

IPU E-BULLETIN

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Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the UN to Explore Peace-Making Role of Parliaments – The role of parliaments in conflict prevention, reconciliation and peace-building will be the main focus of this year's [IPU-UN annual Parliamentary Hearing](#) at the UN headquarters in New York. The event, which gathers together parliamentarians, high level UN officials, experts and member States will take place on 6-7 December as the 67th session of the General Assembly continues. It will be opened by IPU President Abdelwahad Radi, UN General Assembly President Vuc Jeremić and UN Deputy Secretary General Jan Eliason. As part of IPU's efforts to support UN action to promote peace and security, participants will identify ways parliaments can strengthen UN field missions, its Peace building Commission and the Human Rights Council in addition to examining the role of legislators in conflict mediation, transitional justice and truth and reconciliation. The hearing will draw from concrete situations in Kenya, Sierra Leone and Timor Leste to explore avenues for parliamentary engagement in peace-making. The need to bring more women in peace mediation efforts and their contribution to stability will also be discussed. In addition, a debate on the changes in the composition of the UN Security Council to reflect the world's current balance of powers will be held as a follow-up to an IPU resolution adopted at its 126th Assembly in Kampala earlier this year. The conclusions are aimed at making international decision-making more transparent and effective.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in Eastern and Southern Africa – IPU is expanding its campaign to fight violence against women (VAW) to Eastern and Southern Africa. MPs and parliamentary staff from the region will gather in [Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania between 5-7 December](#) to examine the challenges of implementing the various laws their parliaments have adopted to eliminate VAW. The event will identify what is needed to secure effective law enforcement and change attitudes, just as vital as the legislation itself to guarantee women's right to be free from violence. The gathering is part of the 16 days of global activism that follow the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November. This year, IPU is focusing on [using legislation to end violence against women and girls](#). IPU has been working since 2008 to engage parliaments in taking the lead on the fight against VAW. The event in Tanzania follows others organized in Europe, Latin America, Central and Western Africa and Asia, which focused on the specific needs and concerns of each region. Not all countries in Africa have laws banning VAW, and many who do face great hurdles in ensuring their implementation. This gathering hopes to reproduce the breakthrough achieved in the Maldives which earlier this year, adopted legislation that IPU helped draft. It has triggered the drafting of similar legislation in several African countries. IPU-supported bills are on the table in Togo and Burkina Faso with the Organization also helping to trigger legislative reforms in favour of women in Mali and Burundi.

Supporting Turkey to Establish Gender Sensitive Parliament – IPU and UN Women are supporting Turkey in its efforts to assess what progress parliament has made in integrating gender equality in its structures and functioning in recent years and to identify existing challenges. The self-assessment from 30 November to 2 December follows a request by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) of the Turkish parliament to both IPU and UN Women. Involving both men and women MPs from the EOC and parliamentary officials, the self-assessment will analyse amongst other things, women in parliament, plans and capacity needs for achieving gender equality, legislative frameworks as well as internal policies and procedures. Turkey currently ranks

joint 95th with Chile in the IPU world rankings of women's political participation with only 78 women out of 550 MPs. Earlier this year, IPU worked with the Chilean parliament in carrying out a self-assessment on how gender sensitive its parliament was. The self-assessment will result in a report with the main findings and recommendations, which could lead to a plan of action on addressing the issue. At the recent 127th IPU Assembly in Quebec City, IPU members adopted a [plan of action](#) aimed at helping parliaments globally on establishing gender sensitive parliaments.

Caribbean MPs Seek Effective Ways to Meet Citizens' Needs – Parliamentarians from English-speaking Caribbean parliaments have come together in Trinidad and Tobago to develop common strategies to better respond to the needs of their constituencies. A [workshop](#) organized by IPU and the Trinidad and Tobago Parliament in Port-of-Spain on 26 and 27 November used the [Global Parliamentary Report](#) as a framework to address the huge volume of requests MPs receive from citizens, and seek practical ways to maximize their limited time and resources to effectively deal with them. Every day, people come to ask MPs in the region for help in finding a job or a house, in paying their bills or repairing local roads. Participants at the meeting developed solutions to educate citizens about the role of their representatives, diffuse unrealistic expectations towards MPs as service providers, and design long-lasting solutions to common constituency problems. A set of [36 targeted recommendations](#) were issued, including making greater use of constituency meeting to solve common problems, creating funds and programmes that remain after individual terms in office and coming together in bi-partisan efforts to influence national policies.

World AIDS Day - Parliaments Essential to Political Will in Tackling HIV/AIDS - With the release of latest figures on HIV/AIDS by UNAIDS in its [global report for 2012](#) showing a significant drop in the number of new infections in 25 countries, IPU remains committed to parliamentary action on tackling the disease. Parliaments can and will continue to play an essential part in providing the necessary political leadership to meeting global AIDS targets by 2015, mainly through legislation, by reforming health systems to better respond to the disease and by ensuring adequate budgets are in place. Through its Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS, IPU is helping parliaments to review, repeal or amend punitive and discriminatory laws that impede effective responses to AIDS, although this is an area where much work remains to be done in countries around the world. The UNAIDS report cites that laws or policies that blocked effective HIV prevention, treatment and care for key populations exist in between 60-70 per cent of countries. For information on what MPs can do to fight HIV/AIDS, go to: <http://www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm#hiv-guide>

IPU Human Rights Mission to Maldives Questions Lack of Police Accountability – An IPU Human Rights team to the Maldives has expressed deep concern that police officers using excessive force against MPs remain unpunished and that MPs continue to be subjected to political and physical intimidation in the country. It called on the authorities to resolve all cases of police violence and intimidation against MPs. The three-member IPU mission was carried out on 20-22 November amidst rising political tension in a country that has been in political crisis since February. Read more in our [press note](#).