



# INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

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## SURVEY

### Translating international human rights commitments into national realities: The contribution of parliaments

#### Background

The IPU Strategy for 2012-2017 underscores the importance of a strong parliamentary contribution to the protection and promotion of international human rights standards.

All States are obliged to report regularly to the United Nations on how they respect human rights. Every four years they submit a report to the UN Human Rights Council, which examines the human rights situation of all UN Member States under its Universal Periodic Review. Likewise, States report to UN treaty bodies, which monitor compliance with specific international human rights conventions. After examining these reports, the Human Rights Council and the treaty bodies each adopt country-specific recommendations to help States enhance their respect for human rights at the national level. Copies of States' reports and UN recommendations can be found on the website of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org).

Parliament can make the following contribution to the reporting and implementation process:

- Discuss the draft national report before the government submits it to the United Nations;
- Debate and take action on UN recommendations by adopting legislation, holding the government to account for their implementation and ensuring that there are adequate resources in the state budget;
- Follow closely the dialogue which takes place when the government presents its national reports before the UN human rights mechanisms, including by suggesting that a member of parliament accompany the official delegation.

#### About the survey

The purpose of the survey is to assess parliaments' current involvement in the reporting and implementation process and to identify good parliamentary practice. The IPU will carry out an in-depth analysis of the responses to the survey and make it available on the IPU website and share it with Member Parliaments and the human rights community at large.

You are kindly asked to complete this survey and return it **before 27 July 2012** to the IPU Secretariat at the following e-mail address: [postbox@mail.ipu.org](mailto:postbox@mail.ipu.org). You can also send your response by fax or post to: Inter-Parliamentary Union, Chemin du Pommier 5, Le Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland; Fax: +41 22 919 41 60.

## Section A: Parliamentary structures on human rights, gender equality and children's rights

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This section seeks to obtain information on existing parliamentary committees dealing with human rights bodies, gender equality and children's rights

Parliaments are at the core of the promotion and protection of human rights and their activities and decisions determine greatly the extent to which people enjoy their human rights. The IPU believes that it is crucial that human rights are given full attention at the committee level. Given the IPU's strong focus on the promotion of human rights in general and children's and women's rights in particular, it is particularly interested in knowing whether parliaments are equipped with a specialized human rights committee, a gender equality committee and a committee dealing with children's rights. Some data on the existence of the first two kinds of committees in parliaments across the world is available on the IPU website at <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/instanceadvanced.asp>.

### 1. Does your parliament have a:

- **Specialized human rights committee?** YES  NO

If so, please indicate

The exact title of the committee:

The name of the chairperson:

The committee's official e-mail address:

- **Gender equality committee?** YES  NO

If so, please indicate

The exact title of the committee:

The name of the chairperson:

The committee's official e-mail address:

- **Children's rights committee?** YES  NO

If so, please indicate

The exact title of the committee:

The name of the chairperson:

The committee's official e-mail address:

## Section B: Parliamentary involvement in the Universal Periodic Review Process

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This section seeks to determine the manner in which your parliament is involved in the Universal Periodic Review process of the UN Human Rights Council.

The UN General Assembly created the UN Human Rights Council in March 2006. A total of 47 States sit on this Council, which is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world. Part of its mandate is to carry out, on the

basis of country reports and other information, a Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the human rights situation in all UN Member States and to make recommendations for ensuring greater respect for human rights at the national level.

The first UPR cycle took place between 2008 and 2011, during which 192 countries submitted their country reports and received recommendations from their peers. The second UPR cycle started in 2012 and will continue until 2016. It will pay particular attention to how recommendations made during the first cycle have been implemented.

You can find more information on the Human Rights Council, including the calendar for the 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR cycle, on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx>.

<b>2. Was your parliament involved in the preparation of the first (and possibly already second) national report for the Universal Periodic Review?</b>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please elaborate on how the parliament was involved.	
<b>3. Did one or more members of parliament participate in the official delegation that presented the first (and possibly already second) national report to the Human Rights Council?</b>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please state who they were, including their parliamentary functions, and if they undertook any follow-up action in parliament.	
<b>4. Has your parliament discussed the recommendations of the Human Rights Council regarding your country in the first UPR cycle?</b>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
If so, please indicate when this discussion took place.	

5. Has your parliament directly contributed to the implementation of the recommendations made by the Council in the first cycle of UPR? YES  NO

If yes, please specify.

### Section C: Parliament's contribution to the work of the UN human rights treaty bodies

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This section seeks to address the manner in which your parliament contributes to the work of the UN human rights treaty bodies.

There are currently 10 UN human rights treaty bodies, each with its own committee of independent experts. The IPU's efforts focus primarily on strengthening parliaments' contribution to four treaty bodies, namely:

- the UN Human Rights Committee (which oversees implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights);
- the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (which monitors implementation of the relevant Covenant);
- the Committee on the Rights of the Child (which monitors implementation of the relevant Convention);
- the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (which monitors implementation of the relevant Convention).

Information on the functioning of these Committees, their schedule of work and recommendations, as well as copies of States' reports can found at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx>.

6. Has your parliament been involved in recent years in the elaboration of any initial or periodic report before the government submitted it to any of the four human rights treaty bodies mentioned above? YES  NO

If yes, please elaborate how the parliament was involved.

7. Did one or more members of parliament participate recently in the official delegation that presented the government report to any of the four UN Committees? YES  NO

If yes, please specify who, when and with regard to which Committee and if the member(s) provided any feedback to parliament.

8. Has your parliament discussed recently any recommendations which the UN Committee(s) adopted regarding your country? YES  NO

If yes, please specify when and with regard to which Committee.

9. Has your parliament directly contributed to the implementation of any of these recommendations? YES  NO

If yes, please elaborate.

## Section D: Your parliament's needs in the area of human rights

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The IPU aims to provide parliaments with the best possible information and assistance to enhance their contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights. Your answers to these questions will enable us to enhance our understanding of parliaments' needs and hence our response to them.

10. **What kind of information and/or assistance do you believe your parliament needs most in the area of human rights?**

Information on the person completing the survey:

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Parliamentary Chamber: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_