



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Public launch of the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

Geneva, 21 November 2023

I am pleased to officially present to you the new Indicators for Democratic Parliaments, which have been published by the IPU and partner organizations, and which are available in English, French and Spanish at the web site www.parliamentaryindicators.org.

The publication of the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments represents a significant milestone for the parliamentary community. The Indicators are a multi-partner initiative convened by the IPU. They have been prepared over a period of four years, with input from people in more than 50 parliaments. We have worked hand-in-hand with our partners at the CPA, UNDP, UN Women, Directorio Legislativo, Inter Pares, NDI and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy to develop these Indicators.

The core purpose of the Indicators is to support parliamentary learning and development. They offer a framework for assessing parliamentary capacity and practice.

The central philosophy of the Indicators is self-assessment. We are not in the business of external judgements about the quality of this or that parliament. We provide you with the tools so that you can assess your own parliaments, to identify the strengths and weaknesses, and to generate ideas for where you want to further develop your parliament.

Let me say a few words about why we have created these indicators.

Parliament is the central institution of a democracy. It has a unique mandate to represent the people, to pass laws, to adopt the budget and to hold the government to account. The decisions taken by parliament shape the future of society and of our planet.

The way in which parliaments carry out their functions is therefore of the utmost importance. As public expectations evolve, parliaments are challenged to be ever more effective, accountable and transparent. People want and need decision-making processes to be inclusive, responsive, participatory and representative.

These are the conditions for governance in the interests of the many, not the few. Parliaments that embody these democratic principles – as set out in the internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – will be better equipped to take decisive action to fight poverty, to reduce inequalities, to ensure gender equality, to preserve the health of the planet and, indeed, to effect positive change in all areas of human endeavour.

So if we agree that being effective, being transparent, and so on, is important for institutions, including parliaments, then the question is “how effective is my parliament?” “How transparent?”

This set of indicators provides the questions to ask. It sets out all of the different dimensions of effectiveness, and the criteria that you would look to fulfil. By measuring current capacity and practice, parliament is able to formulate plans for future institutional development and track progress towards its goals.

The publication of the Indicators is an important step, certainly. But it is only a first step. The important thing is what you, parliaments, do with them. It is, as they say, in your hands.

For parliaments that want to become stronger, for parliaments that have set ambitious objectives to be more transparent, or more participatory, or simply to continue to improve, the Indicators are a tool that can help you to achieve these goals.

We at the IPU, and all of the partner organizations, are ready to support you in your efforts to develop strong, democratic parliaments.

Thank you.