

# IPU E-BULLETIN

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**Parliaments to Play Key Role in Ensuring Effective Aid** – Parliaments will now have a key role to play in ensuring international aid is effective in helping countries develop in the way they want to. The allocation of a parliamentary seat to IPU on the steering committee of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation puts parliaments at the heart of key decision-making on aid and development with the expectation that they drive the aid process at national levels. The Global Partnership was created at a high-level forum in Busan, South Korea, late in 2011 to provide powerful political impetus to effective development. How to make development aid more effective has long been an issue, particularly with the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals. The steering committee is to provide the strategic leadership, coordination and oversight of the Global Partnership's work and to support its ministerial platforms. It will be co-chaired by the UK's Secretary of State for International Development Andrew Mitchell with other co-chairs yet to be nominated. "The challenge will be to mobilize parliaments to fulfil this critical role and to mobilize donors in supporting work that strengthens parliaments' capacities to oversee development cooperation effectively," says Martin Chungong, IPU Director of Programme and the IPU representative on the Global Partnership steering committee. "All sides in the development equation are accountable for making aid work better for development."

**Taking Action on Maternal and Child Health in Kenya** – Kenya will be the first country to begin translating into action the IPU resolution on maternal and child health adopted at the 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly this year. At a workshop organized by the Kenyan parliament and IPU on 10-11 August, Kenyan MPs and parliamentary staff will gather in the Rift Valley Province town of Naivasha to review existing and proposed legislation concerning maternal and child health. The review aims to define the legislative landscape needed to ensure that the right to basic health for all Kenyans, enshrined in their constitution, is fulfilled and provided at international and national human rights standards. It will look at how to fast-track and mainstream maternal and child health in proposed legislation in addition to examining how to generate larger budgets for this group of the population.

**Rwandan Parliament Assesses its Gender Strengths and Weaknesses** – Although it's the only country in the world where women MPs are in the majority (56.3 per cent), Rwanda's national parliament is conducting a self-assessment end July on how gender sensitive it is. Carried out by 40 male and female MPs and parliamentary staff from both chambers, the assessment addresses various issues such as the posts that women hold, integrating gender issues into legislation and into political parties, working conditions in parliament and what policies are in place to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace. The self-assessment immediately followed a one-day information seminar organized by IPU, the Rwandan parliament and the Forum of Rwandan Women MPs on what makes a parliament gender sensitive, using as a basis IPU's *Gender Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practices* <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/gsp11-e.pdf> A plan of action will be developed in the aftermath of the seminar and self-assessment and ahead of fresh elections next year. The activities are part of on-going IPU support to Rwanda. In April, IPU provided training to MPs and staff on gender mainstreaming and budgeting so

that parliament could deliver on gender equality in issues such as education, health and economic empowerment.

**Senate Resolution Pushes Belgium's Efforts to Fight HIV/AIDS Forward** – The Belgian Senate has unanimously adopted a resolution aimed at strengthening its international role in ending punitive and discriminatory laws that hinder HIV programmes and providing funding for HIV work. The resolution, proposed by Senator and Chair of the IPU Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS, Marleen Temmerman, demands the Belgium government not only integrate HIV/AIDS into all public service policies within the country but also prioritise the fight against the disease in Belgium's international development work. The issue, the resolution says, should be put it on the dialogue agenda with partner countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda, all of which have high rates of infection. Amongst other things, the resolution also calls for Belgium to lead by example in promoting sexual and reproductive rights in international negotiations and to ensure budgets are there to assist groups particularly vulnerable to the disease. Through the resolution, the Belgian Senate has underlined the leadership role parliaments can take in the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic, a key objective of the IPU HIV/AIDS Advisory Group.

*To access the full text of the resolution in French, please go to:*

<http://www.senate.be/www/?Mlval=/dossier&LEG=5&NR=1681&LANG=fr>

**Malian MP Takes on Role of President of IPU Committee on Human Rights of Parliamentarians** – Malian MP and former vice-president of the IPU's Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was elected as the new president of the committee when it met in Geneva late July. Tapo's replacement as vice-president is Chilean MP Juan Pablo Letelier who has a long experience of serving on the Committee. In addition to examining largely confidential cases of human rights abuses both new and old and taking statements from some delegations on alleged abuses, the Committee reviewed some of its working practices.

**Revamped online presence for the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU)** - The British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU) has launched its new website. The site at [www.bgipu.org](http://www.bgipu.org) will become a key focal point for the British Group and its members. The site includes reports of all BGIPU activities and details of upcoming events, in addition to background information on the organization.

In common with other IPU national groups in many countries, the BGIPU consists of members from all parties and from both the House of Commons and House of Lords. It currently has 600 members. It works to expand awareness and understanding of British foreign relations and the contribution made by the UK Parliament to consolidate parliamentary democracy worldwide. It also engages parliamentarians on key global issues central to the IPU agenda such as the defence of universal human rights norms, gender balance in political representation, the rule of law, support for effective global peace and security mechanisms and sustainable development. Working through IPU, the BGIPU helps to bolster democratic norms and institutions as well as parliamentary input to multilateral dialogue, in particular through the United Nations system.