



Translating international human rights commitments into national realities: The contribution of parliaments to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Seminar for African parliaments organized jointly by the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in partnership with the Inter-ministerial delegation for human rights of Morocco, the National Council of Human Rights of Morocco, and in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

29-30 September 2014, Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco (Rabat)

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE SEMINAR

Parliaments and the United Nations Human Rights Council are natural partners. Without parliamentary action - be it passing laws or overseeing government action - very few recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the mechanism through which the Council examines the human rights situation in all UN Member States, could actually be implemented. Indeed, the mandate entrusted to parliaments to legislate and oversee government action in terms of holding the executive to account for their actions is crucial to the work of the Human Rights Council.

In recent years, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has made it a priority to raise awareness among parliaments about the Council and its UPR and the contribution they can make to them. The IPU systematically informs parliaments of the forthcoming examination of their countries' national reports. The IPU organizes capacity-building workshops for parliamentarians to enhance their understanding of the UPR and their role. A recent survey conducted by the IPU found that many parliaments are still unfamiliar with the work of the Council or its UPR. The tide is turning, however, and parliaments are increasingly taking an active interest in the work of the Council.

On 29 May 2013, the Human Rights Council, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the IPU, held a panel discussion in Geneva on the contribution of parliaments to promoting human rights at the national level and to the work of the Council. The participants concurred that parliaments had a critical part to play in ensuring respect for human rights domestically and that parliaments and the Human Rights Council stood to gain much from closer cooperation. To this end, participants formulated the following recommendations:

- Further enhance awareness among members of parliaments of the existence of the Human Rights Council and its UPR and the need for their full involvement in its work;
- Foster greater involvement of members of parliament in the three different reporting stages of the UPR; and
- Promote the adoption, by the Human Rights Council, of practical steps to engage with parliaments and to take their work into account.

On 27 June 2014, during its 26th session, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution¹ endorsing the need to involve parliaments in its work and to benefit from their contribution to the promotion of human rights.

The regional seminar in Rabat aims to inform participants about how the Human Rights Council functions and alert them to the importance of becoming more involved. The meeting aims to identify good parliamentary practices in working with the Council and in promoting and protecting human rights in general, in particular, by initiating an effective and continuous dialogue with other stakeholders such as national institutions and civil society.

¹ A/HRC/26/L.21 (<http://www.ipu.org/Un-e/a-hrc-26-L21.pdf>)

The main objectives of the regional seminar in Rabat are as follows:

- Inform parliamentarians of the functioning of the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review and sensitize them to becoming involved as guardians of human rights in order to better promote the mechanism;
- Highlight the role to be played by parliaments in the protection of human rights at the national level;
- Reflect on the framework, best practices and parliamentary support strategies in the work of the HRC with the support of the IPU;
- Exchange good parliamentary practices in the involvement of parliamentarians in UNHRC sessions and the UPR process;
- Determine the appropriate cooperation framework among other stakeholders, in particular the executive, national human rights institutions, civil society and parliaments with a view to maximizing the latter's contribution to the promotion of human rights.

2. VENUE AND DATE

The seminar will be held on 29 and 30 September 2014 at the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco.

3. INVITED PARLIAMENTARIANS

This seminar is open to parliaments from Africa in order to benefit from their experiences (see list of invited countries)². Representatives of national human rights institutions, Moroccan and African civil society as well as international organizations present in Morocco are also invited to the seminar.

4. REGISTRATION

Invited parliaments are requested to complete and return the attached Registration Form **no later than 20 September 2014** to the following addresses:

		With copy to:
Mr. Abdelillah HMIDOUCHE Inter-ministerial delegation for human rights - Morocco (DIDH) Tel.: + 212 5 37 27 04 82 Mobile: + 212 6 612 57 11 e-mail: hmidouche@didh.gov.ma		Mr. Akiyo AFOUDA Inter-Parliamentary Union 5, Chemin du Pommier 1218 Grand-Saconnex Geneva (Switzerland) Tel.: + 41 22 919 41 23 Fax: + 41 22 919 41 60 e-mail: aa@ipu.org/postbox@ipu.org
Ms. Fatine AOUAB Tel.: + 212 5 37 27 04 80 Mobile: + 212 6 61 22 88 41 e-mail: aouab@didh.gov.ma		

5. LIST OF DELEGATES

A provisional list of delegates will be established based on the confirmations received by the IPU Secretariat by the end of July 2014. For technical reasons, it will not be possible to provide a revised list for the seminar. Nonetheless, a final list will be prepared and sent to participants together with the conclusions after the seminar. These documents will be available on the IPU website.

6. ORGANIZATION OF THE SEMINAR

The seminar will be held in plenary sessions. Each session consists of 10-minute presentations followed by a debate during which delegates can make brief comments, ask questions and/or make contributions. As the debates are informal, no list of speakers will be prepared in advance. A moderator will chair the debates and determine the order of presentations and questions according to the final programme of the seminar.

² Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

7. WORKING LANGUAGE

Arabic, English and French are the official languages of the seminar. Interpretation will be provided in these three languages.

8. MEALS

Meals and coffee breaks will be provided courtesy of the organizers at the premises in rooms designed for this purpose and in the vicinity of the meeting room.

9. HOTEL ACCOMMODATION AND RESERVATIONS

Each parliament is responsible for its delegation's accommodation.

In order to guarantee participants the availability of rooms and facilitate movement during the seminar, a blocked booking has been made at the Hotel La Tour Hassan Palace (see details below). Participants are requested to contact the hotel directly to confirm their reservations with copy to the IPU Secretariat and the Moroccan Inter-ministerial delegation for human rights, indicating the required number of rooms and the precise arrival and departure dates.

Hotel La Tour Hassan Palace

26 Rue Chellah B.P.14

Rabat, Morocco

Tel.: + 212 5 37 23 90 00

Fax: + 212 5 37 73 18 66

e-mail: reservation@latourhassan.com; a.ritab@latourhassan.com; n.zenati@latourhassan.com

10. ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE AND TRANSPORT

To ensure an efficient welcome service upon arrival, participants are kindly requested to indicate on the hotel reservation form their arrival and departure (date, time and flight number details).

A Welcome and Assistance Service will be made available to all participants at the airport upon arrival and departure. The Welcome Service will provide transfers to and from the airport and the Hotel La Tour Hassan Palace.

11. REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION DESK

A Registration and Information Desk will be available to participants at the Hotel La Tour Hassan Palace. It will be opened from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. as of 28 September 2014.

Participants are requested to register at this desk (family name, first name, title and e-mail) upon their arrival at the hotel. The Registration Desk will provide them with badges and all necessary information related to the seminar. Messages addressed to delegates will be transmitted via this Desk during the seminar.

12. MEDICAL FACILITIES

A 24h first aid medical service will be available at the venue to attend to any matter relating to the participants' health.

13. SECURITY

The national authorities will take all the necessary security measures to ensure the safety of the participants. Participants are therefore required to wear their identity badges at all times during the seminar as well as during official receptions.

14. WEATHER CONDITIONS

In September, the temperature varies between 26° and 28° C during the day and between 15° and 17° C during the night.

15. OTHER SERVICES AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Currency: The national currency in Morocco is the Dirham (US \$ 1 = 8.22 Moroccan Dirhams).
Transport: The city of Rabat is served by trams, buses and taxis.
Electricity: The voltage in Morocco is 220 V.

Useful Numbers

Inter-ministerial delegation for human rights	+ 212 5 37 27 04 04/05/06
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation	+ 212 5 37 76 11 25/23/ 24
National Human Rights Council	+ 212 5 37 72 22 07
House of Representatives	+ 212 5 37 67 96 03/04
House of Councillors	+ 212 5 37 20 47 03
Hotel La Tour Hassan Palace	+ 212 5 37 23 90 00

Emergency numbers:

Police	190
Fire brigade/Ambulance	150

16. VISAS

A valid passport is required to enter Morocco. To obtain visas or further information on customs regulations, delegation secretaries/participants are advised to contact the Embassy of Morocco in their respective countries.

17. FURTHER REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

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