



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

130th IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 16 – 20.3.2014

Standing Committee on
United Nations Affairs

C-IV/130/A.1
31 January 2014

STANDING COMMITTEE ON UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS

Annotated agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Approval of the summary records of the Committee's session held on the occasion of the 129th IPU Assembly in Geneva (October 2013)
3. Election of the Standing Committee Bureau
4. Discussion of the parliamentary contribution to the UN process of devising the next generation of development goals
5. Update and discussion of preparations for the UN General Assembly debate on Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU
6. Report and future work plan of the Committee on United Nations Affairs
7. Any other business

STANDING COMMITTEE ON UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS

Item 4: Parliamentary contribution to the UN process of devising the next generation of development goals

Session of Wednesday, 19 March 2014

With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) coming to an end in 2015, the United Nations is working on a new, comprehensive development agenda that will include a generation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs will be global in scope, informing policy in both developed and developing countries. Global consultations with stakeholders have been taking place and will intensify in the months ahead to ensure broad consensus and early buy-in by all stakeholders.

For its part, the IPU has worked closely with the United Nations and with Member Parliaments to ensure that the voices of parliamentarians are heard and taken into consideration by government negotiators at the United Nations. Among other things, two major debates were organized in the course of 2013: one in Quito, at the 128th Assembly, and another in New York, at the annual IPU-UN Parliamentary Hearing. The debates demonstrated strong support among the parliamentary community for a new economic model for sustainable development centred on well-being as opposed to growth as an end in itself, and with developed countries taking a leading role in implementing this paradigm shift. They also sent an unequivocal message to governments at the United Nations that the post-2015 agenda will have to feature democratic governance both as a stand-alone goal and as a cross-cutting issue to inform all other goals. The Parliamentary Hearing further discussed gender issues and recommended that the SDGs should also include a comprehensive goal on gender equality.

Having already discussed the overall policy stance on the post-2015 agenda, attention is now turning to the question of how national parliaments will be able to influence negotiations in their domestic arenas and how they could organize themselves to assist with the future implementation of the new SDGs.

Following up on some of the conclusions of last year's Parliamentary Hearing, the session will consider how parliaments can engage on this issue in order to provide input into the global negotiations, how they can foster political ownership of the new agenda at the national level, including by involving civil society, and what institutional steps may be required to ensure monitoring and accountability for the implementation of the SDGs. In particular, delegations will be invited to reflect on the following questions:

1. Are parliaments being briefed regularly by governments on their negotiating position at the United Nations, and what kind of consultations have taken place or are being planned to hear from parliamentarians on the new agenda?
2. Are parliaments organizing consultations with civil society and, if so, what evidence exists at this stage that the views of the general public are being channelled into the process?
3. Is the new agenda properly understood as a universal one that will require active engagement by parliaments – and the public – in both developing and developed countries?
4. How are parliaments equipped to support the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) into a single policy approach?
5. How well-equipped are parliaments at the institutional level to help mainstream the new agenda through the legislative and budgetary processes, including through dedicated structures (e.g. committees, caucuses or other)?
6. How involved are parliaments in the design of national sustainable development strategies and in monitoring their implementation going forward?