

IPU and UN launch World e-Parliament Report 2008

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The first World e-Parliament Report 2008 was launched today at the United Nations in New York. The publication is timely. Anders Johnsson, IPU Secretary General, reported that only ten percent of 105 parliamentary chambers recently surveyed were making extensive use of ICT. "Much more needs to be done" he said "to boost the use of modern communication technologies in parliament".

The IPU has partnered with UNDESA in producing the report. Speaking alongside Sha Zukang, United Nations Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, and Gertrude Mongella, President of the Pan-African Parliament, Mr. Johnsson said that ICT was a key tool in making parliaments more transparent, more accessible to the public, and thus more democratic.

The Report offers a valuable evidence base to show how parliaments are using ICT. It is a mine of information for parliaments seeking to develop these facilities, and a practical tool for tracking progress. The next edition is planned for the year 2010.

After the launch, a high-level dialogue was held on the Right of Access to Information. Participants included Katalin Szili, Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary, Mechtilde Rothe, Vice President of the European Parliament, and Geoff Q. Doidge, House Chairperson of the National Assembly of South Africa. The launch of the report coincided with the second high-level meeting of the Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament.

Established in 1889 and with Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the IPU - the oldest multilateral political organization in the world - currently brings together 146 affiliated national parliaments and seven associated regional assemblies. The world organization of parliaments also has an Office in New York, which acts as its Permanent Observer to the United Nations.

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