



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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Geneva, 15 September 2014

Office of the
IPU President

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

I am pleased to share with you the first draft of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the result of extensive consultations conducted by a Working Group of the United Nations General Assembly over the past year and a half.

As I have written on several occasions during this time, there is no agenda more important for the health of the planet and the well-being of people that governments will need to adopt by the end of next year than the SDGs. The IPU has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure that the voice of parliaments is heard in this debate. Among other things, we have developed several key messages on reforming the economic model of development so that it is not focused on pure economic growth alone, on instilling the SDGs with a strong gender dimension, and, most critically, on including a stand-alone goal on democratic governance as both an end and a means to development.

While the proposed SDGs are too numerous, and some are clearly lacking in one aspect or another, they also contain many elements that point us in the right direction. For example, I am delighted to see a goal on reducing inequality, which would be a huge step forward in the way we approach many other issues, including poverty. I am also very pleased that gender equality and women's empowerment are being addressed both as a goal and through specific targets within the entire SDGs framework.

Most of all, I am extremely pleased with the proposal for a goal (number 16) "to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels." This is the equivalent of the democratic governance goal that most of us have been advocating for years. It contains a number of targets that speak directly to our concerns, such as one (16.6) to "develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels", and another (16.7) to "ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels".

While parliaments are not explicitly mentioned in this goal, in spite of our campaign to that effect, they are very clearly implied. Through our New York Office and other channels, we will continue to push for parliaments to be featured in either one of the targets or the indicators that will eventually be elaborated to monitor progress on the implementation of the goal. A second round of negotiations involving the entire membership of the United Nations is likely to resume in January and may take several months to conclude.

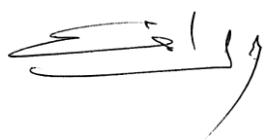
I encourage you to circulate the attached report to all members of your parliament, to engage with your foreign minister, and to ensure maximum visibility and debate on this issue. In addition to engaging with the government side, this is also a good time to begin spreading the word to constituents so that they can better appreciate the relevance of this agenda to their lives.

For our part, our institutional commitment to the post-2015 agenda and attendant SDGs remains firm. We will explore a specific angle of the matter at the forthcoming Parliamentary Hearing on 19 and 20 November, in New York, and make this the main theme of the General Debate at the 132nd Assembly in Hanoi, Viet Nam.

As this is likely my final communication to all IPU Members before the end of my term as President in just a few weeks' time, let me take this opportunity to say what a great honour it has been for me to serve you, and what an immense sense of satisfaction this mandate has brought me. It is particularly gratifying that I should devote this last letter to the SDGs.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration and support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a cursive name.

Abdelwahad Radi