



**INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**  
**OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT OBSERVER TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Third Committee

Agenda item 72 (b, c, e):  
Promotion and protection of human rights

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Chairperson,

Allow me to begin by referring to the Handbook for Parliamentarians on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that was distributed to delegations this morning. As you will have seen, the Guide is the result of a cooperative effort between UN-DESA, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The IPU is keen to raise awareness of the new Convention among parliamentarians, in response to the discrimination and even abuse that many persons with disabilities continue to face all over the world. The Handbook aims at explaining the key provisions of the Convention, highlighting good practices and model legislation that may be of relevance to parliaments as they embark upon the ratification and implementation process. We hope that by making the Convention more easily accessible to parliamentarians, it will be possible to facilitate its early entry into force and, eventually, universal ratification by all parliaments.

The Handbook was launched at the 117<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly held in Geneva earlier this month. The initial six hundred copies made available to delegates were picked up from the conference room table in a matter of minutes, inspiring great interest from participating MPs. Additional copies are in the process of being sent out to the office of Speakers and of the relevant parliamentary committees. The publication will also soon be available in French, Spanish and Arabic, and several parliaments have already indicated their interest in having it translated into their national languages.

As I mentioned, in early October the IPU held its 117<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Geneva. On that occasion, member parliaments decided to devote special attention – through the IPU mechanism of a general debate and ensuing political resolution on an emergency item endorsed by members – to the issue of “The urgent need to immediately stop the widespread human rights violations and to restore the democratic rights of the people of Myanmar”. For several years now, the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians has been examining the situation of the members of parliament elected in 1990 but never allowed to exercise their mandate. Of particular concern was not only the continuing detention of 13 parliamentarians-elect who saw their imprisonment continuously prolonged although they had already served their sentences, but also the refusal of the military junta to honour the results of the 1990 elections and its efforts to entrench military rule through a handpicked National Convention.

Through this resolution, parliaments from around the world strongly deplored the brutal repression of peaceful demonstrations of monks and civilians in Myanmar, in violation of the most basic human rights of ordinary citizens, notably their right to life and to freedom of opinion peacefully expressed. They called for the immediate and unconditional release of the jailed parliamentarians-elect, of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD), as well as of all political prisoners, monks and ethnic leaders struggling for democratization,

political reform and respect for human rights in the country. And they pledged their firm commitment to the promotion and protection of the fundamental human rights of the people of Myanmar as an expression of solidarity with their sacrifice and struggle against tyranny.

As a third point, Chairperson, I would like to refer briefly to the core mission of the IPU, that of working to strengthen the institution of parliament, in such a way that it is effective, open, accessible, representative and accountable. A key component here is the promotion and protection of human rights. For the IPU, parliament is a guardian of human rights and should have the adequate capacities to fulfil this role. To this effect, the Organization has been promoting the establishment of select committees in parliament that could work on human rights questions. Apart from gathering data on such committees and establishing a database, the IPU has been organizing yearly seminars for members of parliamentary human rights committees on topical issues. The latest seminar took place last week, was organised in cooperation with the International Labour Organization and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, and was dedicated to the issue of migration and human rights.

Indeed, migration is a phenomenon that today affects all countries in the world, be they countries of origin, transit or destination. Migration is usually seen from a purely economic or development perspective and only rarely through the prism of human rights. However, migration brings to the fore not only civil and political rights, but also a number of economic and social rights. It is gaining in importance, if we are to judge – for example – by the fact that the vast majority of election campaigns, at least in receiving countries, deal with questions, and often fears, related to migrants and to migration.

In his report summing up the deliberations of the seminar, Jeremy Corbin, an MP from the United Kingdom, stressed that parliamentarians must speak more clearly and publicly on the important contribution of migrants to growth and prosperity, and must confront fellow parliamentarians when they appeal to emotional negative stereotyping of the immigrant for political gain. Parliamentarians must use their powers to ensure that the rights of migrants are fully respected and that their States ratify relevant international conventions, in particular the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families. The seminar appealed to members of parliament to resist divisive policies and to use their powers to promote diverse and cohesive societies. The IPU will maintain the question of migration on its agenda, since it will be one of the main issues to be reported on and discussed during the 118<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Cape Town early next year.

Thank you.