



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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**Office of the
Secretary General**

For the Presidents of all
IPU Groups

Geneva, 24 August 2016

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

Following my letter dated 13 June 2016, it is my pleasure to provide an update on preparations for this year's International Day of Democracy (15 September). I hope that your parliament will take this opportunity to celebrate democracy and to discuss challenges thereto, as more than 100 parliaments have done since 2008.

The IPU's theme this year is "Democracy 2030". This theme is an invitation and a challenge to all parliaments to think about the future of democracy, including from the perspectives of young people and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In the annex to this letter, you can find further description of this year's theme as well as possible messages and suggestions for your parliament's participation in the International Day of Democracy.

As in previous years, IPU has prepared a poster, now available on the IPU website (www.ipu.org/idd), as well as think pieces about democracy in 2030, multimedia contributions and details of parliamentary events.

I encourage your parliament to organize an activity on the occasion of the International Day of Democracy in 2016, and also to engage citizens in a conversation about the future of democracy using the Twitter hashtag #DemocracyDay.

I kindly request that you share with us information about your activities, so that we can include them on the IPU web site.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Chungong
Secretary General

Annex

Notes for parliaments on the theme for the International Day of Democracy 2016: “Democracy 2030”

“Democracy 2030” is an invitation and a challenge to all parliaments to think about the future of democracy.

In some ways, 2030 is very near – only around three electoral cycles’ away in most countries. Arguably, politics in 2030 might still look very similar to today, with familiar processes of elections, political parties and parliaments.

In other ways, it is a distant horizon. Many unforeseen events have taken place since 2000. No-one can predict with any certainty what political events will happen in coming years, what technological innovations will have taken place by 2030, nor how these new tools will be used by citizens.

Since the year 2000, information has become more widely accessible than ever before, reinforcing the demand for transparency and accountability. A generation of “digital natives” have grown up using social networks to connect and mobilize with their peers locally, nationally and across borders. Young people frustrated by authoritarian leaders and the lack of opportunities have sought radical change to the political system in their country. Workers who have seen their jobs threatened by globalization have begun to look to populists as an alternative to the political establishment. New political movements have emerged to challenge the way politics is done and have acceded to positions of power in some countries. Meanwhile, the percentage of women in parliament has increased, but only from 13.1% to 22.1%.

These factors and many more combine to make this a time of challenge and opportunity for democracy. Political parties, parliaments and other institutions are called upon to adapt to changes in society, to renew political processes, to create space in politics for younger generations and to make use of their energy.

The aspirations for a fairer world that are set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will only be met if there is more democracy, not less. Political leaders everywhere need to make the connection between the internationally-agreed development goals and the demands from their citizens, including for greater transparency and accountability as well as more participative and inclusive decision-making.

“Democracy 2030” is an invitation to all parliaments to interrogate the present, to learn from the past and to prepare the future. Key questions include:

- How will the institutions of democracy – parliament, political parties, elections – change between now and 2030?
- Will the existing political processes be sufficient to enable young people to express their aspirations, or do new processes need to be invented?
- What new forms of collaborative, participative decision-making will emerge in the digital era?
- How will parliaments connect the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the concerns and hopes of their citizens?

Reference documents

Parliaments may find useful background information in the following documents:

- Outcome document of the General debate on “Rejuvenating democracy, giving voice to youth” at the 134th IPU Assembly in Lusaka (Zambia), March 2016 <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/134/Rpt-gendebate.pdf>
- Youth participation in national parliaments <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/youthrep-e.pdf>
- World e-Parliament Report 2016 <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/eparl16-en.pdf>
- Women in Parliament: The year in perspective <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/WIP2015-e.pdf>

Potential messages to underpin parliamentary communications

Parliaments may wish to incorporate the following messages into their communications around the International Day of Democracy:

- Imagining the future is fundamental for achieving sustainable and inclusive democracy. The International Day of Democracy provides an opportunity to challenge ideas and concepts, to bring diverse voices to the table and to engage the general public in an effort to empower citizens.
- Parliaments undergo constant renewal and change and future generations are an intrinsic part of such processes.
- Innovative thinking is required to create new forms of engagement with parliament and more transparent, accountable and inclusive political processes.
- Youth have a key role to play in the present and future of democracy. Engaging youth in their own spaces, while at the same time creating spaces for youth in parliaments, is a core part of any effort to reimagine parliaments and democracy in the future.
- New technologies enhance the ability of parliaments to more directly engage with citizens, as long as parliaments are prepared to listen as well as to speak.
- To be successful, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires engaged and committed parliaments in order to enable governments to act, while holding them accountable to their commitments.
- Parliaments are at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals. As SDG 16 suggests, strong, transparent, accountable and inclusive institutions are key for the achievement of all of the goals.

Suggestions for parliamentary activities

Parliaments may wish to organize activities such as:

- Adopt a parliamentary motion/resolution in support of the International Day of Democracy.
- Organize a special debate and invite all political groups to exchange their views on the future of democracy.

- Organize an Open Day and provide guided tours, present exhibitions, or coordinate meetings with parliamentarians.
- Launch a competition relating to “Democracy 2030” and engage youth groups.
- Work with the media, such as radio, television, newspapers, social media to promote debate within society on the future of democracy.

Description of potential activities

The following provides more details of potential activities that parliaments may wish to organize:

Concept 1	Parliaments in the digital era
<i>Summary</i>	Parliaments could organize a debate on ways to update parliamentary processes in the digital era, or to invent new processes.
<i>What?</i>	Discuss how to make political processes more open, transparent and accountable to citizens, and to make decision-making more inclusive and participatory.
<i>Who?</i>	Target audience: Parliamentarians, general public.
<i>How?</i>	Organize a public debate or a parliamentary sitting dedicated to the question of updating parliamentary processes.
<i>For?</i>	Fruitful debates and a possible resolution/roadmap on changes to the work of parliaments.

Concept 2	Parliamentary engagement in youth spaces
<i>Summary</i>	Parliaments could interact with youth in their own spaces, including by harnessing the power of social media. Activities could look towards reaching out to youth to participate rather than to simply be consulted.
<i>What?</i>	<p>Activities could facilitate direct engagement between youth and MPs, in youths’ own spaces. This would enable recognizing the diversity of youth and acknowledging that they are not a homogenous group but one with diverse interests.</p> <p>Activities could aim to open up dialogue and direct engagement and to elaborate specific ways to use social media to engage with youth.</p>
<i>Who?</i>	Target audience: Youth groups, general public, parliamentarians.
<i>How?</i>	<p>Activities could include the use of social media to engage young people, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. Another possible avenue would be launching SMS campaigns, or online campaigns.</p> <p>Parliamentarians could also organize a day to go to schools and</p>

	universities, and other youth identified spaces such as social hubs, to engage in conversations.
<i>For?</i>	Greater awareness of youth challenges and opportunities. Increased engagement and motivation by youth to participate in parliamentary processes. Direct dialogue between youth groups and parliamentarians

Concept 3	Bringing young people into parliaments
<i>Summary</i>	This set of activities would enable youth to interact with parliaments and motivate them to get involved. They would seek to open up parliaments to youth and to devise ways in which to reduce obstacles to participation.
<i>What?</i>	The activities would aim to attract youth into parliaments, parliamentary libraries and other spaces to become motivated and engaged with parliamentary work. They would also seek to increase participation of youth in politics and to discuss solutions to the obstacles to participation in parliamentary processes.
<i>Who?</i>	Target audience: Parliamentarians, youth, general public.
<i>How?</i>	For instance, by coordinating open days for youth to visit parliament or organizing youth parliaments or other programs that aim to have continuous participation of youth in parliaments. They all require a commitment from parliamentarians to be accessible and open.
<i>For?</i>	Increased awareness of obstacles that youth face to engage with parliaments, motivation for youth to participate. Continued dialogue between youth groups and parliamentarians on the way forward to increase youth participation in parliaments.

Concept 4	Sustainable Development Goals and parliaments
<i>Summary</i>	Activities to kick-start debate around the role of parliaments in the implementation of the SDGs.
<i>What?</i>	Parliaments could discuss how they can contribute to setting national priorities and targets within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. Also, they could seek to highlight the role of parliaments in the successful implementation of SDGs, in terms of financing or monitoring activities, for example.
<i>Who?</i>	Target audience: Parliamentarians, general public.
<i>How?</i>	Parliaments could organize a debate, a plenary session, an awareness campaign or public forums.

<i>For?</i>	Greater awareness about SDGs and commitment to look at ways in which they can be localized and supported by parliaments.
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Concept 5	Creating strong institutions
<i>Summary</i>	Parliaments could debate how to implement Sustainable Development Goal 16, which calls for peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. Parliaments address SDG 16.
<i>What?</i>	Activities would highlight the role of democratic values and of parliaments in the SDG agenda, specifically in terms of goal 16. They would also look to start debates around the way in which parliaments can help in developing effective institutions, ensure participatory and representative decision-making and to protect fundamental freedoms.
<i>Who?</i>	Target audience: general public, parliamentarians, international community.
<i>How?</i>	The concept could be materialized by organizing an open forum, debate or a panel event.
<i>For?</i>	Highlighted links between parliaments and SDGs, discussions on ways parliaments can effectively contribute to goal 16.

Note on reporting parliamentary activities

The IPU maintains a list of parliamentary events on the website: www.ipu.org/idd. To keep the webpage updated on the activities we kindly request:

- A short summary of plans for parliamentary events (3-5 lines)
- A short report of the event (1 page), by the end of September
- High resolution photos, including the names of those appearing in the images as well as copyright information
- Documents produced for the event (resolutions, press releases, handouts, posters, etc.).
- Any other relevant material

Please send this information to idd@ipu.org and ar@ipu.org, specifying that the IPU has permission to publish the material online.