



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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Standing Committee on  
Democracy and Human Rights

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## Sharing our diversity: The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Democracy

***Draft resolution submitted by the co-Rapporteurs Ms. S. Dev (India),  
Mr. N. Schrijver (Netherlands) and Mr. I. Umakhanov (Russian Federation)***

The 137<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Acknowledging* the significance of the IPU's 1997 Universal Declaration on Democracy and *taking note of* the world parliamentary community's extensive use of the Declaration,
- (2) *Reiterating* that democracy, human rights and the rule of law are universal, interconnected and mutually reinforcing, and *recognizing* the will of the people as the source of legitimacy of sovereign States,
- (3) *Taking into account* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the United Nations Declaration on Minorities and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on human rights,
- (4) *Reaffirming* the core elements set out in the Universal Declaration on Democracy, including genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society, an independent judiciary, free and fair elections, open and free media, parliamentary oversight, and the protection of the rights of minorities and vulnerable or marginalized groups,
- (5) *Referring to* existing IPU resolutions, including those on human rights (2004), civil society (2005), universal democratic and electoral standards (2007); freedom of expression and the right to information (2009), youth participation in the democratic process (2010), citizen engagement in democracy (2013), democracy in the digital era (2015), women's political participation (2016), the threat posed by terrorism to democracy and human rights (2016), as well as the IPU's Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments (2012),
- (6) *Noting* that there is no single model of democracy and that, as stated in the Universal Declaration on Democracy, democracy reflects the diversity of experiences and cultural particularities, without departing from internationally recognized principles, norms and standards,
- (7) *Also noting* the close relationship between democracy and sustainable development, and drawing attention to the importance of democratic governance for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

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- (8) *Confirming* the central role of parliaments in democracy, and the need for representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective institutions at all levels,
- (9) *Wishing* to foster active citizen engagement in the democratic process and in the activities of government at all levels, including among young people, and committed to achieving gender equality in political decision-making,
- (10) *Underscoring* the vital importance of a strong and freely operating civil society that helps keep governments accountable, as well as of effective political parties, open and free media, and access to independent scientific knowledge, and *reiterating* that freedom of expression is a cornerstone of democracy that permits the free flow of ideas,
- (11) *Noting* the new opportunities for democratic participation offered by digital media, as well as the challenges they can present, and *underscoring* the need to safeguard and promote fundamental rights, such as the right to privacy and the right to determine the disclosure and use of one's own personal data,
- (12) *Also noting* that peace and security are major enablers of democracy, and *expressing deep concern* about violent extremism and terrorism in all its forms, which aim to eliminate democracy, human rights and basic freedoms and which constitute a threat to peace and security,
- (13) *Recognizing* the importance of democratic principles in international relations and the important role of international and regional organizations in upholding these principles,
- (14) *Expressing* support for the 2007 UN General Assembly resolution 62/7 to designate 15 September as the International Day of Democracy,
1. *Reaffirms* that democracy is a universal value and that, as a system of government, democracy contributes to the fulfillment of human potential, the eradication of poverty, the development of open and peaceful societies and the improvement of relations among nations;
  2. *Reiterates* that building a democratic society requires respect for the principles of the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, and the protection of minorities and vulnerable or marginalized groups;
  3. *Calls on* parliaments and all public institutions to take action to uphold the principles and values established in the Universal Declaration on Democracy;
  4. *Reaffirms* the importance of the balance of powers between the legislative, executive and judicial arms of government, *underscores* the importance of securing the independence of parliaments and the judiciary through legislation, and *urges* parliaments to enhance their capacity to oversee the policies, administration and expenditure of the executive as part of a system of checks and balances;
  5. *Calls on* parliaments to work towards greater openness in government in order to strengthen citizen engagement in the democratic process, and *encourages* parliaments to continue to modernize their working methods to facilitate the participation of civil society and ordinary citizens in their deliberations;
  6. *Urges* parliaments to step up their efforts to achieve equality between men and women in decision-making and to ensure equality in all areas of life, including by introducing affirmative action in policies, legislation and budget allocation, providing for gender equality in the law and in practice, and ensuring gender-responsive democratic processes that duly include women's participation and perspectives;
  7. *Calls on* parliaments to enhance youth participation in politics and in parliament;

8. *Also calls on* parliaments to ensure that legislation is in place that fully protects freedom of expression so that politicians, journalists, human rights defenders and other ordinary citizens can speak publicly on matters of concern without fear of reprisals, to denounce any such reprisals and to do everything in their power to ensure the protection of persons at risk and the punishment of those responsible for such acts;
9. *Encourages* parliaments and political parties to denounce all forms of hate speech;
10. *Launches* an urgent appeal to parliaments to promote the inclusion of civic education in the national school curriculum, including education for democracy, human rights, gender equality, freedom of religion and sustainable development;
11. *Calls on* parliaments to enhance their contribution to achieving the SDGs, and to hold governments to account for progress in meeting development targets, in the spirit of leaving no-one behind;
12. *Urges* respect for democratic principles in inter-State relations as well as in international organizations, and *underlines* its conviction that principles of democracy must be applied to the international management of issues of common concern to humankind, in particular the human environment;
13. *Calls on* the IPU to continue to support efforts of parliaments to strengthen democracy and ensure good governance;
14. *Also calls on* IPU Member Parliaments to renew their efforts to implement the provisions of all IPU resolutions related to democracy, as well as the IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments and *requests* the IPU to monitor and regularly report on progress as part of its overall strategy to promote democracy;
15. *Invites* the United Nations to examine the possibility of designating 30 June as the International Day of Parliamentarism in commemoration of the creation of the IPU on 30 June 1889.