



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
27 March 2025

Original: English

Seventy-ninth session  
Agenda item 126

## Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [76/270](#), the present report reflects on the interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The breadth of activities highlighted in the report demonstrates how continued cooperation between the global parliamentary community and the United Nations system has become a core part of the Organization's work and a pillar of networked multilateralism.

2. Against the background of a global environment characterized by heightened divisions and polarization, the adoption of the Pact for the Future in September 2024 demonstrated that Member States remain strongly invested in the United Nations and are intent on using the multilateral system to address common challenges. They reaffirmed the need to set the international community on a path towards a world that is safe, peaceful, just, equal, inclusive, sustainable and prosperous, in which well-being, security and dignity and a healthy planet are assured for all humanity. In action 55 of the Pact, Member States recognized that the challenges faced today require cooperation not just across borders but also across the whole of society, and they recognized the importance of United Nations engagement with national parliaments. Furthermore, they committed to deepening United Nations engagement with national parliaments in United Nations intergovernmental bodies and processes, in accordance with national legislation, including through building on the efforts of the United Nations and IPU to engage parliamentarians to maintain support for the implementation of relevant United Nations agreements and resolutions.

3. The present report, the seventh of its kind, provides an overview of critical areas in which collaboration between the United Nations and parliaments has advanced shared objectives. The activities described in the report show how cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments, as envisioned in the Pact for the Future, is already expanding across all three pillars of the Organization's work. Parliamentarians at the national and global levels are playing a central role in advocacy for and implementation of major international agreements – including the



Pact for the Future itself, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

4. In addition to engagement with parliaments at the national level, strengthening cooperation with IPU has been an important aspect of United Nations engagement with the global parliamentary community. In resolution [76/270](#), the General Assembly recognized the work of the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs to provide a platform for regular interaction between parliamentarians and United Nations officials, including on the 2030 Agenda, review implementation of international commitments and facilitate closer ties between United Nations country teams and national parliaments.

5. The report provides information on the interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and IPU over the past three years (2022–2024). Owing to space limitations, not all activities have been included, but the report showcases the wide scope of cooperation between the United Nations, national parliaments and IPU in today's fragmented global landscape. As requested by the General Assembly in resolution [76/270](#), the report contains a special focus on the implementation of the shared objectives of United Nations entities and IPU, including best practices and contributions of Member States, national parliaments, the United Nations and IPU to increase the representation and participation of women in parliaments.

## **II. United Nations and national parliaments: direct support for parliaments and parliamentarians**

### **A. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

6. In resolution [77/159](#) on enhancing the role of parliaments in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the General Assembly acknowledged the role and responsibility of parliaments with regard to national plans and strategies aimed at fully implementing the 2030 Agenda, as well as in ensuring greater transparency and accountability at both the national and global levels. It encouraged national parliaments to assess the contribution of their countries' existing national legal frameworks to the achievement of the Goals and their targets, acknowledging that the Goals are integrated and indivisible and that policy coherence is key in achieving the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

7. With only five years until the 2030 deadline, only 17 per cent of the Goal targets are on track, with continued gaps in key areas such as gender equality. None of the indicators or subindicators of Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls have been met. As Member States recognized in the Pact for the Future, years of sustainable development gains are being reversed. The current global environment presents significant challenges that are threatening further progress. The deepening polarization and heightened regional instability highlighted in the *Human Development Report 2023/2024* has stalled effective decision-making on critical global issues that are central to the 2030 Agenda, including climate change, social cohesion and entrenched inequalities. Many developing economies, in particular the least developed countries, continue to grapple with the prolonged scarring effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and tighter global financing conditions.

8. Against these significant hurdles, continued engagement between the United Nations, national parliaments and IPU has been central in advocating for the

implementation of the Goals in order to align national agendas and the resources necessary to foster progress. Parliamentarians, as national legislators, have an important role in promoting sustainable development. Parliaments are responsible for creating an enabling environment for pursuing the Goals at the legislative level by directing State resources, identifying reform priorities and drafting new legislation in critical areas.

9. Across the world, United Nations country teams are engaging closely with national parliaments to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In Peru, for example, the country team has worked to strengthen the relationship between United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and the various parties represented in Congress, and has provided technical support to congressional committees to accelerate the country's achievement of the Goals. In Ecuador, the country team has established a memorandum of understanding with the National Assembly, focusing on aligning legislative work with the 2030 Agenda.

10. With parliaments key to ensuring that funding and resources are invested effectively to support sustainable development, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has helped to strengthen parliamentary capacities through targeted training, knowledge-sharing platforms and e-learning tools that empower parliamentarians to exercise effective budget oversight and enhance legislative accountability on sustainable finance. In the Pacific region, it has helped to strengthen the capacity of public accounts committees and enhance relationships between public auditors and parliaments through the Floating Budget Office. UNDP has supported efforts to strengthen parliamentary action across the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa to enhance oversight of the 2030 Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and to reinforce accountability in public finance management. In 2023, UNDP facilitated the fourth high-level working group of the parliamentary budget committees of Timor-Leste and the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa, convening parliamentarians, staff and international experts in Mozambique to strengthen parliamentary oversight of sovereign wealth funds. UNDP is supporting parliaments in adopting anticipatory governance approaches to promote sustainable human development and strengthen democracy, in alignment with recommendations of the Pact for the Future.

11. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has frequently been called upon to give briefings to regional and national parliaments on the recommendations of the *World Investment Report* and on entrepreneurship development issues.

12. The global network of United Nations information centres, overseen by the Department of Global Communications, works directly with national parliaments and parliamentary groups to engage them on the 2030 Agenda and the Goals. For example, in June 2022, the information centre in Beirut organized, in cooperation with the Office of the Speaker of Parliament, a signing ceremony of the first-ever partnership compact between the United Nations country team in Lebanon and the Lebanese Parliament to ensure a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to supporting the Parliament in achieving necessary reform priorities and the Goals.

13. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has partnered with parliaments and parliamentary networks to advance food security, nutrition and sustainable agrifood systems. In June 2023, it organized the second Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition. The event delivered the world's first Global Parliamentary Pact against Hunger and Malnutrition, endorsed by parliamentarians from every region, to end hunger and ensure food security globally, focusing on sustainable and equitable agrifood systems.

14. The World Intellectual Property Organization engaged with parliamentary authorities on matters relating to intellectual property and the importance of enabling effective technology and innovation ecosystems as drivers for sustainable development. In Thailand, it organized a seminar on intellectual property analytics, technology transfer and innovation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations region in 2024.

## **B. Health**

15. Parliaments and parliamentary alliances have proven to be vital partners in efforts to address the socioeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. They have played an active role in developing emergency legislation, refining national regulatory frameworks, approving public budgets and increasing the accountability of Governments, including their fulfilment of human rights obligations and political commitments. Capitalizing on the important role played by parliaments during the pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) is working on its first strategy for parliamentary engagement, which will be finalized by the first half of 2025. Furthermore, in its general programme of work for 2025–2028, WHO identifies parliaments as a key constituency, underscoring their critical role in implementing global health initiatives. WHO and IPU will jointly organize the first global parliamentary forum in the context of the seventy-eighth World Health Assembly.

16. United Nations entities have worked with parliaments on other important health issues, including sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. In November 2023, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) supported the development and launch by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia of an advocacy strategy on adolescent reproductive health, which provides a clear framework for Members of Parliament to guide their work in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights and life skills and health education for young people. Between March 2022 and March 2023, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) provided parliamentarians around the world with a comprehensive analysis of the intersection of HIV/AIDS and broader health and social determinants, such as poverty, gender inequality and education.

17. Between April and November 2022, the United Nations Population Fund collaborated with the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum and other United Nations partners in Botswana to convene a high-level dialogue with parliamentarians to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV-related services for populations left behind, specifically persons with disabilities.

## **C. Democracy and human rights**

18. In 2023 and 2024, within the framework of the universal periodic review, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provided capacity-building and awareness-raising to parliamentarians to facilitate their engagement with the review. In the United Republic of Tanzania, OHCHR organized a workshop for parliamentarians on 11 and 12 May 2024, entitled “The role of parliament in implementing recommendations from regional and international human rights mechanisms”. OHCHR advocated with members of the Transitional Legislative Assembly in Burkina Faso on issues related to the role of human rights defenders in crises, hate speech and the rights to freedom of opinion and peaceful assembly.

19. UNDP has supported parliamentary efforts to combat hate speech, focusing on gendered hate speech and its impact on public discourse. Recognizing the vital role of parliaments in protecting the rights and inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, UNDP convened the 2023 African Parliamentary Forum, bringing together parliamentarians from 11 countries to exchange lessons and strategies in these areas.

20. Parliamentarians play a pivotal role in adopting legal frameworks that protect, safeguard and fulfil children's rights, including in situations of armed conflict. During the reporting period, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict engaged with parliamentarians from Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Peru, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to advance the protection of children affected by armed conflict.

21. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs maintains active engagement with parliamentarians through targeted advocacy efforts. During the reporting period, it engaged with members of committees and subcommittees on foreign affairs, human rights, humanitarian affairs and budgetary matters with several partners, including Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the European Union.

22. In Iraq, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq engaged with parliamentary committees to advance and advocate for legislation that is aligned with international human rights and electoral standards and United Nations conventions and principles.

23. In Ukraine, in partnership with the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, UNDP launched two online courses in 2023, entitled "Business and human rights" and "Human rights due diligence in wartime", which provided comprehensive guidance on integrating human rights principles into business operations, emphasizing stakeholder management and non-discrimination.

24. In 2022 and 2023, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo<sup>1</sup> completed two capacity-building projects for the non-Serb Multi-Ethnic Parliamentary Group of the Assembly of Kosovo. The activities focused on protecting and promoting non-majority rights and interests and strengthening the participation of non-majority communities in policymaking and decision-making processes.

## **D. Gender equality and women's empowerment**

25. Parliamentarians play a critical role in adopting legal frameworks that respect, protect and fulfil the rights of women. To advocate for gender-responsive parliaments, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) provided technical support to parliaments, informing constitutional and legislative reforms for greater gender equality and women's empowerment. In Sierra Leone, UN-Women supported collaborative efforts by the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and the Parliament, including the parliamentary legislative committee working on the passage of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act of 2022, which includes a minimum quota of at least 30 per cent for women in appointed and elected positions and provisions on women's access to finance, employment, equal pay and maternity leave. After the 2023 elections, women's political representation increased at all levels, representing 30.4 per cent of

<sup>1</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

parliamentarians and 34 per cent of local councillors, a marked increase from 12.4 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively, following the 2018 elections.

26. From 25 to 27 September 2023, OHCHR, in partnership with the Arab Women Parliamentarians Network for Equality (Ra'edat), conducted a three-day regional training workshop entitled "The role of parliament in monitoring and observance of legislations that guarantee women's rights".

27. The Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which is under the strategic direction of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, has provided technical support to South Sudanese authorities since 2022 on legislative reform of the country's revised criminal law, criminal procedure and evidence law and on a draft law on gender-based violence. This support included a mission to discuss model legislative provisions in June 2024, in conjunction with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations country team.

28. During the reporting period, the UNESCO collaborated with Member States and their parliaments to increase women's representation in science and engineering, setting an agreed minimum target of 50 per cent of participants in all its training programmes being women.

29. UNDP continued to play a central role in advancing gender equality and women's political participation across Member States that seek such assistance. In Mongolia, technical assistance by UNDP supported the establishment of a quota system and a "zipper system" on party lists, which mandates alternating men and women candidates. This led to an increase in women's representation in the national parliament, from 17 per cent to 25.4 per cent following the 2024 elections. In Armenia, in 2023, UNDP organized training on gender-sensitive policymaking for men and women parliamentarians, including party members from both the ruling and the opposition sides, with 31 participants, including ethnic minorities such as the Assyrian community. In South Sudan, UNDP partnered with the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and UN-Women to train women parliamentarians on gender-responsive budgeting and strengthen ties between parliament and key ministries.

30. On 19 July 2024, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo supported the launch of a consultation framework with the Speaker of the National Assembly aimed at harmonizing the legal framework on gender equality and women's and girls' rights. In late 2024, the Mission launched a consultation framework with the National Assembly to harmonize legal frameworks and developed a road map to counter violence against women in elections.

31. In Sao Tome and Principe, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa supported national efforts to increase women's political representation through advocacy. This contributed to the National Assembly's unanimous approval of the Political Parity Law in July 2022, mandating that 40 per cent of ministerial and elected seats be reserved for women, which built on earlier efforts by women parliamentarians and leaders to enforce a 30 per cent quota.

32. In Libya, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya collaborated with the House of Representatives on a draft law on protecting women from violence, which was approved by the House legislative committee on 18 January 2024. This outcome followed various consultations, including a round table in Cairo in November 2023 supported by UN-Women, UNDP and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, with 20 members of the House of Representatives.

33. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and Somali parliamentarians established the Somalia Women Members of Parliament/United

Nations Leadership Forum in May 2023. The Forum provides a channel through which the United Nations can have regular dialogue with women parliamentarians to engage in peace and security and stabilization processes in a safe and secure environment.

34. In Lebanon, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and UN-Women initiated a study in the last quarter of 2023 to gather data and tailor strategic interventions addressing barriers that hinder women's access to leadership positions within political parties. The study was designed to raise awareness of women's status within political parties and parliament.

35. During the reporting period, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provided legislative assistance to parliamentarians to ensure that criminal laws and procedures are gender-responsive and protect women's rights, in line with international norms and standards in crime prevention and criminal justice. UNODC provided such assistance to Albania, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Botswana, Colombia, Ecuador, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Peru, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

## **E. Youth empowerment**

36. UNDP has supported efforts to enhance interactions between parliaments and young people across the Asia and the Pacific region by leveraging digital tools and fostering innovation. In 2024, in Timor-Leste, UNDP extended the reach of the artificial intelligence-powered Ekota platform by supporting the parliament in launching a mobile policy laboratory known as Demokrasia Bis. This specially equipped bus, outfitted with Internet access and podcast tools, enables young people and rural communities to engage directly with parliamentarians on policy and legislative matters, strengthening participatory democracy.

37. In September 2024, UNODC launched a youth academy on the universalization of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, with a first cohort of 17 participants. The initiative was aimed at empowering young leaders (including Members of Parliament) from States not yet Parties to the Convention and fostering a new generation of advocates for the Convention.

## **F. International peace and security**

38. During the reporting period, the International Atomic Energy Agency interacted with national parliaments of member States on international and national nuclear law, primarily through its legislative assistance programme. The programme is available to all countries, covering all areas of nuclear law (nuclear safety, security, safeguards and liability) and supports the development of necessary national implementing legislation.

39. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate placed a heightened emphasis on engaging with national parliaments and regional parliamentary bodies to foster comprehensive and coordinated responses to counter-terrorism challenges. During the reporting period, it raised awareness among parliamentarians to better understand the complexities of counter-terrorism and develop evidence-based, balanced legislation that promotes the rule of law.

40. In January 2023, the Office of Counter-Terrorism established the Parliamentary Counter-Terrorism Working Group for Africa, a platform and mechanism designed to enhance cooperation and coordination among African national parliaments and regional parliamentary assemblies.

41. The United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia, formerly UNSOM, working through the Somalia Joint Fund, provided advisory and technical support to the Federal Government of Somalia on the constitutional review process. The House of the People approved the new Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission in March 2023. In April 2023, at a joint session of the House of the People and the Upper House, a Joint Oversight Committee was established. UNSOM has worked with both the Commission and the Committee since their re-establishment. In 2024, UNSOM and, since November 2024, its succeeding mission, the United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia, provided advisory and technical support to the ad hoc parliamentary committee on prisons mandated to assess the conditions of prisons in Mogadishu.

42. Engagement with parliamentarians is an important aspect of United Nations support for the implementation of peace agreements. The United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia established a strong relationship with the country's Congress, focusing on supporting and monitoring its role in the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace of 2016. Key efforts included regular engagement with the Peace Commissions of both chambers of parliament, involving regular meetings to discuss peace-related initiatives.

### **G. Other areas of collaboration**

43. Parliaments play a pivotal role in advancing national climate agendas and ensuring accountability for climate commitments. As part of its regional Climate Finance Network initiative in the Asia and the Pacific region, UNDP is supporting parliaments in directing increased resources to tackle climate change and is helping to build parliamentary capacities on scrutinizing Governments' climate finance expenditure. In Indonesia, the Climate Finance Handbook, the circular economy module and a study on Islamic blended finance were launched in 2024. In Bangladesh, UNDP engaged with parliamentarians on approaches and best practices related to climate and finance. In Thailand, it developed a Climate Finance Handbook in close partnership with the secretariat of the House of Representatives, ensuring its effective use in advancing climate action and supporting the Sustainable Development Goals.

44. UNODC continues to provide assistance, upon request, to parliaments and parliamentarians in the development and revision of national criminal laws, including the revision of criminal codes and laws on specific crime prevention and criminal justice topics. For instance, in 2022, UNODC, in collaboration with OHCHR, provided a substantive review of a (now adopted) law on the use of force in Ecuador.

## **III. United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and other parliamentary organizations: advancing global norms**

45. As the world organization of national parliaments, IPU has played a significant role in enhancing parliamentary contributions in the United Nations system. The annual parliamentary hearings, organized by IPU in New York, are unique opportunities to enhance parliamentary inputs into United Nations processes and to foster closer collaboration. The present section includes some of the major engagements between IPU and other parliamentary organizations and the United Nations.



## A. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

46. The adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution [77/159](#), entitled “Enhancing the role of parliaments in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”, was a milestone achievement. In the resolution, the Assembly recognized the significant contribution of parliaments and IPU to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, reflecting the importance attached by the United Nations to parliamentary collaboration on implementation of the Goals. The Assembly recommended inter-parliamentary cooperation, including through IPU, to inspire ambitious collective plans, enhance mutual learning and sharing of best practices, enhance knowledge-sharing and awareness-raising among parliaments and generate momentum to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

47. To follow up on the resolution, IPU, with the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, promoted dialogue between parliaments and the executive branch in Europe and the Asia and Pacific region. This initiative bridged the gap between international commitments and national implementation, emphasizing the need for robust parliamentary engagement in voluntary national reviews and highlighting the need for stronger government-parliament communication.

48. The United Nations and IPU have assisted parliamentarians in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Maldives, Thailand and Viet Nam with joint capacity-building initiatives to advance the implementation of the Goals. In Albania, United Nations and IPU advocacy resulted in the creation of a parliamentary subcommittee dedicated to the Goals, while in Bosnia and Herzegovina, efforts were focused on strengthening the integration of the Goals into parliamentary operations through a dedicated standing committee.

49. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and IPU maintain a close cooperation, including by ensuring dissemination of research and policy work on investment and enterprise for development, and through the sharing of best practices. The President and the Secretary General of IPU participated in the eighth World Investment Forum in Abu Dhabi in October 2023, which featured a tripartite dialogue of parliamentarians, policymakers and business leaders on the theme “legislating for sustainable development”.

50. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs collaborated with IPU on implementation of the Goals, particularly Goal 17, focusing on technology. During the 2024 multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, IPU held a parliamentary side event entitled “The IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology: Harnessing science, technology and innovation responsibly”. Furthermore, IPU has contributed to the annual discussions in the Technology Facilitation Mechanism on the impact of rapid technological change on the Goals.

51. In November 2023, parliamentarians from 13 donor and host countries attended the forum entitled “Parliamentary Solidarity for Refugee Inclusion in Education”, co-organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Parliamentary Network for Education, IPU and the International Institute of Humanitarian Law. The forum’s overall goal was to raise awareness among parliamentarians about the need to finance education for refugees, and to help them develop actionable steps to achieve that goal.

## B. Health

52. The long-standing collaboration between WHO and IPU has supported significant advancements in parliamentary engagement on global health. At the 2024 World Health Assembly, in a parliamentary dialogue, the Director-General of WHO and the IPU Secretary General highlighted this collaboration, leading to a pledge to establish an annual parliamentary meeting at the World Health Assembly and enhance efforts to strengthen parliamentary participation in global health governance.

53. WHO renewed its memorandum of understanding with IPU in 2023. WHO and IPU have developed multiple tools to support parliamentary action on health. These include publishing a handbook on health security preparedness to guide parliamentarians on enhancing health security, including sustainable financing, legislation and governance. In May 2024, WHO and IPU launched an online course on health security preparedness to help parliamentarians advocate for improved health security.

54. In the face of challenges to sexual and reproductive health and rights, WHO and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health worked closely with IPU to disseminate evidence-based practices, showcase effective parliamentary actions and engage legislatures on issues such as addressing maternal mortality and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights policies.

55. In 2024, UNAIDS partnered with IPU at the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women at United Nations Headquarters, and organized a session for parliamentarians. This created an opportunity for parliamentarians to discuss topics related to health without discrimination, the importance of testing and diagnostics, gender equality and democracy. UNAIDS also participated in a panel discussion on the theme “Nobody left behind” at the Tenth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, in Armenia.

56. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) participated in the “Third Regional Seminar on Achieving the SDGs for the IPU’s Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group”, which took place on 18 and 19 January 2024 in Paris, enhancing parliamentarians’ awareness and understanding of the linkages between health and education.

## C. Democracy and human rights

57. During the reporting period, OHCHR and IPU continued their collaboration to strengthen the capacity of parliaments as key promoters and defenders of human rights. In June 2023, OHCHR and IPU organized a parliamentary round table to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In order to offer parliamentarians a timely and easy-to-use tool to help them navigate the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, and the contribution of parliaments there, OHCHR and IPU developed online briefings on the universal periodic review process for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff during the reporting period. In collaboration with the International Organization of la Francophonie and its parliamentary branch, OHCHR and IPU organized workshops for the parliamentarians of several French-speaking countries whose universal periodic review was imminent.

58. On 28 October 2024, UNESCO, IPU and the Centre for Law and Democracy launched a massive open online course for parliamentarians on the right to freedom of expression. On 1 and 2 March 2024, UNESCO and IPU organized a technical legislative workshop in Nagarkot, Nepal, for 30 parliamentarians. The workshop

aimed to enhance participants' knowledge of international standards on freedom of expression and access to information, in view of the country's ongoing legislative reform of three bills on media and the use of social networks. Pursuant to its commitment to contributing to a safe, orderly and regular migration, IPU in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, organized a global conference on migration in June 2022 in Istanbul, Türkiye.

59. Together with IPU and the Internet Governance Forum Parliamentary Track, UNESCO organized a series of online capacity-building workshops, entitled "Parliaments and AI: going beyond the buzz", for parliamentarians worldwide from January to March 2024. During the workshops, the risks and opportunities of artificial intelligence were highlighted for parliamentarians, particularly concerning democracy, human rights and the rule of law. In 2024, the Internet Governance Forum secretariat further extended its collaboration with regional Forum initiatives to enhance parliamentary engagement in digital governance. This led to the creation of a West Africa parliamentary network on Internet governance.

60. On 18 October 2024, UNDP and IPU organized an expert consultation on parliamentary engagement in digital policy, which brought together parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and representatives of leading international and parliamentary organizations. In 2024, UNDP supported the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum by contributing to a guide on the application of the gender-based violence model law and training parliamentarians on applying the law to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and people living with HIV in Southern Africa. From 13 to 15 June 2023, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations supported and led one of the sessions of the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue hosted by IPU and the Parliament of Morocco. Parliamentarians, representatives of international organizations, civil society and faith actors discussed the promotion of interfaith dialogue for peace and the role of religious leaders in countering hate speech, incitement of violence and digital challenges to democracy.

## **D. Gender equality and the empowerment of women**

61. In January 2024, UN-Women, IPU, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the International Labour Organization (ILO) organized an online regional conference for parliamentarians from Arab countries, focused on advancing the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 by strengthening actions on women's economic empowerment in the region.

62. UN-Women, IPU and OHCHR have supported the elaboration and drafting process of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women general recommendation No. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems ([CEDAW/C/GC/40](#)). Adopted in October 2024, the recommendation presents a new approach to governance on the basis of parity as a core principle and a leading force for transformative change. In 2022 and 2023, the Committee and IPU organized a series of webinars targeting parliaments from countries that are due to be reviewed by the Committee and those benefiting from IPU support in gender equality.

63. In 2022, 2023 and 2024, UN-Women and IPU organized the annual parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the annual session of the Commission of the Status of Women, which provided a forum for legislators worldwide to bring a parliamentary perspective to the Commission's theme under discussion and ensure that the agreements reached have an impact at the national level and are debated in

parliament. During the sixty-eighth session of the Commission, UN-Women and IPU, together with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and United Cities and Local Governments, launched the European Union-funded project Women and Youth in Democracy Women's Leadership Initiative.

64. In September 2022, the United Nations Office at Geneva and IPU relaunched the International Gender Champions initiative campaign to create a sexism-free zone at the Office.

65. The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel collaborated with IPU and Transitional Legislative Assembly of Burkina Faso to strengthen the capacities of its parliamentarians and all stakeholders involved in the smooth running of the Assembly, by encouraging the parliamentarians to consider reforms for a strong parliament, social communication, greater involvement of women in the decision-making process and the promotion of women's rights and empowerment in society.

## **E. Youth empowerment**

66. Since April 2022, the United Nations and IPU have cooperated on initiatives to promote the participation of young people and young parliamentarians in political decision-making. Young parliamentarians of IPU and the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians have also participated actively in United Nations events, bringing a parliamentary perspective to the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum and related side-events (yearly from 2022 to 2024), the World Bank's Global Young MP Initiative (in 2022 and 2023), the United Nations Summit of the Future and associated "action days" (September 2024), and preparatory events towards the Second Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition, hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (October and November 2022).

67. In June 2024, UNDP contributed to the IPU Empowerment Series, on the role of young parliamentarians in contributing to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The Series provided an important opportunity to discuss practical actions young parliamentarians can take, including in policymaking, parliamentary diplomacy, mediation and dialogue efforts, and support for diverse youth inclusion.

68. Under the leadership of the United Nations Youth Office, OHCHR and IPU, as well as UNDP, the European Youth Forum and Yiaga Africa, furthered the work of the global "Not Too Young to Run" campaign. This collaboration culminated in the launch in September 2023 of a dedicated website designed to overcome the widespread discrimination that young people running for public office face and provide resources around the issue of the political participation and inclusion of young people.

69. In the Asia and Pacific Region, UNDP, in partnership with UNICEF, UN-Women and other stakeholders, helped establish the Regional Youth Parliament on Climate Action, providing a platform for young people to advocate for climate-responsive policies.

## **F. International peace and security**

70. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to deepen its collaboration with IPU on issues of international peace and security.

71. IPU hosted a briefing for parliamentarians on the Peacebuilding Commission in November 2024, with the engagement of the Chair of the Commission and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support of the United Nations

Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. The session focused on the relevance of the Commission for conflict prevention and sustainable peace and explored the practical measures parliaments can take to foster inclusive governance and strengthen conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

72. The Human Security Unit has cooperated with IPU and supported the “human security for all” campaign.

73. UNHCR and IPU have cooperated over the past three years to raise awareness of, and support strengthened parliamentary engagement relating to, refugee protection and statelessness. IPU has mobilized the parliamentary community around the Global Compact on Refugees and submitted pledges, focusing on the universalization of the human rights conventions.

74. UNODC, UNESCO, UNDP, the World Bank and IPU are working to build parliamentary capacities, promote good governance and foster regional cooperation to support Sahelian countries in addressing the multifaceted challenges they face, including counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism. A key aspect of this initiative is to empower parliaments to create legal frameworks and policies that address the root causes of violent extremism while also ensuring the protection and rehabilitation of terrorism victims.

75. UNODC participated in the 17th meeting of the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, held in Geneva on 13 October 2024, at which it presented emerging trends in terrorism, the link between organized crime and terrorism, particularly in Africa, and ongoing initiatives.

76. In February 2022, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, together with IPU and UNODC, designed and launched the Model Legislative Provisions to Support the Needs and Protect the Rights of Victims of Terrorism, which facilitated the provision of specialized assistance by the Office to countries such as the Philippines. In January 2023, the Office established the Parliamentary Counter-Terrorism Working Group for Africa, a mechanism designed to enhance cooperation and coordination among African national parliaments and regional parliamentary assemblies.

## **G. Other areas of collaboration**

77. In the lead-up to the annual Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, IPU collaborated with various United Nations agencies and bodies, such as the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to provide parliaments with briefings on the latest scientific data and main orientations of the upcoming Conferences of the Parties. IPU has signed memorandums of understanding with the United Nations Environment Programme and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (both from 2020 to 2025) that focus on supporting climate and environmental action, particularly in developing countries.

78. In September 2022, UNHCR and IPU co-curated a global parliamentary dialogue on the impact of climate change on displacement and human security, with the UNHCR Special Adviser on Climate Action and the participation of more than 100 parliamentarians worldwide. The webinar aimed to enhance understanding of the linkages between climate change, displacement and human security for parliamentarians.

79. In 2023 and 2024, regional seminars in San José and Port of Spain brought together parliamentarians from Latin America and the Caribbean to enhance climate action. The national Parliaments of Costa Rica and Trinidad and Tobago hosted these

events in partnership with IPU and with UNDP support. At the seminars, recommendations were discussed pertaining to the alignment of national legislation with international climate agreements, advocating for accessible climate finance for vulnerable nations and the bolstering of regional cooperation through initiatives like the Bridgetown Initiative on loss and damage funding.

80. In October 2024, UNDP and IPU held an expert consultation at the margins of the 149th IPU Assembly on parliamentary engagement in digital policy, focusing on key issues such as privacy, data protection, Internet governance, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence.

81. During the 19th annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Riyadh in December 2024, IPU and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs convened a discussion on global digital governance. Over 90 parliamentarians from more than 35 countries, as well as representatives from the European Parliament and the Pan-African Parliament, exchanged views with other stakeholders on key international Internet governance processes, such as the Global Digital Compact and the World Summit on the Information Society review process.

## **IV. Partnerships**

### **A. Partnerships, senior-level interactions and specialized meetings**

82. Efforts to enhance the interactions between the United Nations and IPU have been undertaken at the highest level, allowing an open channel between the leadership of both organizations.

83. The Secretary-General, his Chef de Cabinet and other senior United Nations officials met regularly with the President and the Secretary General of IPU. The Chef de Cabinet participated in three meetings of the Preparatory Committee of the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, to be held in July 2025.

84. The annual United Nations-IPU parliamentary hearings took place in 2022, 2023 and 2024. The hearings offered important opportunities to discuss parliamentary inputs into the United Nations system. The 2022 hearing was on the theme “Building political support and inclusive responses to sustainable recovery”. In 2023, the hearing was focused on “Water for people and planet: stop the waste, change the game, invest in the future”. The 2024 hearing was held in February 2024 under the theme “Putting an end to conflicts: prescriptions for a peaceful future” and contributed to enhancing parliamentary deliberations on the Summit of the Future, while also emphasizing the importance of parliamentary diplomacy for peace.

85. The Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth participated in the 148th IPU Assembly and the meeting of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians on the occasion. Youth representatives from ILO, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, OHCHR and WHO contributed to an “open session” of the Forum, which took place during the October 2024 Assembly.

86. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and UNDP collaborated with parliamentarians on various initiatives to enhance women’s electoral and political participation in the Arab region. One example is the 2023 inauguration of the Arab Leadership Academy for Women, at which women leaders, including parliamentarians, gathered in Madrid to support women’s transformational leadership. Another example is a 2024 conference held with the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies, held in Amman, on conducting elections in complex and uncertain environments.

87. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has been working with the parliaments of the region in relation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In October 2023, ECLAC and the organization ParlAmericas signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen joint work on sustainable development for the coming two years.

## **B. Development of tools and knowledge products**

88. The wide-ranging cooperation between the United Nations, parliaments and parliamentary organizations has resulted in the development of tools and knowledge products. In November 2023, the indicators for democratic parliaments were launched as a collaborative initiative by UN-Women, UNDP, IPU, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Fundación Directorio Legislativo, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, the National Democratic Institute and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. This comprehensive self-assessment tool allows parliaments to evaluate their capacity and practices against democratic standards, regardless of their political system or stage of development.

89. In 2023 and 2025, UN-Women and IPU published a map of women in politics, which presents new data for women in executive positions and national parliaments. In June 2023, IPU and OHCHR published a new version of a handbook for parliamentarians on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol. The handbook aims to support parliaments in translating the Convention into national legislation and policies.

90. In October 2023, OHCHR and IPU jointly published “Parliaments and Human Rights: A Self-Assessment Toolkit”, which was designed to help parliaments to better integrate human rights into their work and empower parliamentarians as champions of human rights for their constituents.

91. In 2023, UNDP published “Stepping Forward: Parliaments in the Fight Against Hate Speech”, which identifies and promotes specific actions by parliaments and other key actors working in partnership with them to address hate speech and its negative impact on public and political dialogue. UNDP also developed a guide on the use of future-thinking in parliaments, featuring insights from 15 countries.

92. In May 2024, the Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement in Preventing and Countering Terrorism, established by the Office of Counter-Terrorism with the support of the Shura Council of Qatar, launched a handbook to serve as a reference and guidance for parliamentarians to propose, discuss, amend and adopt legislation and national strategies relating to countering terrorism, in line with Security Council resolution [1373 \(2001\)](#).

93. The Internet Governance Forum Parliamentary Track developed a toolkit for parliamentarians on key Internet and digital policy issues and related processes and organizations.

## **V. Observations and recommendations**

94. **In the face of mounting global challenges, the multilateral system, with the United Nations at its centre, is more effective when parliaments and parliamentarians are engaged in its work. Parliaments can play a unique role in helping to counteract the erosion of trust between international institutions and the people they serve, by helping to translate global agendas into concrete deliverables at the national level, and by improving deliberative, inclusive and**

participatory models of engagement, thereby reasserting their roles as advocates for transparency, accountability and inclusive development. The United Nations continues to reinforce its partnerships with the parliamentary community and to support these efforts, helping to empower parliaments to bridge divides and foster a cohesive, resilient multilateral system that effectively addresses shared global challenges.

95. The Pact for the Future marks a milestone in global efforts to renew multilateralism and strengthen global cooperation. Around 80 per cent of all the commitments contained in the Pact are directed to Member States. Parliamentary engagement will be essential to translate those commitments into action at the national level.

96. In its resolution [76/270](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report with a special focus on the importance of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in parliaments. Despite global efforts and commitments, women's representation in parliaments remained at 27 per cent in 2024. According to IPU, in the 53 countries where parliamentary renewals in lower or single chambers were held in 2024, 30 countries saw either a decline, stagnation or marginal increase in women's representation, compared with gains in just 23 countries. If current trends continue, gender parity in parliaments remains a distant dream, potentially not achievable until 2063, according to the annual report "Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: the gender snapshot 2024".<sup>2</sup>

97. The lack of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in political processes has implications for achieving all of the Sustainable Development Goals, not least by pushing the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda to the back of the list of legislative and policy priorities. If current trends continue, it will still take a staggering 134 years to achieve gender parity. For as long as gendered power inequalities, patriarchal social structures, biases, violence and discrimination hold back half of our societies, sustainable development, as well as peace, will remain elusive.

98. Given the important role played by parliaments in translating global agendas into concrete realities at the national level, the following recommendations are submitted for consideration to achieve a more systematic engagement between parliaments and the United Nations and to increase the representation and participation of women in parliaments:

(a) In line with Action 55 of the Pact for the Future, I encourage Member States to participate fully in the joint annual parliamentary hearings at the United Nations. I urge Member States to ensure that their parliamentary delegations include an equitable representation of women;

(b) I encourage the General Assembly to consider standardizing the contribution and participation of parliaments in major United Nations meetings in a manner that recognizes the distinct role of parliaments versus that of civil society, the business community and other constituencies;

(c) I call upon Member States, within relevant governing bodies, to consider ways to develop concrete modalities for the enhanced systematic engagement of parliaments with the United Nations resident coordinators and country teams, accompanied by regular reporting;

(d) I encourage Member States to promote the engagement and support of parliaments in the follow-up and review processes of the achievement of the

<sup>2</sup> See [www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2024](https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2024).



Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in the preparation of voluntary national reviews, to strengthen national ownership and accountability, as called for by the General Assembly in its resolution [77/159](#);

(e) Member States should also consider adopting concrete measures to enhance women's participation in parliamentary processes, as highlighted in the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women general recommendation No. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems, such as the adoption of ambitious and enforceable gender electoral quotas aimed at achieving equal and inclusive representation, measures to ensure the elimination of violence against women in politics, and measures to support to the election of diverse groups of women. I am confident that developing institutions that are gender-sensitive is a key element in promoting more women in decision-making positions, including in parliament;

(f) In addition, I encourage national parliaments to capitalize on the above-mentioned general recommendation No. 40, in which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommends that States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women ensure gender parity in decision-making, and which presents an opportunity for parliaments to take active measures to ensure that national laws, policies, actions, programmes and budget reflect the principles towards achieving equal and inclusive representation of women in all decision-making systems across all sectors, and advance towards a systemic change in governance;

(g) I encourage national parliaments to invest in gender audits. In this context, I welcome the important role played by women's parliamentary caucuses as effective actors in bringing together women parliamentarians across political parties to create an opportunity for advancing legislative reforms and parliamentary oversight around common goals for gender equality and women's empowerment, including promoting inclusive peace and security agendas;

(h) I also call upon Member States to enforce legal and political reforms to change the norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequality. This must include the reform, amendment or repeal of existing discriminatory laws. National parliaments need to be adequately equipped to investigate each piece of legislation from a gender perspective and to strengthen gender mainstreaming through the capacity development of parliamentary staff and portfolio committees, which will go a long way towards ensuring that gender awareness and the necessary skills exist at all levels of the institution, and preventing and addressing implicit bias and gender stereotypes. I encourage national parliaments to make use of legislated quotas and other temporary special measures as part of a strategy to achieve the de facto equality of women with men in the enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(i) While levels of violence against women parliamentarians and hate speech offline and online continue to rise, most parliaments still lack sexual harassment policies for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. Member States should foster a safe and inclusive environment that encourages the full participation of women in parliaments. Member States should urgently make efforts to intensify legislative and policy initiatives aimed at eradicating violence against women in politics. These should include the effective implementation of parliamentary protocols and ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable, as well as legislation designed to ensure accountability for sexism and misogyny in the media and social media and prevent the perpetuation of stereotypes of women in decision-making.