



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations

13-14 February 2017
United Nations Headquarters
New York



***A World of Blue:
Preserving the oceans, safeguarding the planet, ensuring human well-being
in the context of the 2030 Agenda***

New York, 7 December 2016

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

As part of our joint action to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we have decided to devote the 2017 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations to SDG 14 on oceans, seas and marine resources. The Ocean demands our attention because its conservation and sustainable use has vast ramifications for economic, social and environmental policies both nationally and globally.

A World of Blue: Preserving the oceans, safeguarding the planet, ensuring human well-being in the context of the 2030 Agenda will contribute to the preparatory process. The Ocean Conference will be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017. Scheduled for 13 to 14 February, the 2017 Parliamentary Hearing takes place just before the first preparatory meeting for the UN Conference, to be held on 15 and 16 February in New York.

The Ocean is a vital ecosystem for humanity's sustainability. Millions of people depend on it for their livelihoods and for nutrition. Yet, the Ocean has never been more vulnerable than it is today. CO₂ emissions, the main driver of climate change, are causing ocean acidification that in turn impacts the entire marine habitat. Rising sea levels linked to climate change threaten the viability of low-lying island States, along with coastal areas such as food producing river deltas and waterfront cities. Increasing upstream pollution from fertilizers, plastics, and waste are threatening the marine ecosystem. Over-exploitation of fisheries is taking up two thirds of fish stocks to the point of collapse. As new opportunities for economic growth and development arise through the exploitation of the Ocean and its resources, the international community faces new environmental, political and legal challenges.

As a community of policy-makers, we are called upon to address these issues. Accordingly we will hear from leading experts in the field at the Parliamentary Hearing, and identify key recommendations to help restore the health of the Ocean. As you know, the SDGs are all interlinked. SDG 14 is closely connected to other goals such as climate change (SDG 13), sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12), hunger and food security (SDG 2), health risks linked to pollution, chemicals and other harmful materials (SDG 3), sustainable economic growth and employment (SDG 8), and of course governance and the rule of law (SDG 16).

When looked at from space, the Ocean makes our planet predominantly blue. Most countries have direct access to the sea and the *blue* economy is as important to people's livelihood and well-being as the *green* economy.

Kindly find enclosed a registration form and information note for the meeting. A preliminary draft programme will be ready in January. All information, including background documentation, will be posted on the IPU website at www.ipu.org.

We look forward to welcoming a delegation from your parliament at this important meeting. We are confident it will provide parliamentarians with the opportunity to strengthen their engagement with the implementation of SDG 14 and thereby the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Saber H. Chowdhury", written over a horizontal line.

Saber H. Chowdhury
President of the IPU

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Peter Thomson", written over a horizontal line.

Peter Thomson
President of the 71st United Nations
General Assembly