



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly

Hanoi (Viet Nam), 28 March - 1 April 2015



Assembly  
Item 3

A/132/3-Inf.3  
12 March 2015

## Post-2015 development agenda: Update on UN negotiations

At the second session of negotiations held from 17 to 20 February, UN Member States began to look more closely at the content of the Declaration to be adopted at their Summit in September 2015. The session concluded with a Discussion document that will likely provide the outline for a *zero draft* of the Declaration. The co-Facilitators of the negotiations (the Permanent Representatives of Kenya and Ireland to the United Nations) will circulate that draft in advance of the 18-22 May session.

### Main points from the deliberations

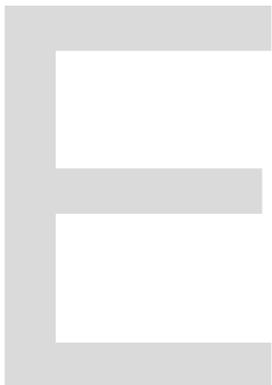
The discussion stressed that the Declaration needs to be short and focused, resisting the temptation to bring together into a single document all of the international development commitments of the past two decades. It should outline in broad terms the main principles to guide government action and the broad vision that lies behind the SDGs.

There was some convergence among negotiators on many aspects of the future Declaration. This included a strong focus on **gender**, the **rule of law** and **human rights** as prerequisites of development, as well as on the importance of **means of implementation** and a strong **monitoring mechanism** to support the goals until 2030.

There remain some important differences between developed and developing countries in terms of their understanding of principles such as “universality”, “common but differentiated responsibilities”, and even “partnership.”

Everyone understands universality to mean, at a minimum, that the goals will apply to all countries regardless of their level of development. Developed countries, however, tend to emphasize the notion of “leaving no one behind” with its implied call to bring the excluded into the current economic and social order. Broader reforms are required to make that order more sustainable and equitable. Developed countries also tend to interpret universality in terms of “shared responsibility”, which conveys the idea that everyone must take responsibility for the goals.

Developing countries tend to highlight other meanings of universality, such as the Rio principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR), which implies that while all must work towards the goals, the countries with more power and resources have a duty to do more. This includes helping change the structures of global economic governance that work against the interests of developing countries. For the developed countries, however, the CBDR principle (one of several from the original 1992 Rio Conference) should only apply to environmental issues and not to the whole development agenda.



As for the role of “partnerships” in the new agenda, while everyone agrees that success will require mobilizing civil society and the private sector along with governments, developing countries tend to stress the role of partnerships *between governments* as the primary duty-bearers. Developed countries, on the other hand, tend to think of partnerships first and foremost in terms of “multi-stakeholder” partnerships – an idea that implicitly places the role of civil society and the private sector on a par with that of governments.

### **Implications for the IPU and parliaments**

During the debate, a few delegations made a clear reference to the role of parliaments and the need to stress that role in the UN Declaration. Other interventions were indirectly supportive of parliaments, such as one statement that referred to “political leaders” as key actors in implementation, and several others that referred to the need for strong, accountable institutions to carry the agenda forward.

The IPU, for its part, lobbied actively to make sure that the role of parliaments as both agents and recipients of development would be an important consideration in the negotiations. The IPU President himself, Mr. Saber Chowdhury, made this point in meetings with the two co-Facilitators and other ambassadors. Given the need for the Declaration to be brief and succinct, the IPU argument for the role of parliaments in the implementation of the new agenda was articulated in the following points:

- As legislative bodies, parliaments can help translate the legally non-binding SDGs into *enforceable laws*;
- As oversight bodies, parliaments can hold governments to account for their policy choices, ensuring that these are aligned with the goals;
- As the most representative institution of government, parliaments can help promote the goals among the people so that every citizen is empowered to demand action on the goals and to provide feedback on their implementation; and
- As the bodies entrusted with the adoption of the national budget and all laws in matters of finance and trade, parliaments can help mobilize the means of implementation (finance, technology, etc.) that will be critical to the success of the SDGs.

Underpinning all of this, the IPU has argued that there is a need to make parliaments “fit for purpose” with respect to their oversight and legislative functions. In many countries, parliament needs to be strengthened through capacity-building as well as expanded legal authority.

With respect to the sensitive issue of the indicators of progress for the SDGs, which was briefly discussed at the February session, the IPU has joined a network of UN agencies and independent experts that is working on indicators for the so-called governance goal of the SDGs (Goal 16). A tentative list of indicators for all of the goals was submitted to the 2-5 March session of the Statistical Commission for a first technical review. Ideally, the indicators that will be selected in the end (no more than one indicator for each of the 169 targets) should abide by SMART technical criteria, i.e., be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. However, it is expected that the final choice of indicators will be determined by a combination of technical and political considerations.

### **Further steps in the negotiations**

In spite of the IPU’s efforts, the Discussion document that was circulated at the end of the session mentioned parliaments only once in the final paragraph. This does not fully reflect the arguments presented by the IPU Secretariat. At a minimum, parliaments could have been mentioned in paragraph 5 (rule of law and governance institutions), paragraph 12 (means of implementation), and paragraph 13 (monitoring and accountability framework).

Going forward, the IPU Secretariat will continue to monitor this process closely to ensure a strong reference to parliaments in the final Declaration. IPU Members are encouraged to take advantage of the weeks ahead to make the case for a clear reference to parliaments in the Declaration with their respective governments. Wherever feasible, parliaments should consider holding hearings with their country’s foreign minister, Permanent Representative at the United Nations, or the relevant entity responsible for their country’s contribution to the negotiations.

More information on the February session, including all government statements, is available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015>.

## DISCUSSION DOCUMENT FOR DECLARATION

*We believe that, to be effective, this Declaration should not exceed three pages.*

*A title such as “Transforming our world – A call for global action” might be considered.*

1. Opening paragraph: Heads of State and Government meeting at the UN adopt historic agreement on new framework. Integrated Agenda will provide opportunity to end poverty and hunger within a generation. Will ensure lasting protection of planet. Will create conditions for sustainable economic growth and prosperity. Bold and ambitious vision. Transformational Goals and targets. Build on Rio+20 Outcome Document, *The future we want*.
2. The MDGs were agreed 15 years ago. Since then, a crucial framework for development. However, progress on implementation uneven; some of Goals not achieved. Must complete unfinished business of MDGs.
3. The world today. A time of major global challenges to sustainable development, such as poverty and exclusion, unemployment, climate change, conflict and humanitarian crises. Some of these challenges are interlinked. Their solutions must be integrated. Global opportunities also – technology, innovation, connectivity.
4. Agenda to be implemented in line with the common fundamental values of the UN, including freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for all human rights, respect for nature and shared responsibility.
5. Importance of building peaceful and inclusive societies, strengthening governance and institutions, and promoting the rule of law.
6. New vision for collective path towards sustainable development. We envisage for 2030 a just. Equitable, tolerant and inclusive world. An ambitious agenda for the next 15 years for people and planet which addresses the structural causes of poverty, inequality and environmental degradation. Three dimensions of sustainable development. Sustained economic growth that delivers benefits for all.
7. Poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing our world. Today we recommit ourselves to freeing humanity from poverty and hunger. No one will be left behind: this is our solemn pledge. No target will be considered met unless it is met for all economic and social groupings. Need to prioritize the most vulnerable. Gender equality and the empowerment of women critical for sustainable development.
8. Needs of countries in special situations to be addressed (LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, African countries), countries facing special challenges (conflict-affected countries and MICs).
9. Universal agenda, applicable to all countries. At the same time we take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development. National ownership critical.
10. Action to combat climate change and environmental degradation a key part of the agenda. Global nature of challenge calls for widest possible international cooperation. Urgency of universal climate agreement.
11. SDGs and targets the basis of the new agenda; the six essential elements in the Secretary General’s Synthesis report, wholly or in part, important as a means of characterizing outcomes of global efforts.
12. Implementation will require an ambitious and effective global partnership which will deliver in full on global goals. Welcome the agreement reached in Addis Ababa on Means of Implementation. Active engagement needed from governments as well as civil society, the private sector and the UN system. (Possible reference to strengthening the UN to support implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda.)
13. A robust and transparent framework for follow-up and review of progress on implementation at all levels and for ensuring mutual accountability. Role of HLPF.

14. Paragraph which makes clear that the Agenda is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Grounded also in the UDHR and other human rights commitments, including the right to development. Inspired by the Rio Declaration (including, inter alia, the principle of CBDR) and by the Millennium Declaration. Based also on Rio+20 Outcome Document, and on proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. Informed by SG's Synthesis Report.<sup>1</sup>
15. Final call to action which could recall the foundation of the UN 70 years ago and draw parallels with the scale of the challenge faced today and the response now decided on by world leaders. Emphasis on significance of new agenda for ordinary people around the world. Vital contributions to be made by governments, parliaments, private sector, civil society etc. We commit to achieving the goal of ending poverty within fifteen years and of preserving our planet for today's young people and future generations.

---

<sup>1</sup> Declaration could footnote all previous important conference/summit outcomes.