



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# 139<sup>th</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

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## Interim report of the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU since the 202<sup>nd</sup> session of the Governing Council

### Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017–2021

*This report is an overview of activities undertaken since March 2018 to implement the IPU Strategy. It focuses in particular on initiatives that provide support to parliaments in building their capacity, strengthening their work at the national level and delivering on national objectives. It also provides a list of activities planned for the next six months and a checklist of actions that IPU Members are invited to consider taking.*

### Objective 1: Build strong, democratic parliaments

#### **Standards setting and knowledge generation**

##### **1. Overview of activities**

The New Parline database on national parliaments was publicly launched on 15 September 2018 on the occasion of the International Day of Democracy (<https://data.ipu.org>). This major redesign of the IPU's Parline database provides authoritative data on the composition, structure and working methods of every national parliament in the world. The New Parline integrates for the first time IPU data on women and youth in parliament, and provides a series of tools for users to view, compare and export data on parliaments. Web analytics will provide the IPU with a fresh insight into who is using New Parline and how, so that the IPU can continue to improve services to users. New Parline relies on close cooperation with IPU Members who regularly provide, update and review data on their parliament.

Since the launch of the 2017 *Global Parliamentary Report* on parliamentary oversight, the IPU has continued to support parliaments that wish to review and strengthen their oversight performance. A Serbian-language version of the Report was presented at the Serbian National Assembly in May. The IPU is also working with the parliaments of Benin and Zambia to use a new IPU self-assessment tool to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in oversight before the end of the year. The theme for the International Day of Democracy 2018 also focused on parliamentary oversight, offering another avenue to disseminate information and good practice as identified in the *Global Parliamentary Report*.

Work on the 2018 *World e-Parliament Report* was pursued. Data from 114 parliamentary chambers in 85 countries was collected and a survey of 168 parliamentarians about their use of digital tools carried out.

Lessons from the Report also inform the development of the Centre for Innovation in Parliament. Intended to become a platform for inter-parliamentary cooperation for more effective use of technology, 10 parliaments are already in contact with the IPU to explore the creation of parliamentary hubs within the Centre, as a basis for sharing information, building capacity and developing new guidelines for parliaments. A preliminary meeting of seven parliaments on the Centre's Steering Committee was hosted by the European Parliament in June, and set the direction for the Centre's development in the months leading up to the World e-Parliament Conference.

The IPU has been working with UNDP to develop a methodology for gathering data for Sustainable Development Goal 16.7.1, on the representativeness of parliaments and other public institutions. This methodology is being tested with a pilot group of parliaments, prior to being submitted for formal inclusion in the SDGs monitoring process. It is a further step in the IPU's efforts to develop indicators for democratic parliaments, based on the standards, guidelines and good practices developed by the organization over the years.

## **2. Future activities**

- The New Parline database will be actively promoted; feedback from users in parliaments and the research community will be gathered and baseline figures established for use of the database.
- A self-assessment tool on parliamentary oversight will be produced, and used with parliaments that wish to evaluate and improve their oversight performance.
- The World e-Parliament Conference will be held from 3 to 5 December 2018; the *World e-Parliament Report* and the Centre for Innovation in Parliament will be launched on that occasion.
- A collaborative process to design indicators for democratic parliaments will be initiated.

## **3. Next steps for IPU Members**

- Review data on their parliament in the New Parline database; provide feedback and updates.
- Consider disseminating information on New Parline in parliament; organize a formal presentation; inform partners, etc.
- Consider participation in the World e-Parliament Conference and the Centre for Innovation in Parliament.
- Consider carrying out self-assessments, including of their oversight performance.

## ***Build institutional capacity***

### **1. Overview of activities**

The IPU technical cooperation programme continues to implement the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments. Application of the Principles across the IPU's work has steadily increased. A second expert roundtable took place in March 2018 that resulted in an agreement to produce a user-friendly guide to enhance parliamentary self-development.

Since March 2018, the IPU Technical Cooperation Programme has supported the national Parliaments of Benin, Djibouti, Egypt, Georgia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Zambia.

- In Benin, preparations continue for an upcoming workshop on oversight and an administrative audit.
- In Djibouti, support to the Parliament in designing its strategic plan continued. The IPU organized a mission composed of women members of parliament to attend a congress of caucuses of women parliamentarians, in view of ongoing work in Djibouti to establish a similar structure.
- In Egypt, the IPU supported the organization of seven training seminars for members of parliaments on various themes ranging from the role of women in parliament to parliamentary diplomacy and conflict of interest and anti-corruption. Overall, the seminars benefitted 162 members of parliament.
- In Georgia, support was provided to the country's Parliament to develop a strategic plan for its Committee on External Relations and to evaluate its performance and stimulate parliamentary reform and modernization.

- In Myanmar, the joint UNDP–IPU Parliamentary Support Programme has continued to develop the IT skills of members of parliament and staff and has made progress on establishing an intranet to help them use technology to enhance the institution's work.
- In Pakistan, the IPU and the Senate of Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in June 2018. A study visit was organized for three staff of the Secretariat of the Senate, including the Secretary General, to the House of Representatives of Japan (September 2018).
- In Timor-Leste, the IPU and the National Parliament of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste signed an MoU in March 2018, and a national conference on democracy was organized with IPU support (September 2018).
- In Tuvalu, the IPU provided support to the country's Parliament to design an ICT strategic plan and related action-plan.
- In Vanuatu, further to the assessment of the Parliament's capacity needs earlier this year, a project document is now being developed. Training of an IT officer is ongoing through his participation in the Tuvalu ICT strategic planning exercise.
- In Zambia the IPU supported a National Assembly seminar in June 2018 on the role of the opposition in parliament. Preparations are now underway for the IPU to support the National Assembly in carrying out a self-assessment of its oversight capacity and performance in 2018.

## 2. Future activities

- Current projects listed above will continue, and the IPU will respond to new requests received from national parliaments. For example in Chad, preparations have begun for an activity on legislative drafting.
- User-friendly tools (e.g. guidelines to evaluate parliamentary support based on the Common Principles) will be designed so that parliaments and partners can easily apply the Common Principles.

## 3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Encourage parliaments that have not yet done so to endorse the Common Principles and integrate them in their work. (See [Annex II](#) for a map of parliaments that have endorsed the principles.)
- Linked to the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments, ensure contribution to the development of a guide that would serve as a reference tool for parliaments and their partners to help increase parliament's proactive engagement in self-development

## Objective 2: Advance gender equality and respect for women's rights

### 1. Overview of activities

The 12<sup>th</sup> Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament on the theme *Working so every voice counts* was held in Cochabamba (Plurinational State of Bolivia), in April 2018, in cooperation with the Bolivian Chamber of Deputies. Six women Speakers and 50 Members of Parliament from 14 countries attended the meeting. The Cochabamba Declaration re-affirms the link between women's equal participation in politics and more prosperous, peaceful and inclusive societies. It calls for greater efforts to achieve gender parity in politics and for parliaments to adopt and implement specific legislation to combat violence against women in politics. Bolivia's good practices in these areas informed the debates.

The IPU continued to disseminate research work on sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians. The 2016 IPU Issues Brief on this topic was recognized by the UN system (UN Women, CEDAW Committee, UN Special Rapporteur on VAW, etc.) and academic researchers as the main global reference and statistics available on this topic. Since March 2018, the study has been presented and discussed at the following meetings:

- The Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament in Bolivia;
- The conference on violence against women in politics organized by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy in London;
- The National Democratic Institute #NotTheCost Forum in Washington, D.C.; and
- The OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Countering Violence against Women in Vienna.

From January to June 2018, the IPU and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) jointly prepared the *Regional study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe*. It is the first in a series of regional studies that the IPU plans to conduct on the subject. The study broadens the scope of research by including harassment of and violence against female parliamentary staff.

The IPU contributed to the Expert Group Meeting on Violence against Women in Politics organized by UN Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, in collaboration with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). On a related note, the IPU also contributed to the work of the ILO Standard-Setting Committee on violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work. The work of this Committee will feed into ILO-led efforts to develop an international convention on violence in the world of work.

In June 2018, the IPU facilitated a self-assessment exercise in the Parliament of Georgia with USAID and UNDP. It focused on the core parliamentary functions and gender equality based on the IPU toolkit *Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments*. Priorities were identified for future reform, including measures to increase the number of women members of parliament and to tackle sexism and harassment. The conclusions of the exercise will also inform the design of the Parliament's strategy and plan of action.

The IPU continued to provide support to the development of parliamentary caucuses of women members of parliament. It participated in the first International Congress of Women's Parliamentary Caucuses held in Ireland in September 2018. Based on its *Guidelines for Women's Parliamentary Caucuses* and its experience in supporting the establishment and proper functioning of women's parliamentary caucuses, the IPU facilitated a workshop session on how to enhance the impact of caucuses.

The IPU has furthermore provided support to the Network of Women Parliamentarians of Mauritania (REFPAM) to combat violence against women and mainstream gender in the Parliament's work. In August 2018, in preparation for the legislative elections scheduled for September, the IPU and REFPAM organized a series of travelling conferences in the regions of Aioun, Kiffa, Aleg, Rosso, Zoueratt and Nouakchott west and north, to promote the participation of women in the elections and empower women aspirants to elected office. These Conferences were attended by leaders, political parties and members of civil society at the local and national levels. Through the conferences, participants gained a better understanding of the benefits of having a more balanced representation of women in parliament and in administrative divisions (*wilayas*).

The IPU has continued to promote the role of parliaments in implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). IPU Member Parliaments have been regularly informed and invited to contribute to their country review by the UN CEDAW Committee.

## **2. Future activities**

- Workshop on implementation of CEDAW in the margins of the October 2018 Assembly, in collaboration with the CEDAW Committee.
- Support to a gender self-assessment in the UK Parliament (October 2018).
- National seminars and training workshops on gender equality and CEDAW implementation in Kenya, Mali, Namibia, Turkey, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania (November 2018).
- Training workshop for women members of parliament in Turkey (November 2018).
- Gathering of parliamentary good practices in addressing sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff (October-November 2018).
- Launch of the IPU *Report on Women in Parliament* (8 March 2019).
- National Conference on women's participation in Oman (March 2019).
- Parliamentary Meeting and side events on the occasion of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (March 2019).

### 3. Next Steps for IPU members

- Consider carrying out gender-sensitive parliament self-assessments (see [www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/gender-toolkit-e.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/gender-toolkit-e.pdf)).
- Share data and information on women in parliament after elections and whenever a change occurs in their membership.
- Share with the IPU Secretariat good practices developed in parliament to address sexism, harassment and gender-based violence.
- Support parliamentary involvement in the CEDAW reporting process. Reports from more than 20 countries will be reviewed during the October 2018 and March 2019 sessions (see [Annex II](#)).

## Objective 3: Protect and promote human rights

### 1. Overview of activities

The IPU has provided significant inputs to the report on parliaments' contributions to the work of the Human Rights Council released in early June by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

In the context of the launch of this report, on 28 June, the IPU, together with OHCHR, organized a one-day meeting at IPU Headquarters to identify good practices that parliamentary human rights committees developed to promote and protect human rights. With the participation of a dozen members of parliament from such committees, the meeting was a valuable opportunity to exchange national and personal experiences. It showed that parliamentary human rights committees could make a real difference when it came to ensuring better respect for human rights. For instance, in Burkina Faso, the death penalty had been abolished in 2017 following pressure from its parliamentary human rights committee. In a similar vein, in Ecuador, the committee had helped pass legislation against gender-based violence. In the United Kingdom, the committee's public report on two cases of wrongful detention of people who had moved to the United Kingdom from the Commonwealth before 1973, the so-called "Windrush Generation", had ultimately led to the resignation of the Home Secretary.

On 28 June, the IPU and OHCHR along with the diplomatic representatives of countries supporting greater focus on parliaments in the Human Rights Council, organized a lunch-time panel discussion at UNOG to showcase good parliamentary practices on human rights and the rule of law and to advocate to the human rights community in Geneva the benefits of closer cooperation with parliaments.

During the period under review, the IPU systematically informed the parliaments of countries that were due to be or had just been examined under the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of the steps they could take to contribute to the Council's assessment of their countries' situation and to the implementation of its recommendations for action. The IPU also continued to encourage parliaments to engage similarly with the UN Human Rights Committee, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

In recent months, work has been undertaken to overhaul the Parline module on parliamentary human rights committees and to seek updated information from parliaments on the existence and functioning of these committees. Information collected will be presented in the New Parline (see Objective 1)

The handbook entitled *Freedom of expression for parliaments and their members: Importance and scope of protection* has been finalized in English and French. It will be launched at the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. In light of continuous demand, the joint IPU-OHCHR *Human rights handbook for parliamentarians* and the IPU-OHCHR-ILO handbook for parliamentarians titled *Migration, human rights and governance* were reprinted and disseminated.

The third African Parliamentary Conference on Migration on *Promoting safe, orderly and regular migration: Which role for the Parliament* was held on 4 and 5 September 2018 in Niamey (Niger). The Conference was organized by the African Parliamentary Union (APU) with the contribution of the IPU and the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Priority areas of work for parliaments were identified, including building regional synergies and cooperation with external partners, and regular monitoring of migration-related developments.

Preparations were initiated with the Moroccan parliamentary authorities to organize a parliamentary meeting in Morocco on the occasion of the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration which will be held in Marrakech in December 2018.

The IPU has cooperated extensively with the OHCHR to organize the second session of the UN Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, which will be held in Geneva on 22 and 23 November 2018 and will focus exclusively on the role of parliaments.

Throughout the period under review, the IPU Secretariat followed up on recent decisions of the IPU Governing Council on individual human rights cases, monitored and responded to ongoing developments in existing cases and took action in response to new complaints submitted to the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. These new complaints concerned members of parliament from the following countries: Israel, Russian Federation (with regard to alleged violations committed by the US authorities), Uganda and Venezuela. Trial observation missions were undertaken or are planned for cases in the Philippines, Turkey and Uganda. During the period under review, the IPU spoke out publicly about worrying developments in cases in Venezuela. A planned human rights mission to Turkey was postponed after snap elections were announced soon after the end of the 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. An urgent mission to Venezuela is still awaiting official approval from the Venezuelan Government. Significant developments and/or new allegations were submitted in cases in countries including Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Turkey and Venezuela. An IPU expert travelled to Kuala Lumpur at the end of September to advise members of the Malaysian Parliament about possible review of existing legislation, including the Sedition Act, so as to ensure its conformity with existing freedom of expression standards.

## **2. Future activities**

- Follow up on the 157<sup>th</sup> session (October 2018) of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, including on the organization of missions and trial observations, and prepare for the 158<sup>th</sup> session (January 2019), which will entail a review of all cases on file.
- Collection, analysis and launch of statistics on the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians on International Human Rights Day, 10 December.
- Co-organization of the second session of the UN Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law.
- Co-organization of a parliamentary meeting on migration in Morocco.
- Co-organization of a regional seminar in Abuja (Nigeria) in November 2018 on the contribution of parliament to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, organized together with the ECOWAS Parliament and the International Labour Organization (ILO).
- Promotion and dissemination of the new handbook on freedom of expression.

## **3. Next steps for IPU Members**

- Follow up on cases of alleged human rights violations of parliamentarians currently under consideration by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and inform the IPU Secretariat of any such follow-up action. (A list of countries with cases under examination is contained in [Annex II](#)).
- Give visibility to International Human Rights Day—10 December— by speaking out in support of parliamentarians at risk and by making full use of the global map and the analysis with Committee statistics released on that day as well as other, already existing, visual and information tools to raise awareness in parliament about the work of the Committee and the ideals it seeks to defend (see [www.youtube.com/user/iparliamentaryunion](http://www.youtube.com/user/iparliamentaryunion)).
- Support parliamentary involvement in and follow-up of the next sessions of the UN Human Rights Council, UN Human Rights Committee, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- Disseminate and make use of the handbook for members of parliament on freedom of expression.
- Mobilize the participation of parliamentarians who have relevant expertise and hold relevant functions in parliament in human rights events that the IPU co-organizes.

## Objective 4: Contribute to peace building, conflict prevention and security

### 1. Overview of activities

The IPU participated actively in the High-Level Meeting (HLM) of the United Nations General Assembly on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, which took place from 24 to 26 April 2018 in New York, where it highlighted the role of parliament in peacebuilding and promoted the resolution on *Sustaining peace as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development* adopted unanimously at the 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

The IPU has been in close contact with the 1540 Committee and its group of experts to prepare a project for the organization of a regional event (Latin America or Asia Pacific) on UN Security Council resolution 1540 and has been approached by The Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) and Stimson Center to participate in a project on Legislative Implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and related provisions of UN Security Council resolution 1540 in Africa.

The IPU Secretary General travelled to Burundi from 30 July to 3 August to hold political consultations with the parliamentary authorities, government officers and the Head of State regarding the situation in the country (see separate note on this mission).

The IPU organized the second meeting of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, where the budget and the activities of the joint programme of work were approved. Following this event, the IPU and UNODC engaged in consultations with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) in order to formalize a trilateral agreement. The MoU will be presented to the governing bodies at the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly for approval. In addition, work has started on drafting the first parliamentary report on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism, which will be launched at the First Global Parliamentary Summit scheduled for 2019.

### 2. Future activities

- Special session on comprehensive disarmament to be convened with institutional partners on the occasion of the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly.
- Regional seminar on UN Security Council resolution 1540 (on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors).
- Participation in the 2018 Geneva Peace week with the organization of two events (November 2018).
- Regional capacity-building workshops on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism.
- First Global Parliamentary Summit on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism organized in cooperation with the United Nations.

### 3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Monitor political developments regionally and build parliamentary solidarity at the regional level.
- Consider signing and ratifying the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

## Objective 5: Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation

### 1. Overview of activities

The 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly was attended by 1,526 participants from 148 Member Parliaments and 38 partner organizations. It adopted an outcome document on *Strengthening the global regime for migrants and refugees: The need for evidence-based policy solutions* and three resolutions: (1) *Sustaining peace as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development*, (2) *Engaging the private sector in implementing the SDGs, especially on renewable energy*, and (3) *The consequences of the US declaration on Jerusalem and the rights of the Palestinian people in Jerusalem in the light of the UN Charter and resolutions*. The Governing Council also adopted decisions on the human rights situation of 236 parliamentarians from eight countries.

The Assembly featured special events, such as:

- An interactive debate at the opening of the General Debate with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the High Commissioner for Refugees and the Director General of the International Organization for Migration. The theme of the General Debate was complemented by an exhibit featuring a refugee tent and photos depicting migration and climate change.
- The launch of the IPU-UNHCR handbook entitled *A guide to international refugee protection and building state asylum systems*.
- Workshops on refugee protection and state asylum systems and on the implementation of the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty.
- A special segment on the dangers of weapons of mass destruction, with the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Chair of the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.
- An interactive debate with the Director General of the World Health Organization.

In addition to the formal programme of the Assembly, many delegations held bilateral meetings and engaged in other forms of parliamentary diplomacy. Over 160 bilateral meeting room requests from 55 Member Parliaments and another five partner organizations were registered by the IPU Secretariat.

The IPU President and Secretary General also held over 50 bilateral meetings with participating delegations. Efforts were made to promote political dialogue in the context of the very tense situations in countries such as Cambodia, Venezuela and Yemen. In the context of the ongoing efforts to facilitate the inter-Korean dialogue at parliamentary level, a direct meeting between the delegations of Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea was held at the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

In the context of the Assembly, the Executive Committee and the Geopolitical Groups considered modalities to further enhance the work of the IPU, including through amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules. A major decision was taken to formally encourage the inclusion of young members of parliament on national delegations and to devote a special segment in the General Debate exclusively for young parliamentarians.

The IPU governing bodies decided to implement a new modality for reporting by Members on follow-up to IPU resolutions and other decisions, based on a new rotational (and more predictable) system. In all, 67 per cent of the designated Members for the 2018 reporting exercise had carried out their statutory responsibilities within the deadline of 31 July (31 of the 46 selected parliaments, in addition to 15 voluntary responses).

The IPU Secretary General pursued outreach efforts to parliaments and undertook visits to Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Turkmenistan and the United Kingdom. The visits were aimed at strengthening ties with parliaments and building cooperation, especially with the more recent IPU Members. Two IPU Directors also visited the Republic of Korea at the invitation of the Korea Institute with a view to strengthening institutional ties and fostering exchange and cooperation.

The Secretariat continued to engage with parliaments and Permanent Missions to the United Nations of non-Members, including Jamaica and Liberia, in light of possible future affiliation to the IPU. The Speaker of Parliament of Kiribati announced he would attend the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly with a view to developing closer cooperation with the IPU.

## **2. Future activities**

- Organization of 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, with a General Debate focusing on *Parliamentary leadership in promoting peace and development in the age of innovation and technological change*.
  - The Assembly will include a number of special events, including workshops and panel discussions on: (1) *Building bridges between parliamentary and scientific communities*, (2) *Sorting fact from fiction in the age of fake news*, (3) *The role of parliaments in combating terrorism and violent extremism*, (4) *Ensuring that children enjoy their rights and grow up protected from violence*, and (5) *How good is parliament at holding government to account*.
  - The 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly will also feature the launch of the IPU-PACE regional study *Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe*, as well as a new Handbook for parliamentarians on freedom of expression. A special event will be held in plenary to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Mandela centennial.



- Further efforts to reach out to Members and Geopolitical Groups with a view to increasing the response rate to the annual reporting exercise.
- Preparations for the Regional Seminar on the SDGs for CARICOM Parliaments (hosted by the Parliament of Suriname from 5 to 6 November) which, among other things, aims to enhance dialogue and cooperation with the non-Member Parliaments of the Caribbean region (with a view to future IPU membership).

### 3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Follow up on resolutions and other decisions to be adopted at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly.
- Include violations of the human rights of parliamentarians in talking points during official visits to the countries concerned.
- Prepare country reports in due time—the countries concerned for the 2019 reporting exercise (with a deadline of 31 July 2019) are the following:

**African Group** - Burundi, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho.

**Arab Group** - Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman.

**Asia-Pacific Group** - Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands.

**Eurasia Group** - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan.

**Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC)** - Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras.

**Twelve Plus Group** - Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania.

## Objective 6: Promote youth empowerment

### 1. Overview of activities

The IPU marked International Youth Day (12 August), by organizing an interactive Twitter Chat with iKNOW Politics ([iknowpolitics.org](http://iknowpolitics.org)) which took place on 10 August 2018. Participants included parliamentarians, experts, activists, and the general public. The Twitter Chat gathered feedback and generated buzz on a series of questions related to youth and young women's participation in politics. The hashtag #YouthinPolitics was used 26 times; Tweets were seen by 16.3K people.

The IPU continued to collect data and information from its Member Parliaments on the state of representation of young men and women in parliaments. The data collected will inform the IPU Report on Youth Participation in National Parliaments to be launched in 2018.

### 2. Future activities

- Initiate a consultative process to identify a target for youth participation (Forum of Young Parliamentarians at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly).
- Organization of the fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians.
- Launch of the IPU *Report on youth participation in national parliaments*.

### 3. Next steps for IPU Members

- Join and promote the *Not Too Young To Run* campaign, including on social media (#NotTooYoungToRun).
- Share data and information with the IPU Secretariat on youth in parliament after elections.

## Objective 7: Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda

### 1. Overview of activities

- Four regional meetings were organized in relation to SDGs, in Belgrade (Serbia) in May 2018; in Colombo (Sri Lanka) in July 2018; in Alexandria (Egypt) in September; and in Panama City (Panama), also in September 2018. Outcome documents were adopted at the close of each seminar, mapping out priority action points for parliaments and enhancing regional synergies among parliaments. The interregional seminar on the SDGs was hosted by the National People's Congress of China in September 2018, bringing together for the third time parliaments from developing countries to discuss cooperation on the SDGs.

- The IPU, UNDP and USAID jointly supported a national SDGs self-assessment exercise in Tbilisi (Georgia) in June 2018, which resulted in Parliament identifying priorities and drafting a strategic parliamentary action plan on the SDGs; it also enhanced national parliamentary ownership of SDG implementation.
- The IPU organized multiple activities during the 2018 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). A side event for parliamentarians took place as well as a workshop on the IPU/UNDP SDG Self-Assessment Toolkit. In lead up to the HLPF, the IPU carried out a survey on parliamentary contribution to the preparation of Voluntary National Reports (VNRs). The results showed that only 15 out of 47 parliaments surveyed had provided some input or contribution to the VNRs.
- The survey "Institutionalization of the SDGs in the work of parliaments" was launched and shared with all parliaments. The results will help the IPU document and publicize the ways in which parliaments organize their work around the goals, understand the patterns and share good practices. The data and an analysis of the responses will be published online and shared with parliaments and relevant stakeholders.
- In the area of health, work continued with WHO to publish a review of child, early and forced marriage legislation in Africa. The review will include profiles for different countries and the publication is expected towards the end of the year. Work has also been initiated on a new handbook for parliamentarians on nutrition and food security in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization, SUN movement and NEPAD. A new Cooperation and Funding Agreement was signed with the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, setting priorities for engagement in this area for 2019.
- In the area of climate change an MoU was signed with UN Environment. In the implementation of this agreement, four parliaments were selected to participate in a pilot project to build capacity of parliamentarians to engage on climate change issues. Emphasis is placed on national implementation of the Paris Agreement through Nationally Determined Contributions and required legislation. The IPU and UN Environment are also finalizing a background paper for parliamentarians on the green economy.
- The IPU continued to focus on development cooperation as a key enabler of sustainable development. As the representative of parliaments on the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, the IPU participated in the event on "Reinvigorating effectiveness for the 2030 Agenda" in September. The meeting discussed the 2018 Global Monitoring Exercise, which tracks progress on the implementation of development cooperation principles and commitments at the country, regional and global levels. This exercise is based on 10 leading indicators, including at least four that directly relate to the role of parliament.

## **2. Future activities**

- IPU Workshop on financing the SDGs in the context of the World Investment Forum (WIF), 22-24 October 2018.
- SDG self-assessment in Namibia and in Sri Lanka (12-14 October 2018).
- Four regional seminars on SDGs:
  - Regional seminar on Achieving the SDGs for the Parliaments of IPA-CIS, 18 October 2018, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation
  - Regional Seminar on Achieving the SDGs for the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group and East Asia Parliaments, 20-22 November 2018, Jerusalem, Israel
  - Second Regional Seminar on Achieving the SDGs for the Parliaments in the Asia-Pacific Region, 2019, Ulaabaatar, Mongolia
  - Second Regional Seminar on Achieving the SDGs for African Parliaments, 2019, Côte d'Ivoire.
- Parliamentary Meeting at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP24), 9 December 2018, Poland.
- Production of a handbook on women's, children's and adolescents' health (with PMNCH).
- Production of a handbook on nutrition and food security (with FAO).

## **3. Next steps for IPU Members**

- Consider undertaking SDGs self-assessment using the IPU-UNDP toolkit.
- Mainstream the SDGs into the work of parliament with regular inclusive debates on national implementation.

- Ensure parliamentary involvement (including of the opposition) in the elaboration of a strategic action plan for achieving the SDGs.
- Take part in the IPU's SDG survey to share good practices and contribute to mutual learning.
- Participate in the IPU's seminars and workshops on the SDGs, climate change and health.
- Ascertain if their government has pledged to present a VNR to the 2019 HLPF.

### **Objective 8: Bridge the democracy gap in international relations**

The checklist on cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations (joint activities over the past six months) can be found in [Annex I](#).

#### **Future activities:**

- Parliamentary Workshop and events in the context of the UNCTAD World Investment Forum (Geneva, 22-24 October 2018)
- UN Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (Geneva, 22-23 November 2018)
- Annual Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO (Geneva, 6-7 December 2018)
- Parliamentary Meeting at UN Climate Change Conference (COP24) (Poland, 9 December 2018)
- Parliamentary Meeting at the Global Compact on Migration (Marrakesh, December 2018)
- Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations (New York, February 2019)
- Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the Annual session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (New York, March 2019).

## Cooperation with the United Nations system

*This document provides a brief checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system from 15 March to 15 September 2018.*

Building on the biennial Report of the UN Secretary-General, on 22 May the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a new and comprehensive resolution on *Interaction between the UN, national parliaments and the IPU* - [www.ipu.org/sites/default/files/documents/72-278-e.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/sites/default/files/documents/72-278-e.pdf). UNGA President, Mr. Lajcak, chaired the meeting, which was also addressed by a number of UN Member States and by the IPU President. The resolution came to fruition after a number of inter-governmental consultations in New York led by Ambassador Camacho of Mexico. The resolution is substantive and forward looking, and identifies modalities of interaction and cooperation in a variety of areas. Among other things, it establishes a new International Day of Parliamentarism, calls for closer and more systematic engagement between the UN Country Teams and national parliaments, and reiterates the need for IPU and the UN to work together with parliaments in the implementation of the SDGs.

### Democracy and human rights

The IPU continued to contribute to the UN processes for a Global Compact for Migration and another on Refugees that will be adopted this year. Following the Declaration on migrants and refugees adopted by the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly on 28 March, the IPU advocated incorporating language on parliaments in the texts being negotiated in New York (migration) and in Geneva (refugees). This resulted in several acknowledgements of the role of parliaments in both documents.

On 17 May, the Human Rights Council issued a comprehensive report entitled the *Contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review*. The report draws from responses to a questionnaire for parliaments sent by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to Member States, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders. It contains recommendations regarding the setting up of a parliamentary human rights committee and the strengthening of engagement with the international human rights mechanisms, especially the universal periodic review.

In addition to helping engage parliaments in the Universal Periodic Review during the HRC annual session (18 June – 6 July), the IPU organized a workshop and a side event during the session to highlight concrete experiences of parliamentarians to protect and promote human rights.

On 23 May, the UN General Assembly designated 30 June as the International Day of Parliamentarism. This date commemorates the first ever meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1889. At the IPU's suggestion, a number of parliaments were already able to organize events to celebrate the first International Day of Parliamentarism on 30 June 2018, and the IPU will continue to work with the UN to reinforce efforts to promote this Day in the future.

The IPU also pursued its regular efforts to engage parliaments to celebrate the International Day of Democracy on 15 September. In 2018, the IPU proposed, as an overall theme, that of "oversight" – a core function of parliaments and a vital part of the checks and balances of any healthy democracy.

On 18 September, the IPU contributed to a side event convened by the Permanent Mission of Ecuador in the context of the 39<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council, which focused on "the impact of corruption in the full enjoyment of human rights at all levels". This provided an opportunity to share with the broader UN community in Geneva the main findings of the recent IPU-UNDP Global Parliamentary Report on Oversight.

UNDP and the IPU continued their project of assistance to the Parliament of Myanmar. The two organizations also continued their collaboration in support of the parliaments of Djibouti, Georgia, and Vanuatu.

The IPU and UNDP also continued cooperation to develop a methodology for Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.7.1, which measures the proportions of positions (by age group, sex, persons with disabilities, and population groups) in public institutions, compared to national distributions. The IPU and UNDP have drafted metadata for this indicator and initiated a pilot test in August with selected parliaments. If the pilot is successful, the next step is to submit the methodology for approval to the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs).

IPU and UNDP continued their efforts to disseminate the 2017 *Global Parliamentary Report* on parliamentary oversight. These include the presentation of a Serbian-language version of the Report, prepared by UNDP's office in Serbia, at a regional seminar on the SDGs held in Belgrade on 24-25 May.

### **Gender equality**

The IPU pursued its collaboration with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) to promote the role of parliaments in advancing implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The IPU Member Parliaments have been regularly informed and invited to contribute to their State review by the CEDAW Committee. The IPU communicated the recommendations of these reviews to the parliaments of the countries under review for them to take them into account in their work. The IPU's work in this area has also consisted of ensuring that the CEDAW Committee understands the key role of parliament in implementation of CEDAW and has access to IPU's data on women in politics, and increasingly stresses both issues during their dialogue with States.

IPU, in collaboration with USAID and UNDP, supported the Parliament of Georgia in carrying out a gender self-assessment in June 2018 based on the IPU's *Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments: A self-assessment toolkit*. The exercise brought together men and women, members of parliament and staff. Priorities were identified for future reform, including measures to increase the number of women members of parliament and to tackle sexism and harassment. The conclusions of the exercise will also inform the development of the parliament's strategy and plan of action.

Representatives from UN Women and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) took part in the 12<sup>th</sup> Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, which was held in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in April 2018, and co-hosted by the IPU and the Bolivian Chamber of Deputies. The Summit focused on the theme *Working so every voice counts*. A Cochabamba Declaration affirmed the link between women's equal participation in politics and more prosperous, peaceful and inclusive societies and called for the achievement of gender parity in politics and the adoption and implementation of specific legislation to combat violence against women in politics (see section under Objective 2 of main report).

### **Youth empowerment**

At the 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, a dialogue session was organized in collaboration with UNAIDS during the meeting of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. The panel session focused on the role of young parliamentarians in addressing harmful laws and politics in order to end AIDS by 2030, with activists and civil society also taking part.

On 28 June 2018, the UN General Assembly released the report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on Youth and Human Rights (A/HRC/39/33). Informed by IPU activities at the Human Rights Council, such as at the 2016 UN Forum on Human Rights, Democracy, and the Rule of Law, the report heavily references the 2016 IPU report on *Youth Participation in National Parliaments*, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU, and related IPU recommendations on youth participation in parliaments.

For International Youth Day (12 August 2018), the IPU partnered with iKNOW Politics for an interactive Twitter Chat that took place on 10 August 2018. The Twitter Chat engaged with parliamentarians, experts, activists and the general public to get feedback and generate buzz on a series of questions related to youth and young women's participation in politics. iKNOW Politics is a joint project, with UNDP and UN Women taking part (see section under Objective 6 of main report).

### **International peace and security**

An IPU delegation participated in the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace on 25 April. The IPU delivered a statement at the Sixth Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that was held on 27 June in New York.

The IPU and UNODC continued to develop a joint programme on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism, which seeks to facilitate the incorporation of international commitments into domestic legislation and promote regional parliamentary cooperation. The two partners organized the second meeting of the specialized group on counterterrorism, where the budget and the activities of the joint programme were approved. Following this event, the IPU and UNODC engaged in consultations with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) in order to formalize a trilateral agreement, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU will be presented to the Governing Bodies at the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly for approval. In addition, the joint secretariat started drafting the first parliamentary report on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism, which will be launched at the First Global Parliamentary Summit tentatively scheduled for February 2019 (see section under Objective 4 of main report).

### **Sustainable development**

On 12 April 2018, the IPU Secretary General and UN Environment Executive Director signed an MoU setting out their joint cooperation on the SDGs, especially those related to environment and climate change. Work on a joint Policy Brief for members of parliament on the green economy continued during the summer, with the aim of launching the paper at the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in early December (see section under Objective 7 of main report).

On May 21-22, the IPU participated in the biannual session of the UN Development Cooperation Forum, with a delegation of eight members of parliament. The IPU also followed the annual Financing for Development Forum and related side events. The IPU Secretary General was a presenter at a special meeting of the UN Economic and Social Council on sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies on 23 May.

On 25 May in Geneva, the Director General of WHO took part alongside the IPU Secretary General in a technical briefing on "the role of parliamentarians in achieving universal health coverage and global health security as two sides of the same coin".

On 5 June, an IPU delegation took part in the multi-stakeholder hearing providing input to a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on non-communicable diseases in September. The IPU was asked to contribute to this meeting by a resolution of the General Assembly. Building on this, the IPU was invited to contribute to the high-level meeting on universal health coverage in September 2019.

As a contribution to the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development, the IPU encouraged the participation of some 90 members of parliament in the main proceedings and organized an official side event on 16 July, the first day of the HLPF ministerial segment. The side event discussed the main theme of the HLPF on environmental sustainability. On 17 July, IPU and UNDP held a parliamentary workshop on their self-assessment toolkit for the SDGs. The IPU President delivered a statement during the general debate of the HLPF later in the week. In the months leading up to the HLPF, the IPU surveyed the parliaments of the 47 countries presenting Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) as a way of encouraging greater parliamentary engagement in this key monitoring process (see section under Objective 7 of main report).

The IPU and UNDP continued to support SDG self-assessments in parliaments through the IPU-UNDP SDG Self-Assessment Toolkit. During the reporting period the parliament of Argentina began plans for a workshop using the IPU-UNDP toolkit.

The IPU participated actively in several working group meetings of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), which includes UNDP. The IPU provided input to two working groups of the GPEDC, helped establish the new business leaders caucus, helped define new indicators of progress on development cooperation, and participated in the launch event of the GPEDC's 2018 Global Monitoring Exercise 11-12 September in Paris (see section under Objective 7 of main report).

Honorary President of the IPU, Saber Chowdhury, presented on a panel of the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs on the contribution of audit institutions to the SDGs in New York on 29 July. On 18 July the IPU Permanent Observer spoke at a UNDP side event on parliamentary engagement with civil society organizations on the SDGs.

### **Senior-level interaction**

A high level panel on migration and refugees was held on 23 March at the opening of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Geneva. The panel featured the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, the Director of the International Organization for Migration, Mr. William Lacy Swing, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussain. Other UN officials participated in the workshops, special events and committee sessions throughout the Assembly.

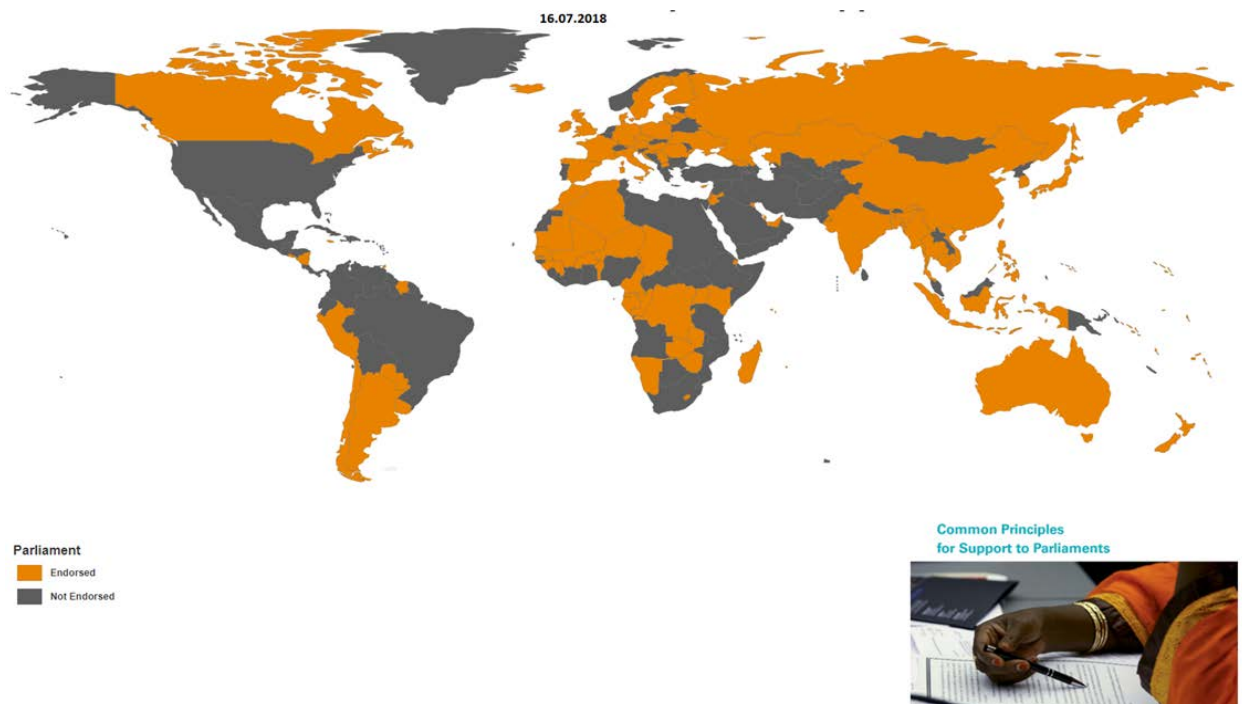
The UN Secretary-General contributed to the celebration of the first ever International Day of Parliamentarism on 30 June with a special video message to all parliaments and parliamentarians. The video message was featured on the IPU web site as part of a broader effort to celebrate the day, which also coincides with the founding of the IPU.

On 19 July, the first working level meeting of IPU and UN staff took place following a recommendation of the Senior Leadership meeting held in November 2017. Sixteen entities or bodies of the United Nations were represented at the meeting co-chaired by the IPU Permanent Observer at the United Nations and a senior officer from the UN Department of Political Affairs. The meeting explored potential new synergies between the IPU and the United Nations at the working level and identified a number of questions regarding cooperation at the country level.

On 9 July a meeting was held at the WHO Headquarters in Geneva to discuss preparations for a new MoU on political and technical cooperation between the IPU and WHO. Both organizations committed to deepening their partnership, which in future would extend beyond the traditional area of cooperation of women's, children's and adolescent health (WCAH) to universal health coverage (UHC) and global health security (GHS).

On 31 July, the Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the United Nations met with the President-elect of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the General Assembly, Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa, for a first informal exchange of views on the upcoming session. The meeting helped place the IPU and parliament more firmly on the agenda of the President elect of the General Assembly. It also included a first discussion on the possible theme and timing of the 2019 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations.

**I. Parliaments that have endorsed the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments (as of 16 July 2018)**



**II. Countries that currently have cases before the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians that have been examined at least once:**

- **Africa:** Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe;
- **Americas:** Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of);
- **Asia:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand;
- **Europe:** Belarus, Russian Federation, Turkey;
- **Middle East and North Africa:** Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Palestine, Israel, Yemen;
- **Southern Pacific:** Fiji.

**III. Countries whose national reports were reviewed at the July 2018 CEDAW Committee session and whose national reports will be reviewed at the next sessions of the CEDAW Committee (February and July 2019):**

**July 2018 session:** Australia, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Mexico, New Zealand, Palestine and Turkmenistan;

**February 2019 session:** Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Botswana, Bulgaria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Serbia and the United Kingdom.

**July 2019 session:** Austria, Bahrain, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guyana, Mozambique and Qatar.

**IV. Countries that were reviewed by the UN Human Rights Council under its Universal Periodic Review (November 2018 and January/February 2019)**

**Week 5-9 November 2018:** Central African Republic, China, Jordan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Senegal.



**Week 12-16 November 2018:** Belize, Chad, Congo, Malta and Monaco.

**Week 21-25 January 2019:** Afghanistan, Chile, Comoros, New Zealand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Yemen.

**Week 28 Jan - 1 February 2019:** Cambodia, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, and Slovakia.

**V. Countries due to report to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (July 2019)**

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Eritrea, Fiji, France, Ghana, Guatemala, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nauru, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, and Vanuatu.