



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION
124th Assembly and related meetings
Panama City (Panama), 15 – 20 April 2011



A/124/Inf.5
15 April 2011

BETTER PARLIAMENTS, STRONGER DEMOCRACIES

IPU STRATEGY 2012-2017

The present draft strategy has been prepared by the Executive Committee. It incorporates many of the suggestions put forward by Member Parliaments, geopolitical groups and other bodies within the IPU.

It is submitted to the Members for information and discussion. The geopolitical groups are encouraged to debate the draft at their meetings in Panama. Any comments or suggestions should be submitted to the Secretariat by 30 June 2011.

The strategy will be submitted to the Governing Council for adoption at its 189th session, to be held in Bern in October 2011.

Introduction

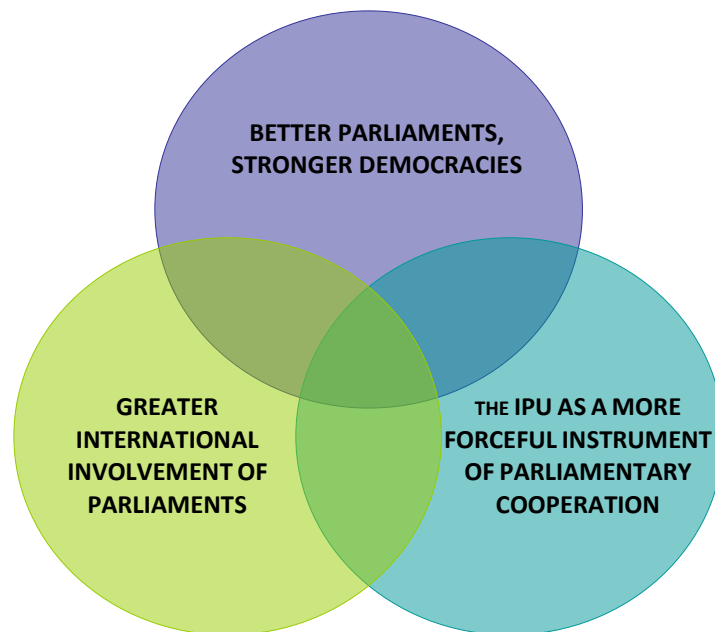
The present document contains a strategy for the IPU for the coming five years. It charts a course for the organization's development in three strategic directions, spells out the corresponding objectives and identifies what it hopes to have achieved by the end of the five years.

The document starts by formulating a mission statement. The statement says in a few words what the IPU is. It is a text that is deliberately short and easy to understand. It encapsulates the mission of the IPU without trying to include all the details. It is accompanied by an explanation and a slogan.

The mission statement is followed by a vision. The vision expresses where the IPU wants to be in the longer term. It reflects a general ambitious view of the IPU's future. It aims to mobilize all stakeholders around a common general aspiration.

The three strategic directions that follow chart a path for the IPU over the next five years that takes it towards the fulfilment of its vision. The strategic directions are inferred from the mission statement. They give priority to three areas of work: democracy and parliaments, international involvement of parliaments and the IPU as an instrument of parliamentary cooperation.

The three strategic directions are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Parliamentary cooperation is at the centre. It underpins all of the IPU's work. Each strategic direction is composed of three objectives and several sub-objectives. Each objective is accompanied by a list of expected outcomes.



The strategy will guide the IPU over the coming five years. A mid-term review of the strategy will take place after the first two years.

The strategy will be implemented on the basis of priorities. All things reflected in the plan cannot be done immediately, at the same time, and during the full five-year period. Some things are time-bound, others will depend on demand for services, others still will need to wait pending the identification of resources.

The strategy is not a business plan or a budget document. Nonetheless, it has been elaborated with current economic realities in mind. It will need to be translated into a separate annual or bi-annual work plan and budget. The budget will correlate to a level of income that corresponds to what Members are able to contribute and other revenues the IPU can realistically hope to obtain.

The strategy is based on a careful analysis of the IPU today, the environment in which it operates, the challenges it faces and, most importantly, its considerable comparative advantages. It has been enriched by observations, comments and suggestions from many Member Parliaments, geo-political groups and IPU Committees and has been elaborated on by the Executive Committee.

Once finalized and adopted, the strategy will create clarity, focus and understanding within and outside the IPU regarding its future direction and make it possible to plan resources and action.

Executive Summary

<p>Mission statement:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The IPU, the world organization of parliaments, is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. It strives to advance democracy and assist parliaments and parliamentarians in all parts of the world in fulfilling their mandates.
<p>Vision:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ To be a universal, dynamic and effective organization that is able to advance democratic culture, values and institutions through cooperation among parliaments. ✚ To be able to assist parliaments and parliamentarians in all parts of the world to articulate and respond effectively to the needs of the people and their aspirations for peace, human rights, gender equality and development. ✚ To be acknowledged and supported by Member Parliaments in providing a parliamentary dimension to the United Nations and other multilateral institutions.
<p>Strategic direction 1: Objectives:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Better parliaments, stronger democracies ✚ Strengthen democracy through parliaments ✚ Advance gender equality ✚ Protect and promote human rights
<p>Strategic direction 2: Objectives:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ More international involvement of parliaments ✚ Develop a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions ✚ Build parliamentary support for international development goals ✚ Contribute to peace-building and conflict prevention
<p>Strategic direction 3: Objectives:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The IPU as a more forceful instrument of parliamentary cooperation ✚ Achieve universal membership and enhance relations with Members ✚ Enhance the IPU's visibility through a modern communications strategy ✚ Improve operational management, governance and internal oversight

MISSION STATEMENT

- ✚ The IPU, the world organization of parliaments, is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. It strives to advance democracy and assist parliaments and parliamentarians in all parts of the world in fulfilling their mandates.

The mission statement is short, easy to understand and encapsulates the mission of the IPU without trying to include all the details. It is immediately associated with the organization.

The IPU facilitates political parliamentary debate, dialogue and cooperation. It promotes and defends democracy and the rule of law. It develops standards, disseminates information on good practices and helps build parliamentary capacity. It defends the human rights of members of parliament and promotes respect for universal values, norms and principles. It works in support of gender equality and the participation of women, minorities and indigenous peoples in political and public life. It assists parliaments in coping with a growing international agenda and in contributing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and similar multilateral institutions.

In short, the IPU stands for: *better parliaments, stronger democracies.*

VISION

- ✚ To be a universal, dynamic and effective organization that is able to advance democratic culture, values and institutions through cooperation among parliaments.
- ✚ To be able to assist parliaments and parliamentarians in all parts of the world to articulate and respond effectively to the needs of the people and their aspirations for peace, human rights, gender equality and development.
- ✚ To be acknowledged and supported by Member Parliaments in providing a parliamentary dimension to the United Nations and other multilateral institutions.

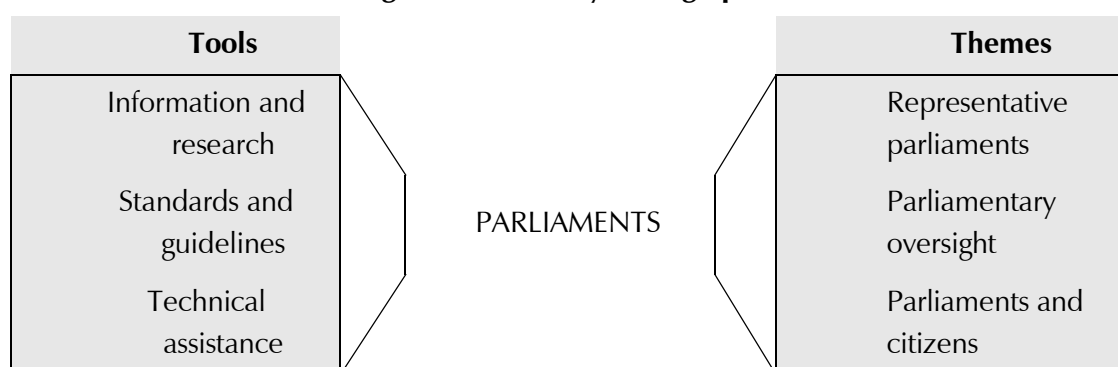
The IPU's vision states in a few words where the organization wants to be in the longer term (beyond five-year objectives). It reflects a generally ambitious view of the IPU's future. It aims to mobilize all stakeholders around a common general aspiration.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. BETTER PARLIAMENTS, STRONGER DEMOCRACIES

The IPU holds that better parliaments make for stronger democracies. The organization has a clear comparative advantage through its membership and the work it has carried out over the years to strengthen parliaments, advance gender equality and protect and promote human rights. The IPU's work is focused on parliament, which acts as both a provider and recipient of assistance and as an agent for change. Over the next five years - 2012 to 2017 - the IPU will work with the support of its Member Parliaments to advance three priority objectives: strengthen democracy through parliaments, advance gender equality and protect and promote human rights.

1.1 Strengthen democracy through parliaments



Parliaments are the cornerstone of democracy. They need to be empowered and have the requisite means to carry out their constitutional functions. They must embody core democratic values in their work. The IPU's strategy consists of strengthening parliaments to enable them to contribute to democracy and help meet the aspirations of the people. The IPU pursues an integrated approach; it develops different kinds of tools and applies them to priority thematic areas of work. Parliaments are central to the development and implementation of all activities.

Work area: Information and research

Objective: Consolidate the IPU as a global resource on parliament and democracy

The IPU will update and develop the PARLINE database on national parliaments. It will publish a *Global Parliamentary Report* on the state of the world's parliaments on a regular basis. It will establish a new publishing programme focusing on good practices in parliaments and new and emerging topics in parliamentary development. The IPU will support the development and consolidation of professional networks for the exchange of information among parliaments. Information and research feeds the IPU's work on standard-setting and technical assistance.

Work area: Standards and guidelines

Objective: Encourage recognition and implementation of standards for democratic parliaments

The IPU will promote its criteria for democratic parliaments as outlined in *Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice*. The IPU will encourage parliaments to assess their performance based on these criteria, and will create a mechanism

for reviewing parliamentary performance on a voluntary basis, including through peer reviews. It will continue to provide a parliamentary dimension to the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and will work towards its rapprochement with a similar mechanism in the Community of Democracies. It will develop new standards and guidelines for good practice in parliaments as and when the need arises.

Work area: Technical assistance

Objective: Strengthen parliaments by providing tailored advice and programmes of assistance

The IPU will continue to provide advisory services and technical assistance to strengthen parliaments. It will systematically seek to improve the delivery and impact of technical assistance, providing better coordinated and more efficient services to parliaments. It will focus its attention on parliaments in countries emerging from conflict or in transition. It will continue to build parliamentary capacity to address key human rights and gender concerns as well as other issues that are present on the global agenda. It will strengthen partnerships with like-minded organizations that work to enhance parliamentary development. Technical assistance is underpinned by the IPU's work on research and standards, and lessons learned from technical assistance programmes are fed back into this work.

These tools will be applied in three priority thematic areas of work:

Work area: Representative parliaments

Objective: Encourage parliaments to be more representative of the social diversity of the population

The IPU will continue its work to enhance women's representation in parliament (see section on gender). It will also build on initial efforts to ensure that parliaments are inclusive of minorities and indigenous people as well as other marginalized sectors of society. It will take action to encourage youth participation in the democratic process.

Work area: Parliamentary oversight

Objective: Support parliaments in developing effective mechanisms to oversee government action

The IPU will enhance its work to support parliaments' capacity to hold the government to account on behalf of the people. It will spread knowledge of good practices in parliamentary oversight, and support the implementation of good practices through technical assistance. It will pay particular attention to parliament's budget and audit functions.

Work area: Parliaments and citizens

Objective: Identify effective ways for parliaments to develop closer relations with their constituents

The IPU will draw attention to challenges and good practices among parliaments in their relations with their constituents, which was the theme of the first *Global Parliamentary Report*. It will disseminate good practices by using information and communication technologies (ICTs) to reach out to citizens and civil society organizations. It will continue to promote the International Day of Democracy as an opportunity for parliaments to reach out to citizens. It will begin to provide informative materials for citizens about the role of parliament in a democracy.

Expected outcomes

Strengthening democracy through parliaments is a long-term undertaking. Political events sometimes dramatically accelerate movements towards democracy, but can also cause setbacks in even the most well-conceived of plans. That said, it is expected that by 2017:

- Criteria for democratic parliaments will be widely recognized by parliaments and the international community; these criteria are given effective implementation in national parliaments; and that IPU Member Parliaments will take part in a voluntary parliamentary performance peer review mechanism;
- Parliaments that choose to work with the IPU will be more representative, have greater capacity to oversee government action and build closer relations with their constituents;
- Delivery of IPU technical assistance will be improved and have greater impact;
- Parliaments in countries emerging from conflict will be more effective in carrying out their legislative and oversight functions; and
- Cooperation between parliaments and the IPU will be enhanced. This cooperation is materialized by an increase in the number of parliaments that effectively contribute to the IPU's research and standard-setting as well as technical assistance work. It will also be reflected in the number of parliaments that make use of the outputs and technical assistance offered by the IPU.

1.2 Advance gender equality

Gender equality is a key component of better parliaments. The IPU pursues a strategy that focuses on monitoring and providing support for women's participation in politics, building the capacity of IPU Member Parliaments and assisting parliaments in their gender-related tasks. Activities in this area will build on the parliamentary work of IPU Member Parliaments, the contribution of both men and women, the expertise of former members of parliament and contributions of partner international organizations, including the newly created UN Women.

Work area: Information and research

Objective: Maintain its position as a global reference point for women in politics

The IPU will continue to collect up-to-date information on women's participation in politics. It will undertake research and produce statistics, surveys and reports through online databases (on quotas and statistics on women), websites and the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOWPolitics). It will develop new indicators on women's participation in politics, provide an analysis of emerging issues or trends and, on request, specific gender concerns. It will provide information and training materials tailored to the needs of newly elected women parliamentarians.

Work area: Access to and participation in parliament

Objective: Develop national strategies to facilitate women's access to parliament and support women MPs' participation in policy-making

The IPU will help strengthen national frameworks to facilitate women's access to parliament by reviewing legal frameworks that impact on women in politics. The IPU will continue to provide technical assistance and training to women MPs. The programme will incorporate building the capacity of women through the use of ICTs and developing mentorships for newly elected women MPs.

Work area: Gender mainstreaming

Objective: Foster gender-sensitive change in parliament

The IPU has produced the first ever global analysis on gender mainstreaming in parliament and gender-sensitive parliaments. It has mapped the current situation and identified good practices. The IPU will now work to develop standards and issue guidelines on gender-sensitive policies and procedures. It will provide capacity-building support to parliamentary bodies that deal with gender equality and women's issues. It will help members of parliament and parliamentary staff build their capacities in gender mainstreaming and will facilitate the exchange of good practices.

Work area: Respect for women's rights

Objective: Assist parliaments in amending discriminatory laws and strengthening their capacity to address violence against women

The IPU will continue to support parliaments in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and taking action on violence against women – two key gender and societal concerns. It will continue to support a parliamentary contribution to the CEDAW reporting process and will focus on discriminatory legislation. With regard to violence against women, it will pay greater attention to legislative reform and strengthening parliamentary oversight to ensure enforcement of legislation. IPU activities will be directed at building parliamentary capacity. It will provide legislative counselling and policy advice. In all activities, the IPU will ensure that men parliamentarians and parliamentary staff are involved and that both men and women work together on gender-related matters. The activities will also consolidate bridges and enhance cooperation between MPs, government agencies, UN agencies working on gender, civil society organizations, constituents, media and research centres.

Expected outcomes

The global average of women in parliament - 19 per cent - is expected to increase by half a percent each year. The IPU's strategy aims to double this rate to reach at least 25 per cent of women in parliaments by 2017. By that year, the IPU should also have prompted and helped a significant number of parliaments to establish gender-sensitive policies and procedures based on standards and guidelines developed by the organization. As a result of these efforts, a majority of parliaments should have participated at least once in the CEDAW periodic reporting exercise. Men and women will increasingly work together to address issues in parliament relating to gender equality and violence against women. Overall, it is expected that the IPU will maintain its pioneering role in women in politics and will develop selected new fields of research on women in politics.

1.3 Protect and promote human rights

Parliaments and their members are "guardians" of human rights by virtue of their essential legislative and oversight responsibilities to ensure respect for human rights. The IPU helps parliaments assume these responsibilities by protecting the rights of their members and providing them with information, knowledge and training to enable them to take an active part in human rights promotion and protection. Over the next five years, the IPU will bolster these efforts by focusing on the following four priorities:

Work area: IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians **Objectives: Enhance the capacity of the IPU Committee to address human rights abuses**

The IPU will strengthen the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and will explore new ways to encourage Member Parliaments to take an active part in helping resolve the cases brought to the attention of the IPU Governing Council. More work will also be undertaken to inform and promote concerted action with United Nations mechanisms and the human rights community at large in support of the Committee's work. The Committee will examine action can be taken to prevent recurrent and cross-cutting concerns in its case-work with a view to helping prevent new violations. It will pay particular attention to how women parliamentarians are affected by human rights abuses.

Work area: Capacity-building **Objectives: Strengthen the contribution of parliaments to human rights promotion and protection**

The IPU will continue to heighten awareness about the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It will focus on the role of parliaments in their implementation. It will help ensure that the parliaments of those countries whose national reports are due for examination by the main UN human rights committees and the Human Rights Council in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review are involved in preparing the reports, are represented in the delegations presenting them, and subsequently help implement their recommendations. The IPU will work more closely with the UN human rights monitoring system and will provide assistance as part of its capacity-building programme to parliaments wishing to become more involved in it. Work in this area will also help identify if and where there is a need for the development of IPU publications in the area of human rights.

Work area: Children's rights **Objectives: Help parliaments ensure respect for children's rights**

The IPU will raise awareness in parliaments on rights issues and help build their capacity to contribute to the promotion of children's rights. Although children are active holders of rights, they often lack the means to ensure respect for them, which is why it is all the more important for parliaments to help ensure such respect. The IPU will focus on strengthening parliaments' involvement in the work of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, building the oversight capacity of parliaments to ensure implementation of legislation on children's rights and supporting child participation in parliaments.

Work area: International humanitarian law **Objectives: Promote ratification and implementation of selected humanitarian law conventions**

The IPU will focus, through the work of the Committee to promote respect for International Humanitarian Law, on increasing the ratification and implementation of a selected number of conventions in the area of international humanitarian law. More attention will be given to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Expected outcomes

Implementation of these four priorities should lead by 2017 to better respect for the rights of parliamentarians in the exercise of their parliamentary mandate, greater knowledge by parliaments and their members of international human rights norms and mechanisms, the

participation of at least one third of IPU Member Parliaments in one of the stages of the of the reporting procedure of the UN human rights monitoring system, and enhanced implementation of human rights and international humanitarian law standards. It will also lead to more attention being paid to children's rights issues in parliaments.

2. GREATER INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT OF PARLIAMENTS

Greater international involvement of parliaments is necessary to help bridge the democracy deficit in international relations. In today's globalized and interconnected world, a more robust parliamentary engagement internationally is desirable to identify sustainable solutions to major global issues and ensure their implementation. The IPU will continue to develop a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation, enhancing the transparency and accountability of global processes, and mobilizing parliamentary action on major global challenges.

2.1 Develop a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions

The IPU pursues a strategy that consists of mobilizing parliaments around today's major global issues and assisting them as they implement corresponding multilateral agreements and hold governments to account. The IPU works closely with the United Nations, which reaches out to national parliaments through the IPU. The IPU provides a parliamentary input to the work of the United Nations, as well as the beginnings of parliamentary oversight and accountability of it. The IPU is establishing a strategic partnership with the United Nations and is seeking to develop similar relationships with the WTO and the Bretton Woods Institutions.

Work area: Cooperation with the UN

Objective: Enhance the parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations

The IPU will continue to provide parliamentary input to the work of the UN and seek to have a parliamentary perspective reflected in the decisions adopted by the world body. It will convene legislators around the main global issues under consideration by the United Nations. It will encourage the more systematic participation of legislators in national delegations to major UN conferences and events and promote a more uniform approach by the United Nations system as to how it relates to national parliaments. It will work with the United Nations towards mobilizing greater support by the international community for building the capacity of parliaments worldwide. The IPU will work with the United Nations in search of a more coherent framework for cooperation and coordination between the two institutions. It will work to build support by UN Member States for a new cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU to replace the outdated 1996 one.

Work area: New UN bodies and major UN processes

Objective: Develop a strong parliamentary component to the work of the new UN bodies and major UN processes

The IPU will continue to organize a direct parliamentary contribution to the work of the three UN bodies set up in 2005 - the Peacebuilding Commission, the Development Cooperation Forum, and the Human Rights Council - as proposed by the UN General Assembly. The IPU will also continue to organize parliamentary meetings in the margins of major UN conferences and processes. In 2010, the UN General Assembly formally decided to engage more systematically with the IPU in organizing and integrating a parliamentary

component of and contribution to major UN deliberative processes and the review of international commitments. The IPU Committee on UN Affairs will assist in developing the IPU's response to this decision.

Work area: WTO and international trade

Objective: Strengthen the parliamentary dimension to the work of the WTO and, more generally, on matters of international trade

The IPU will continue its work, in cooperation with the European Parliament, aimed at providing a parliamentary dimension to the World Trade Organization (WTO). It will work to build capacity in parliament to monitor WTO activities, maintain dialogue with governmental negotiators, facilitate information-exchange and a sharing of experiences, and exert a growing parliamentary influence on the direction of discussions and negotiations within the WTO. The IPU will also continue its cooperation with other multilateral institutions working in the field of trade and development, in particular UNCTAD.

Work area: Global economic governance

Objective: Strengthen parliamentary action on economic and financial issues

The global economic and financial crisis that erupted in 2008 has highlighted the need for a fundamental review and reform of regulatory frameworks and economic policies. The IPU will continue to promote parliamentary debate and action on these issues. It will start building greater parliamentary accountability of the Bretton Woods Institutions. This will entail three broad objectives: enhance the legal authority of parliaments to approve World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans; strengthen the role of parliaments in the adoption of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and related plans; and increase the input of parliaments into new global policies designed by the World Bank/IMF, the United Nations and the G20.

Expected outcomes

Over the next five years, it is expected that the IPU will have helped shape a stronger and more meaningful parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations. It will involve a measurably greater parliamentary input to UN outcome documents, enhanced awareness and involvement of legislators in major global processes, and increased parliamentary support and follow-up at the national level. A new and comprehensive cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU will have been concluded. The IPU will have begun the process of developing a similarly comprehensive framework of cooperation with other multilateral institutions, in particular the World Bank and the IMF. Parliaments will have strengthened their capacity to deal with major global challenges and assumed a more proactive role in helping to implement existing commitments and shape new international agreements.

2.2 Build parliamentary support for international development goals

Parliaments have an essential role to play in eradicating poverty and achieving development. Members of parliament can ensure that development plans are informed by the people's priorities, speak on behalf of the poor and other marginalized and vulnerable groups, and ensure national ownership of development policies and programmes. The IPU strategy aims to assist parliaments in achieving this in a few targeted areas linked to the internationally agreed development commitments, in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The strategy will focus on helping parliaments develop stronger oversight tools to monitor

all of the MDGs, review their own institutional processes, and identify the optimal institutional set-up to mainstream the MDGs into their work.

Work area: Maternal, neonatal and child health

Objective: Help parliaments influence maternal, neonatal and child health policies and programmes

The IPU aims to increase the influence of national parliaments on maternal, neonatal and child health. In support of this broad goal, the IPU will raise awareness among parliaments and support the emergence and implementation of related parliamentary action plans. Such support for parliamentary action may include providing parliaments with the skills required to develop appropriate and specific legislation, set appropriate budget levels for improved health, and ensure availability and accessibility of adequate and equitable services and the accountability of central government for the delivery of these elements. Other approaches to be used by the project will include knowledge creation and awareness raising regarding the work of parliaments in these areas as well as strengthening linkages between national, regional and global processes or platforms critical to maternal, neonatal and child health.

Work area: HIV/AIDS

Objective: Provide global leadership for parliamentary work on HIV/AIDS

Governments have pledged to pursue a domestic HIV policy that is founded on evidence and internationally agreed human rights principles. The IPU will support these efforts by assisting parliaments in turning these commitments into national legislation and creating an enabling legislative environment to respond to HIV/AIDS. The IPU will continue to work with partner organizations and provide guidelines, advice and technical assistance to help build parliamentary capacity to address HIV/AIDS issues. The IPU will continue to lead the global parliamentary dialogue on different aspects of the epidemic, with the IPU Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS providing a global parliamentary focal point for legislative work on HIV/AIDS. The IPU will also help channel parliamentary input to international processes that will determine the way forward for the global AIDS response.

Work area: Development aid

Objective: Help parliaments ensure greater aid effectiveness

The IPU has carried out several case studies in support of international commitments to achieve aid effectiveness (Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda and Busan outcome). The IPU will carry this work forward through dialogue among parliamentarians, building the capacities of parliaments to achieve the following key objectives: include parliaments in the decision-making structures set up between donors and the executive in aid-recipient countries; improve parliaments' access to information on aid flows and modalities; build the capacity of parliamentarians and relevant staff to analyse annual budgets and other related documents and the capacity of parliaments to influence and monitor aid policies.

Work area: Least developed countries (LDCs) Objective: Mobilize support for implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action

The IPU will follow up the outcome of the Parliamentary Forum it organized at the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC IV). It will provide support to parliaments in implementing the 2011-2020 Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the LDCs adopted by that conference. The IPU will raise awareness in parliaments and promote their engagement and involvement in the LDC process. It will work to strengthen the parliamentary focal point mechanism, assist parliaments in contributing to the implementation of the IPoA, and support the creation of a Parliamentary Plan of Action as a tool for such engagement. To

facilitate LDC parliaments' engagement with development issues, the IPU will highlight the links between the IPoA and the achievement of the MDGs as outlined in the former.

Work area: Climate change

Objective: Strengthen parliamentary action on climate change

The IPU will continue to set up a parliamentary process to accompany the global climate change negotiations. It will complement this work by promoting action by parliaments to integrate climate change into their own agenda and work programme by elaborating and approving national climate-related budgets and implementing legislation. The IPU will also promote action by parliaments to reduce their own carbon footprint.

Expected outcomes

It will take many years before international development goals are reached. During the next five years, it should, nevertheless, be possible to make significant advancements. It is expected that by 2017, parliaments will be more aware of the eight MDGs and will have helped achieve them. Many of them will have taken action to ensure adequate funding to help prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, amended laws to make it easier for vulnerable populations to be reached, and generally, helped ensure that the concerns of people with HIV are brought to the fore in national debates. Many parliaments will also have taken steps to help ensure aid effectiveness. Parliaments will also have assisted the IPU in evaluating parliamentary action in support of the international development commitments and identifying good practices, and will have taken an active part under the aegis of the IPU in contributing to the identification of future development goals.

2.3 Contribute to peace-building and conflict prevention

A parliament that represents all sectors of society and has the requisite powers and means to legislate and hold government to account makes an enormous contribution towards peace and stability. That is why the work the IPU carries out to build better parliaments and stronger democracies is in itself a contribution to peace-building and conflict prevention. The IPU also provides additional support to parliaments in countries facing or emerging from conflict. These activities are often part of IPU's work in cooperation with the United Nations and its Peace-building Commission. They include targeted action to facilitate political reconciliation through parliaments in post-conflict situations and parliamentary diplomacy. In all instances they are complementary to efforts undertaken by other actors, focus on the parliaments, respond to their requests for support and rely on the political support of IPU Member Parliaments.

Work area: Political reconciliation in post-conflict situations

Objective: Help parliaments become more open to dialogue and inclusive so that they can facilitate reconciliation and security sector governance

The IPU will continue to provide targeted support to parliaments in post-conflict countries by promoting dialogue within parliament and helping it contribute to national reconciliation and security sector governance. The implementation of these activities will entail capacity-building and advisory services and will draw on the expertise of IPU Member Parliaments and the knowledge of partner organizations directly involved in peace-building. The activities will be results-oriented and based on parliamentary action plans, with the parliaments committing themselves to progressive implementation. The IPU's advisory services will cater to the needs of each parliament, but will focus on ensuring smooth relations with the

executive and on codifying the role and rights of the opposition as a means of soothing tensions within and outside parliament.

Work area: Parliamentary diplomacy

Objective: Facilitate conflict resolution through parliamentary diplomacy

The IPU offers a privileged space for parliamentary diplomacy. It is a natural and neutral venue for members of parliament from different countries and political factions to exchange views and experiences and discuss conflicts within and between countries. The IPU intends to put this resource more systematically to good use. When internal crises seriously affect or bring national parliamentary business to a halt, the IPU will offer its good offices to help defuse tensions and promote dialogue. Rapid resort to parliamentary diplomacy may subsequently help identify longer-term needs for capacity-building and advisory services. Similar efforts will be made in regional conflicts where the IPU may have an advantage through its membership. Such involvement would be largely modelled on the work of the Committee on Middle East Questions, which should be strengthened, but in contrast would be time-bound and more flexible and informal in nature. The idea is not to systematically put in place formal structures such as the Committee, which would require substantial resources to give them a life of their own.

Expected outcomes

In line with these parameters, the IPU aims to achieve, by 2017, greater involvement of parliaments and their members in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. In practical terms, by then:

- An increasing number of parliaments of post-conflict countries will have drawn on IPU expertise to strengthen their internal dynamics in support of inclusiveness and political dialogue and enhance their contribution to national reconciliation and security sector governance;
- The IPU will have been directly involved in regional parliamentary diplomacy to promote dialogue between parliamentarians of conflicting countries or parties; and
- The IPU Committee on Middle East Questions will have provided a meaningful contribution to an easing of conflict in the Middle East region.

3. THE IPU AS A MORE FORCEFUL INSTRUMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

The IPU's Strategic Plan for 2012 – 2017 also contains an internal dimension; turning the IPU into a more forceful instrument of parliamentary cooperation. It represents a strategic direction for the IPU's development over the next five years because it underpins much of what the IPU hopes to achieve. In order to be able to provide more incisive support to parliaments and assist them in developing their international involvement, the IPU must necessarily also improve itself. The following four objectives have been identified:

3.1 Achieve universal membership and enhance relations with Members

The IPU is a unique global forum for parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. Over the past 10 years, it has modernized its structures, adapting them more closely to those employed by parliaments. For the next five years, the organization needs to bring this process forward in four interrelated areas: making the organization more universal, improving on parliament's participation in IPU meetings, including from a political and gender perspective, making the

annual assemblies more effective and better able to meet the demands of its Members, and facilitating greater coherence in parliamentary cooperation.

Work area: Membership

Objective: Advance towards universal membership

The IPU will make every effort to achieve universal membership. It will focus on parliaments of small island States in the Caribbean and in the South Pacific. It will pursue efforts to encourage other parliaments that are not yet members to join, including parliaments in countries that have recently emerged from conflict.

Work area: Participation in activities

Objective: Strengthen the participation of parliaments in the work of the IPU

The IPU will encourage parliaments to include in their delegations to IPU meetings members of parliamentary committees dealing with the subject matters that are placed on the IPU's agenda. The knowledge and experience of these MPs can help enrich the discussion for the benefit of all the participants; they can put the outcome of those discussions to direct use in their respective committees in parliament; and they can ensure follow-up and implementation of recommendations formulated at the IPU.

Work area: Parliamentary representation

Objective: Formulate guidelines on gender and political balance in parliamentary delegations

The IPU will assess the existing directives concerning gender balance in parliamentary delegations with a view to further increasing the participation of women parliamentarians. It will develop guidelines for ensuring political balance in delegations attending IPU meetings. The guidelines will seek to encourage better representation of the main political factions in parliament while respecting the basic tenet that all parliaments are sovereign in deciding on the composition of their delegations. The IPU will also examine possible avenues for encouraging better participation of youth.

Work area: Structures and working methods

Objective: Improve IPU structures and working methods

The IPU will continue to strengthen the Assembly and its Standing Committees. It will provide induction material for new participants in IPU activities. It will seek to secure greater support and participation by Member Parliaments in the work of the Standing Committees, with better preparation, participation in debates and follow-up of outcomes. It will assess the contribution of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians and the Gender Partnership Group to advancing gender equality issues with the objective of ensuring more interactive exchanges, greater participation of men and more gender-focused debates. The IPU will include the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians in its Statutes, thereby making it as a statutory body. It will issue guidelines to ensure that members are elected on the basis of their capacity to participate effectively in the Committee's work.

Work area: Monitoring implementation

Objectives: Ensure better follow-up and implementation of decisions and recommendations adopted by the IPU

The IPU will further improve the existing reporting exercise. It will systematically examine how the content of IPU resolutions can be integrated into the regular programme of work. Similarly, it will examine what action it can take to assist Member Parliaments follow up on these resolutions. As many of these resolutions contain recommendations to parliaments to

ensure implementation of major international conventions, agreements and decisions, the IPU will pay special attention to action to encourage parliamentary implementation of these recommendations.

Work area: Parliamentary cooperation

Objectives: Seek greater coherence in global parliamentary cooperation

The IPU will continue to monitor the development of parliamentary cooperation through different formal and informal structures. It will explore avenues for ensuring greater cooperation and a sharing of agendas and experiences with global and regional parliamentary assemblies and organizations.

Expected outcome

During the next five years it is expected that IPU's membership will increase significantly. Guidelines will be adopted for parliaments' participation in the IPU, including from a political and gender perspective. More young MPs will participate in IPU meetings. Members of parliament will be better informed of the organization and be better able to take part in its work. The working methods of the Standing Committees will be improved, which, in turn, will lead to greater follow-up through work carried out by parliaments in support of the committees. The Assemblies will be more effective. The IPU will have established a register of global, regional and subregional structures for parliamentary cooperation. There will be better dialogue and cooperation with and among these parliamentary entities.

3.2 Enhance the IPU's visibility through a modern communications strategy

The IPU needs a communications policy that supports the three strategic directions. It must generate and capitalize on opportunities to publicize the work of parliaments, parliamentarians and the IPU in order to entrench a public perception of the IPU as a unique organization that belongs to parliaments and strives to advance democracy. Putting into effect such a policy will require a re-thinking of how the IPU goes about communicating with the rest of the world. The policy will seek vigorous outreach towards parliaments. It will entail achieving much more direct communication with members of parliament and publicizing their work both in parliament and at the IPU. It will require significant focus on the organization's website, streamlining its publications and re-orienting its media relations.

Work area: Website

Objective: Modernize the IPU's website and turn it into a dynamic resource for two-way communication with the global parliamentary community

The IPU website will get a new face. It will primarily be about national parliaments and individual parliamentarians, but it must also become the support tool for a knowledge base, a source of information that is unique. It will build on (and reflect) the substantial body of work carried out by the IPU and its Members, in particular the work carried out to strengthen democracy through parliaments, advance gender equality and protect and promote human rights. It must be the reference point for anyone wanting to know about parliaments, from the basics of how they work and what they do, to advanced academic commentary on politics. It must become a site for appealing and digestible data on legislatures in general, trends, changes and innovations, and broader patterns of attitudes to democracy and the nuts and bolts of the machinery that sustains it. In so doing, it will build the recognition that the IPU currently lacks. It will be a tool for communicating with and between parliaments and their members as well as with a broader public. It will be complemented by greater use of the social media.

Work area: Information products

Objective: Create modern information products that meet the needs of Member Parliaments

The IPU will establish a publications policy. It will focus on producing information products that meet the needs of Member Parliaments. It will aim to become a leader in parliamentary information products. It will streamline and, as appropriate, discontinue some publications while launching others. It will develop a major annual report – The Global Parliamentary Report - as a flagship publication for the IPU that will become a primary reference tool on parliaments, their members, and the challenges they face (see section 1.1 above). It will produce video materials on the IPU. Specific attention will be given to enhancing the user-friendliness of products, ensuring greater publicity and follow-up, and producing versions in Spanish and Arabic.

Work area: Media

Objective: Reorient the IPU's media policy towards outreach

The IPU will continue to network with journalists and correspondents while aiming for greater specialization among those interested in parliamentary politics or particular aspects of the organization's work. The media policy objective will be to place articles reflecting the work and opinions of the IPU within leading newspapers and secure TV coverage for IPU activities. The IPU will continue to explore options for content-sharing among parliamentary TV channels, the aim being to manufacture an IPU-branded product.

Expected outcome

The IPU will be able to establish and gradually implement a communications policy for the 21st century that little by little is outfitted with the resources - financial and human - it needs. The website will achieve its aim of building closer ties with the membership and offering them an opportunity to participate - physically and virtually - in the work of the IPU, branding the IPU as a unique organization with special competences in parliaments and democracy, and providing information that meets the demands and expectations of all its users, including access to records of the IPU itself.

The website initiative will be accompanied by a conscientious effort to reach out regularly to parliaments and engage them on a variety of issues through such communication tools as blogs, extranet, targeted e-mail distribution, mobile text messages, Facebook, Twitter and other social media. The IPU will achieve a change of working culture in the Secretariat, where the website will become a shared tool and the staff automatically considers and integrates the communications dimensions of its work. The success of the policy over the next five years will ultimately be determined by the extent to which the IPU's image has been anchored in the consciousness of its audiences, the IPU has become a “brand”, and Members promote the image of the IPU in parliaments.

3.3 Improve operational management, governance and internal oversight

Providing better services to its Members will require modernizing the way the IPU operates. This will entail mainstreaming gender throughout the organization, its policies, programmes and activities. It will also involve ensuring a rights-based approach to all IPU work. Modernization also requires reviewing key business practices that impact on cost effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability. The IPU will upgrade its management systems and procedures, in particular in the area of human resources, financial systems and

communications. The current challenges faced by the IPU to better serve its Members require a faster response time and flexibility, particularly in the area of communications and finance. The IPU will need to discontinue some functions and establish new ones.

Work area: Gender mainstreaming

Objectives: Ensure that gender is systematically mainstreamed throughout the IPU

The IPU will develop a gender mainstreaming policy and will apply it throughout the organization. Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. It makes political and development agendas more relevant and effective; acknowledging gender inequalities and addressing them will strengthen the effectiveness of any policy, programme and action. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.

Work area: Rights-based approach

Objectives: Introduce a rights-based approach in all IPU activities

The IPU will introduce a rights-based approach to its work. A rights-based approach is a means of protecting and empowering human beings and enhancing the capacity and accountability of public institutions – including parliament – that have an obligation to ensure the respect, promotion and fulfilment of their rights. By introducing a rights-based approach in all its work areas, the IPU will contribute to enhancing the capacity of parliaments to promote and protect human rights.

Work area: Management action plan

Objectives: Upgrade IPU management systems and procedures and implement a results-based management system

The IPU will put in place a real-time financial system to increase the operational efficiency of budget holders. Directors and staff will receive training on planning, budgeting and financial management to make the best use of financial systems. More systematic evaluation of projects and programmes will be carried out. The IPU will implement a results-based management system. The performance evaluation system for staff will be enhanced. The IPU will start integrating modern ICTs throughout its operations. ICT support systems will be put in place where none have existed so far. Databases of contacts will increasingly become a vital support for communications outreach. The IPU will start making more systematic use of video conferencing and facilitate virtual meetings. This will eventually also require upgrading the IPU's conference facilities to make "virtual" parliamentary cooperation possible. The IPU will invest in staff training and improve human resources processes.

Work area: Governance and oversight

Objectives: Strengthen internal governance and oversight

The IPU will establish a mechanism (e.g. a finance commission) for ensuring better internal governance and oversight. It will build on best practices in international organizations and will aim to provide expert advice on all financial and risk matters affecting the IPU, oversee the budget and its implementation and assist the Executive Committee in applying and implementing the decisions of the Governing Council on the financial management of the IPU. It will also establish a resource mobilization strategy to ensure that the IPU can count on predictable and stable resources to carry out its work.

Expected outcomes

Within five years, the IPU's policies, structures and processes will be based on sound and effective gender-mainstreaming and rights-based policies for the IPU. The IPU will have established a clear results-based framework of action across all of its work. The implementation of the Management Action Plan will result in improved financial systems and operational management, more efficient operations through the use of ICTs, and better management by objectives, evaluation of performance and training of staff. The Management Action Plan will also result in greater recognition of the excellent calibre of the IPU's activities and, therefore, also greater prospects for additional resources (voluntary funding). Establishment of a finance commission will result in better dialogue on budgetary and financial matters between the members of the commission and the Secretariat. It will establish a transparent mechanism for budget and finance matters, which allows participation and ownership by the Members. The resource mobilization strategy will set the IPU on a sound longer-term financial footing.

CONCLUSION

The IPU is an organization of parliaments. The strategy outlined in this document should help the Members build an IPU that is universal, dynamic and effective and able to advance democratic culture, values and institutions through cooperation among parliaments.

The Members wish to bolster the political impact of the IPU within their Parliaments, within individual countries and worldwide. They seek to reinforce the work of the IPU in support of parliaments and of democracy. Better parliaments make for stronger democracies. The IPU will work to strengthen democracy through parliaments, advance gender equality and protect and promote human rights.

The strategy suggests that the membership can achieve this by intensifying parliamentary cooperation through the IPU. In all three strategic directions, parliaments and their members are the principal actors.

The strategy will be put into effect through selected activities set out in the annual programme of work and its consolidated budget. To a large extent, they will be financed through the core budget. The level of funding through Members' contributions will remain constant for the period covered by the strategy. Voluntary funding will have to be found to implement additional activities that are not funded by the core budget.

In its very essence, the strategy seeks to render more effective Member Parliaments' participation in the work of the IPU and their ownership of the organization.