



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

+41 22 919 41 11
+41 22 919 41 60
postbox@ipu.org

Chemin du Pommier 5
Case postale 330
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland
www.ipu.org

Geneva, 22 February 2021

Office of the
Secretary General

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

I am pleased to take this opportunity to update you on developments in the organization of the work of the IPU for the months ahead.

Since the beginning of the year, the Executive Committee (ExCom) has held three sessions to deliberate on the function and activities of the Organization. Below is a briefing on the outcome of its deliberations.

In view of the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic and its impact, the 142nd IPU Assembly will be held on 24-28 May 2021 in virtual format. The ExCom has established a Working Group to examine the implications of such an unprecedented virtual Assembly and to find the best possible solutions, including in terms of drafting special/simplified Rules of Procedure to govern its deliberations. We expect to be able to provide more detailed information in the coming weeks.

As you know, the current IPU Strategy will end at the end of the year. The Executive Committee is giving high priority to its revision. It would like for the process to be Member-driven so that the revised Strategy reflects the vision of the broad Membership of the Organization. It has therefore endorsed a methodology and roadmap that will be as inclusive as possible. It hopes that it can count on all Members and Geopolitical Groups to actively engage in this process. We will shortly be sending you a separate communication on this issue.

Universal membership remains a top strategic objective for the IPU, which will require coordinated efforts by the IPU President, Secretary General, the Secretariat and in fact by all Members and Geopolitical Groups. I am pleased to share the background note that has been examined and endorsed by the ExCom, with recommendations for specific actions to be undertaken, and would very much welcome your active engagement in meeting this goal. My colleagues and I will be pleased to answer any questions and/or provide additional information.

Transparency and accountability is also a very important goal for our Organization. At one of its previous meetings in 2020, the Executive Committee endorsed the findings and recommendations of an independent consultant on a Comprehensive Transparency, Accountability and Openness Strategy for the IPU. I am pleased to share this Report with all Members of the IPU, with the request that Members kindly review it and send us their feedback so that the Secretariat can work on implementing the recommendations of the report. It would be appreciated if we could receive your feedback by 30 March 2021.

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In the course of this year, the IPU's governing bodies will be examining the Report of an independent consultant on IPU's political project at the United Nations. Cooperation has been growing steadily over the years, as reflected in the increasing number of agreements signed between the IPU and the United Nations. On 27 January, I circulated to all Members two Memoranda of Understanding that had been endorsed by the Executive Committee – one with the Office of the UN High Commissioner and Human Rights, the other with the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. As per the special rules of procedure for the Governing Council, we had only received one objection within the established deadline of 15 days and shall therefore now proceed to finalize and sign these agreements with the partners concerned.

I would also like to share with you the text of an additional MoU with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which the Executive Committee reviewed and endorsed at its meeting on 8 February. This MoU is consistent with the IPU Strategy and programme of work, and I very much hope that you can support it. The special rules of procedure shall also apply in this case. Should you have any objections, I would kindly request that these be transmitted to the IPU Secretariat in writing by 10 March.

My colleagues and I are committed to keeping you informed on a regular basis on developments within the Organization, especially during these challenging times. I thank you for your kind understanding and support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Martin Chungong', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Martin Chungong
Secretary General