21/CMP11.

9. In addition to the Meeting on 5 and 6 December, the IPU and the London School of Economics and Political Science (Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment) jointly organized a panel discussion on 8 December on the COP21/CMP11 premises entitled "Credibility of national actions and INDCs: worldwide legislative and policy developments". The discussion was one of the best-attended side events on the official programme of the UN Climate Change Conference.

Recommendations

10. The Parliamentary Meeting was a resounding success that reaffirmed the leading role of the IPU as the convener of parliamentary meetings held in conjunction with major UN forums, including annual UNFCCC sessions. This accomplishment should be further exploited, including during the COP22/CMP12 session, to be held in Marrakesh (Morocco) in November 2016.

11. The adoption of the Paris Agreement marked a turning point both for tackling climate change and for international governance more generally. The Outcome Document of the Parliamentary Meeting made clear that legislators have their own share of responsibility for effective implementation of the Paris Agreement, including at the stage of its ratification, acceptance or approval. Before the end of 2016, IPU Member Parliaments should therefore undertake a comprehensive review of their country's existing national legislative response to climate change in order to assess its consistency with the Paris Agreement and the related goals of the Sendai Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

12. The IPU should finalize and adopt its own Parliamentary Action Plan on Climate Change, a draft of which was first presented at the 133rd IPU Assembly in Geneva and then at the Parliamentary Meeting in Paris. The Action Plan is meant to serve as a policy directive, offering a medium- to long-term vision of IPU objectives and priorities in the field of climate change and related areas of sustainable development.



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Paris (France), 5 and 6 December 2015

*Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union
and the French Parliament*



Outcome document

Adopted by consensus on 6 December 2015

1. We, parliamentarians from around the world, gathered in Paris on the occasion of the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) and the 11th Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP11), forcefully reaffirm our concern over the consequences of climate change and our determination to take account of it in our national laws and regional parliamentary forums.
2. Caused by human activity, climate change is now documented beyond dispute by solid global and interdisciplinary scientific work. There is scientific consensus on the existence of climatic warming (according to the latest IPCC report the increase in the average world temperature could be as high as 4.8°C by the end of the century); on a rise in sea levels (by up to 1 metre by 2100, which would affect one in every 10 inhabitants on earth, i.e. 600 to 700 million people); and on an increase in extreme weather events (droughts as well as more frequent and intense rainfall and an expansion of desert zones). Climate change thus appears to represent a serious threat to the planet.
3. The impact of climate change is felt throughout the world. It is a global problem with major environmental, economic, social and political repercussions. It is a serious threat to access to water, food security, public health and biodiversity that could cause extensive forced migrations (between 50 and 150 million inhabitants could be displaced between now and the end of the century), that could threaten peace in the world, and that could affect especially populations in the poorest developing countries.
4. The current trends will produce temperature increases well above 2°C between now and the end of the century. The acceleration of phenomena and of deterioration and change calls for courageous decisions by governments, parliaments and the international community, which must come together to confront one of the gravest threats known to the planet and to humanity.
5. In this context we reaffirm the urgency of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions and limiting the increase in average world temperature to less than 2°C relative to preindustrial levels, in line with the fundamental objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and as agreed by governments in the Copenhagen Agreement of 18 December 2009.
6. We reiterate our belief that the principles of equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, depending on different national situations, are fundamental for multilateral action to address climate change and should be incorporated into the Paris Agreement.
7. We consider it imperative that the Paris Agreement be an accord by all and for all, a fair, durable and dynamic agreement to fight effectively and accelerate action against climate change over the coming decades. This agreement must take into account the needs and capacities of developing countries, in particular the poorest and most vulnerable countries, facilitate the transformation of development trajectories, through knowledge transfer and financing, in order to remain under the 2°C limit and help each country deal with the impact of climate change.

8. To that end, the agreement should cover in a balanced manner the issues of mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation (financing, technology, capacity-building) out of a concern for true transparency in the activities conducted by countries, with a common framework defined to achieve this transparency.

9. The priority objective of adaptation should be to reduce vulnerability, in particular among countries most negatively affected by climate change, and especially the small island developing States (SIDS), including certain Pacific atolls, the countries of Africa, the least developed countries, and certain large megalopolises in coastal areas, mountainous regions and countries, and to achieve sustainable development that is resilient to climate change.

10. The interests of future generations require the promotion of ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures, in favour of sustainable and diversified agriculture, renewable, non- and low-carbon emitting forms of energy, better energy efficiency, more effective management of forest and marine resources and the organization of access to water for all.

11. The financial provisions of the agreement should give priority to the financing of transition to low-carbon and climate change-resilient economies. We emphasize the need to intensify the mobilization of financial resources to achieve the objective fixed at Copenhagen of collecting \$100 billion annually in public and private funds by the year 2020. Part of the response to this objective lies in the success of the Green Climate Fund, whose creation was decided in Copenhagen, to serve as the main multilateral fund for the financing of this transition in developing countries. This fund needs to rapidly secure effective project financing while adhering to the principles of equity, transparency, and effectiveness.

12. Research, transfers of technology, knowledge, good practices and support for capacity-building in developing countries by 2020 and beyond are essential elements for climate change adaptation and mitigation, as is the gradual reduction of fossil fuel use. They should be the subject of concrete and measurable commitments.

13. We observe a troubling discrepancy between the global objectives for reduced greenhouse gas emissions and limited increases in average temperature on the one hand, and the national commitments undertaken to achieve those objectives on the other. We therefore reaffirm the importance of national contributions and commitments by every country, on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities, to help achieve the global objectives. We undertake to exercise the greatest vigilance in finalizing and applying these contributions in each of our countries to achieve the development of clear and ambitious national legislation on the climate and to urge governments to adapt that legislation based on the results obtained. We underscore the need for an annual review of each country's commitments to ensure that national laws are in line with the emissions-reduction objectives.

14. We support the approach of a solutions agenda to help strengthen the ambitions of all countries by offering solutions to be included as part of a low-carbon development strategy compatible with the 2°C objective, through specific and broad initiatives on the part of nongovernmental actors added to the commitments undertaken by States. We consider it necessary for all governments and civil society actors (enterprises, local communities and NGOs) to support and strengthen this agenda for action, which is intended to put in place immediate measures without awaiting the entry into force of the Paris Agreement in 2020. Partnerships with stakeholders, and particularly local authorities, economic actors, regional agencies and NGOs, should be sought out and encouraged.

15. The Paris Agreement should not only involve States but should also involve all individuals, particularly young people, while respecting their cultural diversity and also recognizing gender equality as a fundamental principle, given that the numerous effective initiatives which women have driven forward should be systematically taken into account as part of the solutions agenda, and that women should be more closely involved in international negotiations. All the forces of humanist and scientific culture should be brought to bear on the fight against climate change.

16. The promotion and implementation of territorial measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is a major issue on the climate front. We support the commitments undertaken by local communities in the fight against climate change. As the first to be impacted by the consequences of such change, territories are and should be essential actors in transitioning towards a low-carbon or carbon-free economic model. Parliaments need to encourage and facilitate that effort.

17. In encouraging developers and initiators to accelerate their work we express the wish that the Paris Conference and subsequent meetings will help to generate momentum for the process and convey the message of economic and social opportunities as part of the fight against climate change. The Paris Agreement, like those to follow, must lead to real and concerted solutions.

18. The fight against climate change cannot be an obstacle to development. The two challenges must be met together. The Paris Agreement must be fully consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in New York on 25 September 2015 and with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction adopted on 18 March 2015.

19. The search for innovative solutions in all areas – mitigation, adaptation, financing, technology transfer, transparency and capacity-building – and the application of science and education will be encouraged by parliaments. Among other activities, parliaments undertake to draw particular attention to the establishment of a carbon credit regime, among other relevant measures.

20. Parliamentarians have an essential role to play in contributing to the success of policies to combat climate change. They share part of the responsibility for their effective implementation. In developing, adopting and modifying legislation, in approving national budgets and in holding governments to account, they are a key part of the process for putting international agreements effectively in place. We therefore undertake to exercise our powers and responsibilities with the greatest vigour in the global fight against climate disruption.

21. We wish for contacts between parliaments to be a means of strengthening the parliamentary capacity for the implementation and monitoring of climate legislation and the dissemination of good practices. We shall ensure that questions related to climate change are systematically included on the agenda of inter-parliamentary meetings. We express the wish that the 134th IPU Assembly in Lusaka should adopt a Parliamentary Action Plan on climate change. The 22nd session of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Morocco in 2016 will provide an opportunity to take stock of the mobilizing role of parliaments in the fight against climate change. Cooperation should be developed between the IPU and the competent UN bodies to ensure follow-up of the Paris Agreement.

22. We request that explicit reference be made to the role of parliaments and the IPU in the Paris Agreement and that our commitments, as set forth in this document, be attached to the Final Acts of the Paris Conference.