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## **International Day of Democracy – 15 September 2013**

The theme of the International Day of Democracy 2013 is **‘Strengthening Voices for Democracy’**. This document contains some suggestions for which in which the theme could be addressed, and types of events that parliaments could carry out.

All parliamentary events will be listed on the IPU web site at [www.ipu.org/idd](http://www.ipu.org/idd).

### **Possible ways of addressing the theme**

With the objective of promoting political participation, parliament may wish to organize outreach activities with citizens that aim, for example, to:

- Raise awareness of the principles of democracy, as an ideal to be pursued and a mode of government
- Combine messages for the International Day with voter education campaigns in preparation for elections
- Share case studies of how people get involved in politics at local and national levels
- Highlight ways in which citizens can get information about the work of parliament and interact with the institution
- Create a forum for citizens to give their views on how their voices can be heard more effectively

With the objective of enhancing parliamentary rules and working methods, parliament may wish to examine questions such as:

- How much opportunity do citizens (both men and women) have for direct involvement in legislation?
- How user-friendly is the procedure for individuals and groups to make submissions to a parliamentary committee or commission of enquiry?
- How careful is parliament in ensuring a gender-equality perspective in its work?
- How adequate are arrangements for ensuring that minority groups can effectively contribute to the work of parliament?
- How extensive and successful are attempts to interest young people in the work of parliament?

What has been the biggest recent improvement in the above? What is the most serious ongoing deficiency? What measures would be needed to remedy this deficiency?

## **Suggestions for parliamentary events**

### ***Celebrate the International Day of Democracy in parliament***

There are many ways in which the theme of the International Day of Democracy could be observed in parliament, such as:

- Adopt a parliamentary motion/resolution in support of the International Day of Democracy
- Organize a special plenary debate and invite all political groups to exchange their views on the state of 'Strengthening Voices for Democracy' within parliament, or within society

### ***Engage in a broad discussion about developing a culture of dialogue and inclusiveness***

Bring together politicians, representatives of civil society, academia, and journalists to make proposals for actions to develop the culture of democracy. Engage with civil society organizations that work especially on the issue of parliament (also known as 'parliamentary monitoring organizations').

### ***Organize an Open Day***

Several activities could be carried out during an Open Day in parliament, such as guided tours, exhibitions, meetings with parliamentarians, mock sittings etc.

### ***Launch a competition on the International Day of Democracy***

A competition could involve creating artwork, writing essays, making videos, taking photos, etc., related to the theme of democracy and/or 'Strengthening Voices for Democracy'. The competition could target schools or universities, and culminate in an exhibition at parliament, where the best entries are displayed and prizes awarded.

### ***Communicate about the International Day of Democracy***

Use the parliamentary web site, communications service, social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to inform citizens and invite them to get involved in the day and the work of parliament more generally. Link to information available at the IPU web site

### ***Work with the media***

Many parliaments have used radio programmes, televised debates, press releases and newspaper interviews to promote previous International Days of Democracy. National broadcasters, private media and parliament's own communication channels all help to raise awareness of the role of parliament in democracy.

## **Note on reporting on parliamentary events**

The IPU maintains a list of parliamentary events for the International Day at [www.ipu.org/idd](http://www.ipu.org/idd). In order to make this list more user-friendly, we would ask parliaments to send us:

- A short summary of plans for parliamentary events (3-5 lines)
- A short report of the event (1 page), by the end of September
- Photos of the event, focusing on people during an activity, including the names of those in the images. Minimum resolution for photos should be 1926 x 2900 pixels @ 300 dpi. Please also send copyright information
- Documents produced for the event (resolutions, press releases, handouts, posters, etc).
- Any other relevant material

Please confirm in writing that you give IPU permission to publish this material in IPU communications product, including on its web site.

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<https://twitter.com/IPUparliament> or use the hashtag #DemocracyDay