



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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IPU Statement

Mr. Martin Chungong
Secretary General

**High Level Political Forum on
sustainable development
United Nations
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Mr. President,

The 2030 Agenda acknowledges the central role parliaments can play in advancing the SDGs by adopting enabling legislation, including the key budget bill. It also recognizes that parliaments are uniquely placed to hold governments to account for the effective implementation of the new SDGs.

How, in practice, do we turn these words into action?

The IPU perspective is that governance, as represented by Goals 16, is a key driver of change. The rule of law, justice, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, and several other elements of Goal 16, provide the enabling environment we need to engage people effectively in this huge agenda. Governance ensures that the voice of *all* people, without discrimination or exclusion, is heard when it comes to decisions that affect everyone. It demands returning to a politics founded on the pursuit of the common good over the special interests of the few.

The SDGs will loom large in the IPU work plan for years to come. We are taking steps to mainstream the goals throughout our work. Similarly, we are developing a series of tools and activities to help parliaments institutionalize the goals so that they will come to provide the broader context of all acts of legislation and oversight for the next fifteen years - a period long enough for at least two new generations of MPs to take office.

This work will include direct assistance to parliaments, which we will provide together with UNDP and other partners, as well as policy guidance to help parliaments figure out the right approach to a specific issue of sustainable development - be it health, gender equality, climate change or some issue where we are directly invested as an organization. Several parliamentary workshops have been conducted already and more are in the pipeline.

More concretely, we are pursuing the following actions:

IPU has asked all parliaments to adopt a **motion** or a resolution to take stock of the goals and to set out the various steps they need to take toward their implementation. The first of these steps is to insist that governments draft a national plan for the SDGs to identify country-specific goals and the policies required toward their implementation. A second step is to insist on an annual progress report from governments to the parliaments on the

implementation of the national plan for the SDGs. So far parliamentary motions for the SDGs have been adopted in Trinidad and Tobago, and in Mali.

Second, IPU is developing a **toolkit** for parliaments to assess how “fit for purpose” they are in helping implement the goals in their own country context. This toolkit is designed to help parliaments identify all the means and processes available to them, as well as the institutional gaps that need to be filled. A questionnaire attached to this toolkit will provide data such as the number of parliaments who receive regular SDGs progress reports from the government.

Third, IPU is asking the parliaments of the countries volunteering for a **national review** to report on their involvement in that process before, during and after. As you know, the national reviews that began this year are supposed to be open and inclusive processes, not just desk exercises. Of the 22 countries volunteering this year, we heard from the parliaments of France, Finland, Germany, and Switzerland. This low response rate may be due to the novelty of the exercise, but more likely signals an overall disengagement of parliaments from this key national review process. We will work to change this.

Fourth, at the more institutional level, the **IPU Committee on UN Affairs** will devote a session during its spring meeting to track how parliaments are dealing with the SDGs over the next fifteen years. This session will serve as a bridge to connect parliaments to the global review of the HLPF. It will provide a dedicated space for parliaments to share their best practices on SDGs implementation and to take stock of progress as well as challenges in their own countries as well as globally. Part of the UN Committee session of course will be used to discuss the main theme of the HLPF each year.

Last but not least, IPU will continue to **encourage MPs to attend each HLPF** session as part of their national delegations. The GA endorsed this idea in its 2014 resolution on interaction between the UN, parliaments and the IPU. Having MPs follow the HLPF can help raise awareness of the SDGs and all related processes in the parliaments.

To help garner the lessons learned from our members, IPU will organize a **parliamentary side event** at each annual session of the HLPF. Thirty MPs from sixteen countries participated in the first of such events this week. Among other things, the MPs noted the need for cross-party agreement on key policy initiatives for the SDGs, the need to make parliaments to better represent the most vulnerable in our societies, and the need to put in place new structures to overcome existing silos.

In sum, Mr. President, all these actions will amount to building the two things we all know are most needed to accomplish this agenda: political will, and leadership.

Thank you.