



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

**130**  
years of  
empowering  
parliamentarians

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

## Press Release

### Multilateralism and inter-parliamentary cooperation strengthened during pandemic

*Geneva, 23 April 2020. For immediate release.*

On International Day of Multilateralism on 24 April, information collected by the IPU shows that parliaments all over the world are working together in their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through its campaign [Parliaments in a time of pandemic](#), the IPU is helping to facilitate inter-parliamentary coordination and solidarity by collating and sharing examples of how parliaments can continue to legislate, debate and scrutinize the actions of government in a time of lockdown and social distancing.

“The IPU, throughout its long history, has always stood for the principle that global challenges require global responses,” said Gabriela Cuevas, IPU President. “Only through collective action and reaction can we confront threats to humanity such as this pandemic. Our Organization has always seen its essential mission as bringing together the parliaments of the world – not only to strengthen the foundations of democracy at the national level, but also to develop joint solutions to international problems.”

“The clue is in our name,” said Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General. “It’s in times like these that inter-parliamentary unity and international solidarity with other multilateral organizations are so important. The World Health Organization is the premier body leading the global effort, supporting countries to prevent, detect and respond to the pandemic. Now, more than ever, it needs the support of our Member Parliaments in a spirit of solidarity and multilateralism to end the pandemic.”

The IPU’s [country-by-country compilation](#) of parliamentary responses to the pandemic shows that parliaments are adapting to the health crisis by putting in place the same public health and social distancing measures as schools, places of worship or businesses.

Most parliaments are continuing to function by reducing physical meetings and moving online despite the security, technology and procedure challenges that come with virtual sittings.

Parliaments’ efforts to continue to function during the pandemic are also intended to defend democracy. As well as supporting government efforts to manage the health and economic crisis, many parliaments are ensuring that the emergency does not bypass democratic processes.

Parliaments that have fast-tracked some of the technology for videoconferencing and remote working, such as Argentina, Canada, Chile, Finland and Spain, are sharing their experiences with other, smaller parliaments. The National Congress of Brazil is also actively sharing its technology solutions for virtual plenaries and teleworking with other parliaments.

The IPU is currently facilitating discussions between technology giants and parliaments to discuss IT packages better tailored to parliaments' specific needs when it comes to virtual sittings.

Regional parliamentary bodies have also stepped up to share best practices. For example, ParlAmericas, a permanent observer to the IPU made up of 35 parliaments in the Americas and the Caribbean, is organizing online events to encourage exchanges between parliamentary staff on how to organize virtual parliamentary meetings.

Similarly, the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie, an IPU Associate Member, is sharing initiatives between its member parliaments to counter the effects of the pandemic.

The IPU has also produced guidance notes, drawing from examples around the world, to help parliaments take into account both a [gender](#) and a [human rights](#) perspective in their response to the pandemic.

### ***Support for the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund***

The IPU has called on its Member Parliaments to support the World Health Organization (WHO) through the [COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund](#), a partnership between the WHO, the United Nations Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation.

The Fund is designed to raise money to support the work of WHO and partners to help countries respond to the pandemic, including financing personal protective equipment for front-line health workers, boosting laboratory capacity through training and equipment, and accelerating efforts to fast-track vaccines, diagnostics and treatments.

### ***Forthcoming virtual events on multilateralism and inter-parliamentary cooperation***

The IPU is organizing or participating in a number of virtual events on International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, and over the next few days, to help parliaments respond to the pandemic.

- *Virtual Parliamentary Briefing on Pandemics with a Special Focus on COVID-19*

**Friday, 24 April, 15.00–16.30 CEST.** More information <http://www.parlnet.org/node>

IPU President Gabriela Cuevas will join representatives from the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

- *One Planet, One Humanity*

**Friday, 24 April, 12.30–14.30 EDT and 18.30–20.30 CEST.**

Join the conversation at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83261541814?pwd=UFB6aWZJZWxRMIRYaFhaV1o1VUU4UT09>

A virtual panel for parliamentarians to discuss the relevance of multilateralism in the face of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Panellists will include Gabriela Cuevas, IPU President; Fabrizio Hochschild, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General; Juan

Carlos Romero, Argentinian Senator and President of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs; and Mladen Grujić, Serbian MP and member of the IPU Executive Committee.

- *UN Geneva Multilateralism in the time of COVID-19*

**Friday, 24 April, 10.30–11.30 CEST.** Watch live <http://webtv.un.org/>

IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong will join the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, and other heads of international organizations in a virtual conversation with students.

- *Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic: parliamentary action to reduce risks, increase resilience and strengthen emergency preparedness*

**Tuesday, 28 April, 14.00–15.00 CEST.** More information <https://bit.ly/3brQXkV>

IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong will join Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, and Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk and Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, in a webinar designed for parliamentarians.

\*\*\*

*The IPU is the global organization of national parliaments. It was founded 130 years ago as the first multilateral political organization in the world, encouraging cooperation and dialogue between all nations. Today, the IPU comprises 179 national Member Parliaments and 13 regional parliamentary bodies. It promotes democracy and helps parliaments become stronger, younger, gender-balanced and more diverse. It also defends the human rights of parliamentarians through a dedicated committee made up of MPs from around the world. Twice a year, the IPU convenes over 1,500 parliamentary delegates and partners in a world assembly, bringing a parliamentary dimension to global governance, including the work of the United Nations and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

For more information about the IPU, contact Thomas Fitzsimons at email: [press@ipu.org](mailto:press@ipu.org) or [tf@ipu.org](mailto:tf@ipu.org) or tel: +41(0) 79 854 31 53