

IPU E-BULLETIN

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Putting Democracy and Democratic Governance at the Heart of Sustainable Development – A special roundtable hosted by IPU in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, on 30th January attended by a UN-appointed high-level panel and MPs from around the world concluded that democracy and democratic governance should be at the heart of a new international development agenda.

The roundtable represented a first and important step in the Organization's efforts to put democratic governance at the heart of new development goals to replace the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) when they expire in 2015.

The meeting allowed an exchange of views between members of the high-level panel tasked with advising the UN Secretary-General on the broad parameters of a new development agenda and an IPU delegation including the Speakers of both houses of parliament in Liberia, leading Liberian MPs as well as parliamentarians from Bangladesh, UK, and Uganda.

Participants reiterated the need for national ownership of and commitment to development plans. Parliaments would play a key role in achieving this. As a result, parliaments are strongly encouraged to participate in both [national and regional UN-organized consultations](#) in the coming months to define the new international development goals.

The Monrovia meeting also highlighted that a well-functioning parliament was essential to democracy and democratic governance. Consequently, its ability to be representative, transparent and accountability needed to be strengthened.

IPU has long argued that democracy and democratic governance underpin successful and sustainable development. It will use its upcoming [128th Assembly in Ecuador](#) in March to also gather input from its members on the inclusion of a specific goal on democratic governance in any new development plan to apply to both developed and developing countries. The main theme of the assembly is in finding new ways to ensure development delivers well-being for all of the world's citizens.

The Organization is also encouraging MPs to take part in an online survey called [My World](#) which is collecting individual views on development priorities. All responses will feed into the official UN-led process defining the new development goals.

IPU Middle East Committee Undertakes Long-Anticipated Mission to Gaza - Members of IPU's Committee on Middle East Questions were in Gaza on 28 January in the first of a two-part mission to the region. The mission's aim is to assess the socio-economic and political impact of the conflict and its repercussions on the workings of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

The mission, led by Britain's Lord Judd from the House of Lords and including IPU Secretary General Anders B. Johnsson, met UN officials and PLC members to hear their views on security, human rights and the humanitarian situation in the Gaza strip.

The Committee also sought to assess the status of the PLC, which since 2007 has been largely paralyzed by the divisions among the two main Palestinian political groups and the administrative detention of large numbers of PLC members in Israeli prisons.

A second part of the mission to Israel and the West Bank is being planned for the coming weeks and will focus on the same issues.

The IPU Committee on the Middle East Questions was established in 1987 to follow the peace process in the region and to facilitate dialogue between MPs from all the political factions in the Israeli and Palestinian parliaments and in neighbouring countries.

IPU Urges Chad to Resolve Human Rights Case of MP Five Years On – IPU is urging the Chadian authorities to make a serious and genuine push to bring to justice the perpetrators of human rights violations against an opposition MP. The Organization is deeply concerned that five years after the arbitrary arrest, detention and mistreatment of MP Ngarledji Yorongar, no progress has been made in identifying the perpetrators.

Yorongar was violently arrested along with two other opposition members by armed men on 3rd February 2008 during a rebel attack on the Chadian capital, N'Djamena. The detainees were then tortured. Leader of the opposition Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh, detained on the same day, has never been seen since.

Although Yorongar managed to escape, he needed extensive medical treatment for the injuries received during the brutal arrest and detention. He also survived an assassination attempt in May 2011 ahead of partial legislative elections.

IPU's Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians has been closely following the case since 2008. In August 2008, a national commission of inquiry found that Chadian defence and security forces were involved in the abductions, arrests and intimidation of opposition politicians. Despite assurances by Chad that judicial investigations are on-going, and five years on, Yorongar's case remains unresolved.

Record Number of Women Elected to Israel's Knesset – A record number of women have been elected to the Israeli parliament, the Knesset in last week's elections. Women won 26 out of 120 seats in the Israeli parliament's 19th legislature, representing 21.6 per cent of parliamentarians. This is up from 20 per cent in the previous parliament. With these latest figures, Israel now moves up to 62nd place from 68th in IPU's world ranking of women in parliaments.