

IPU E-BULLETIN

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Supporting Libya in Establishing Full Parliamentary Democracy - IPU Secretary-General Anders B. Johnsson will sign an agreement with the President of Libya's General National Council (GNC) Mohamed Al-Magariaf in Tripoli next week on a programme of support that will pave the way for the establishment of a full parliamentary democracy in the North African country. Initially, IPU will focus on a set of priorities including clarifying the GNC's role over a new constitution, reviewing all rules and procedures of the GNC, and providing support to women's political representation in Libya. Ensuring that the Libyan people are fully informed and engaged on the process to establish parliamentary democracy will be another key area of work. The GNC, elected this July and which appointed an interim government in November, requested support from IPU in its efforts to ensure democratic transition.

The agreement revitalizes IPU's links with the Libyan Parliament, which first joined the organization in 1958, and strives to ensure long-term stability in the country. A full assessment of parliamentary needs will also be carried out. IPU's support to Libya follows similar efforts just this year to support the establishment of parliamentary democracy in Myanmar and Tunisia.

IPU Kick-Starts Long-Term Support to Myanmar with Swedish Support - IPU is launching a five-month support programme to strengthen the Parliament of Myanmar's library, research and information service. It's the first building block towards longer-term support to be delivered over the next three years by IPU and UNDP in coordination with other organizations such as International IDEA and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). This will include assisting the parliament in implementing democratic reforms and to develop its oversight, law making and representative roles. As an immediate step, 30 parliamentary staff will receive a one-month basic training and certification on IT software starting mid-December. This will build their computer and internet skills to provide services to MPs. Building a modern, member-focused parliamentary library was identified by Myanmar's parliamentary authorities as a priority during an IPU needs assessment mission earlier this year. The library project, funded by the Swedish Development Agency, Sida, will be implemented by international and national staff on the ground. The Assembly of the Union of Myanmar has made impressive progress in its short history in improving structures and services, adopting standing orders and basic procedures and setting up a full legislative schedule. In the five sessions it has held since its re-establishment in 2010, it has discussed more than 100 bills and proposals and enacted numerous laws.

Security Council Reform Needed to Strengthen Worldwide Peace and Security - The annual UN-IPU Parliamentary Hearing held in New York last week called for reform of the UN Security Council to make it more representative and so command more authority and acceptance of peace-making efforts around the world. The recommendation, which follows on from an IPU resolution adopted at its 126th Assembly in Kampala earlier this year, was amongst many others endorsed by the 180 parliamentarians and high level UN officials, experts and representatives from Member States who participated in the Hearing. This year's meeting focused on the role of parliaments in conflict prevention, reconciliation and peace-building. Participants also called for greater involvement of women in national politics as a guarantee of long-term stability. They recommended that at

least 30 per cent of women should be represented in decision-making bodies, with the aim of reaching parity. The hearing further urged IPU to continue building bridges between national parliaments and UN missions, and the UN to systematically include and strengthen parliaments in peace processes. UN Parliamentary hearings have been held since 2003 aimed making international decision-making more transparent and effective.

Parliaments Pledge to Enforce Bans on Violence Against Women in East and Southern Africa - Parliaments from Eastern and Southern African countries have made commitments to strengthen laws banning violence against women and girls in the region and guarantee their effective enforcement. At a seminar organized by IPU and the Tanzanian Parliament in Dar-es Salaam last week, representatives of the parliaments of Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia put forward a series of priority measures, including the establishment of monitoring systems to assess the implementation and effectiveness of legislation on violence against women. They also agreed to create a dedicated group in each parliament to champion the cause. Countries in these two regions of Africa face a particular challenge in aligning national laws with international legal instruments on violence against women and overcoming the cultural, social and economic hurdles that stand in the way of implementation. The gathering was 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 focused on using legislation to end violence against women and girls, a global scourge that spares no society.

Honing the Leadership Skills of Women MPs in Burundi – In a bid to enhance the role and influence of women MPs in the political scene in Burundi, women parliamentarians in the east African country have been given training on ways to build their leadership, communication and advocacy skills as part of a long-standing IPU programme there on strengthening the parliament's capacity to address gender issues and violence against women. At 31st in the IPU world rankings of women in parliament, the Burundian parliament has relatively strong female participation with 30.5 per cent of MPs in the lower house and 46.3 per cent in the senate being women. The training in the capital Bujumbura in mid-December focused on linking concepts and strategies to practical exercises on how to lead and communicate on key messages. A special session was devoted to developing targeted advocacy tools to combat gender-based violence. IPU has carried out similar training in many parts of the world including Togo, Rwanda, Jordan and the Gulf States.

Strengthening Democracy Through Constituency Work in Bangladesh - IPU is assisting Bangladeshi MPs enhance their relations with and services to the citizens they have been elected to represent, as part of a UNDP programme to build stronger democratic governance in the country that IPU supports. Based on international best practices collected in the IPU-UNDP [Global Parliamentary Report](#), IPU is providing expertise to Bangladesh on studying and assessing the state of constituency relations. MPs in Bangladesh devote a considerable amount of time to constituency work, but face significant difficulties in establishing and maintaining personal links with the electorate. The large size of constituencies, the high level of illiteracy among the population and the lack of personal offices and staff for MPs in Bangladesh are among the main challenges that need addressing. In a report to be issued in the spring, experts will develop recommendations adapted to the Bangladeshi context and identify resources on how to best maintain two-way contact between MPs and constituencies and to communicate with and seek inputs from citizens so that they can actively participate in political decision-making in the country.