

SPECIAL DEBATE: CITIZENSHIP, IDENTITY AND LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

Overview

The diversity of our societies and civilizations is a prominent feature of our ever-more-globalized and interconnected world. There are few, if any, countries in the world that are without any kind of diversity, whether linguistic, ethnic, cultural, racial or religious, and no one experience is common to all others. Moreover, women belonging to racial, religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities are particularly vulnerable to political, economic and social alienation and discrimination.

Governments and parliaments have primary responsibility for managing and building common values amidst the increasing diversity of a globalized world. Indeed, their task is increasingly to protect diversity as a global value. Balancing diversity with social cohesion within the framework provided by international law and standards is key to advancing social justice, cooperation and peaceful relations at the national, regional and international levels. Many governments and parliaments are creating and implementing measures that would enhance the political participation and representation of minorities and indigenous peoples. They and their citizens are looking to each other for best practices and innovative ideas about how to advance inter-cultural dialogue and to manage citizenship and identity in a rapidly changing global environment.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has long-standing experience with the issues of diversity, identity and citizenship. In particular, the IPU has developed a closer relationship with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Forum. It has also adopted several resolutions on this topic at recent Assemblies, including resolutions on migration and development, religious communities and beliefs, and xenophobia and human rights.

Parliamentarians will have an opportunity to debate the challenges and opportunities of balancing linguistic and cultural diversity, citizenship and identity in the context of globalization in the plenary sessions devoted to this topic.

For more information, see "*Assembly Documents*" at www.ipu2012uip.ca.