

IPU E-BULLETIN

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Over 30 Countries Co-Sponsor Draft Resolution on UN-IPU Collaboration – Thirty-three countries have co-sponsored a draft resolution initiated by Morocco on ways to better incorporate and strengthen the parliamentary dimension of the work of the UN. The resolution is expected to be adopted during the first-ever General Assembly debate on the interaction between the UN, parliaments and IPU on 29 May. Among the many recommendations are the call to UN country teams to develop a more structured way of working with national parliaments and for the UN system to use the unique experience of IPU and its membership in strengthening parliaments, particularly in countries emerging from conflict.

Parliaments Could Help UN Member States in their Counter-Terrorism Efforts – The UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee has said it would explore the possibility of collaborating with the IPU to identify best practices and standards that could help UN Member States in their counter-terrorism strategies. The statement was made in a briefing by Committee Chair Hardeep Singh Puri to the Security Council on the publication in January 2012 of the first Global Survey of the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1624. The resolution focused on the incitement to commit terrorist acts and the obligations of countries to comply with international human rights laws. Within a human rights context, the Survey had noted the need to pay more attention to Internet and social media content thought to incite terrorism whilst highlighting the greater role that victims and civil society can play in countering it.

New Algerian Parliament Reaches Milestone in Women's Political Participation - Algeria has become the first and only Arab country to have more than 30 per cent of its parliamentary seats held by women following last week's elections and the recent adoption of a new law on women's political participation. One hundred and forty-five women were elected as MPs out of 462 in elections to the lower house of parliament, accounting for nearly 31.4 per cent of parliamentarians. In the outgoing parliament, women MPs only accounted for less than eight per cent, putting Algeria joint 120th with Ukraine in the IPU world ranking of women's political participation. The outcome of these latest elections means Algeria now leap-frogs into the top 25 countries. In the IPU's annual statistics on women's political participation, the Arab world had the lowest regional average across the globe at 10.7 per cent. Until now, it had also been the only part of the world without a single parliament hosting 30 per cent or more women MPs. In Algeria's proportional representation system, the new law set quotas for women candidates on political party lists depending on the size of a constituency. However, the law didn't stipulate where on the list

women should appear, significantly reducing the potential effectiveness of such a measure.

Ugandan Parliament's Self-Assessment to Gauge Democratic Performance with IPU Help – A self-assessment carried out this week by the Ugandan parliament with help from IPU and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) will identify its strength and weaknesses and provide a sound basis for parliamentary reforms before the next elections in 2017. The self-assessment, using the IPU's self-assessment toolkit for parliaments and a gender analysis, will not only evaluate this relatively young Ugandan parliament's own democratic performance but is also intended to lead to concrete action to strengthen parliament. Findings will also contribute to a strategic plan for the parliament currently being worked upon. The four-member IPU team on the assignment include staff from the Australian, Irish and South African parliaments as well as from the Geneva secretariat.

New MPs in DRC Receive IPU Training on Workings of Parliamentary Democracy – A three-day IPU-UNDP workshop in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) this week will help to provide essential training to new MPs in the DRC parliament. More than 80 per cent of MPs elected in late November 2011 have no parliamentary experience. The workshop, part of a long-standing joint IPU-UNDP programme of support to the DRC mainly funded by the British government will tackle issues such as how to draft legislation, parliamentary oversight, parliamentary procedures, political representation and the relationship between the majority and minority groups in parliament.

Maldives Law on Domestic Violence Takes Effect – A woman who had been continuously abused for 18 years in Maldives has reportedly been given police protection through a court order in the first implementation of a recently adopted law addressing domestic violence in the country. Strong support for the law which IPU helped draft and review and which was passed this April, was qualified by calls for the law to be fully implemented in a country where one in three women suffer domestic abuse.