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Standing Committee on  
Sustainable Development,  
Finance and Trade

11 October 2017

## Panel discussion *Using science and research to achieve the highest health standards*

*Tuesday, 17 October 2017 (4.30 – 6.30 p.m.)  
Hall no.1, Tavrichesky Palace*

### Concept note

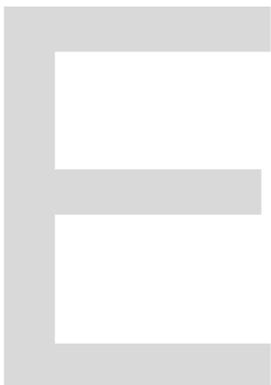
Without scientific knowledge, it is hard to have a public health policy that makes sense. However, it is increasingly recognized that insufficient knowledge exchange and comprehension, as well as political challenges, hinder the development of evidence-informed health policy. Parliaments have a key role to play in bridging this gap and ensuring that health laws and policies, as well as their implementation, are continuously informed by robust scientific findings.

Health research has been at the forefront of recent advances in global development and it has helped countries and societies to prosper and thrive. Recent emphasis on health equity, including the needs of marginalized and vulnerable populations, made it possible for millions of women, children, young people and other sectors of society to survive and reach their full potential, thereby having an important social impact.

A decision-making process informed by scientific knowledge is an integral part of sustainable development. It is also a prerequisite for parliamentary action, including policy development, legislation, financing, advocacy and accountability.

The panel discussion will address the following key questions:

- What is the place of scientific evidence in the political arena? Is there an inherent tension between “science” and “politics”? How do we get the right mix of evidence and opinion in the parliamentary discussion?
- How does parliament build connections with the science/research community? How do MPs get the information they need to take informed decisions?
- How have parliaments handled sensitive health issues with a strong ethical dimension?
- How to combat the risks of inaccurate information and promote evidence-informed decision-making on issues such as immunization and sexual and reproductive health?
- Are countries ready to respond to existing and emerging pandemics? What can we learn from recent outbreaks?
- What have parliaments done to build a strong science/research infrastructure in their countries?



#IPU137

Moderator:

- Dr. Flavia Bustreo, Assistant Director-General, World Health Organization

Panellists:

- Ms. Nkando Luo, Member of Parliament and Minister of Higher Education, Zambia
- Ms. Pia Locatelli, Member of Parliament, Italy
- Mr. Victor Suarez, Member of Parliament, Dominican Republic
- Dr. Adan Rios, Associate Professor, University of Texas
- Mr. Pradeep Kakkattil, Director of Programme Partnerships, Innovations and Fundraising, UNAIDS
- Ms. Elena Baybarina, Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, member of the WHO Human Reproduction Programme Policy and Coordination Committee