



Activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2008



Inter-Parliamentary Union – 2009

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Foreword

For the IPU, the year 2008 began and ended with all eyes on the Middle East. In January, the President paid an official visit to Jerusalem and Ramallah for talks with the leaders of the Israeli and Palestinian Parliaments and Governments. The Committee on Middle East Questions visited the region a few months later to make plans to re-start direct dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian lawmakers. During the 118th Assembly, the IPU governing bodies decided to make the statutory changes that would permit the Parliament of Palestine to become a full member of the Organization. This objective was achieved during the 119th Assembly and the Parliament of Palestine became the 154th Member on 15 October.

The IPU expressed grave concern at the worsening humanitarian situation in the Middle East. Delegates to the 118th Assembly added an emergency item to the agenda and adopted a resolution in which they called for an end to the blockade of Gaza and progress towards the conclusion of peace and the establishment of a Palestinian State. As the year came to a close and violence and conflict erupted once again, the President called for an immediate ceasefire and a return to the negotiating table. Decades of conflict have proven beyond doubt, he said, that armed force and violence will never bring peace to the Middle East.

The IPU is founded on the notion that conflicts are solved through dialogue and reconciliation. This implies a need for robust parliaments that can legislate and oversee the executive on behalf of all the people. To this end, the IPU assisted many parliaments during the year through capacity building projects. It launched a new programme which seeks, in the first instance, to help African parliaments achieve reconciliation. It began with a regional parliamentary seminar in Sierra Leone, followed by a highly successful exercise in Kenya. The IPU is assisting other parliaments, such as that of Burundi, in a similar fashion. Much of this work was showcased during panel discussions which the IPU held during its 118th Assembly and, later in the year, at the United Nations.

Throughout the year, the IPU worked steadfastly in support of development. *Pushing back the frontiers of poverty* was the theme for the 118th Assembly in Cape Town. Delegates heard key-note presentations on water and sanitation issues, and on climate change, and were briefed on practical ways to alleviate poverty before exchanging views on the subject in the general debate.

The parliamentarians held a separate debate on parliamentary oversight of State policies on foreign aid. They compiled a checklist of actions parliaments can take to secure ownership of national development strategies and give greater transparency and accountability to development cooperation assistance. This theme was central to the year's work. Building on the debate in Cape Town and a separate follow-up "stakeholder" meeting in Rome, the IPU provided parliamentary input to the newly established United Nations Development Cooperation Forum. Similarly, the Organization contributed to the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra in September and helped make sure that parliaments are now party to global efforts to increase the effectiveness of development assistance.

The 118th Assembly also featured a discussion on maternal, newborn and child health along with a meeting organized with *Countdown to 2015*, a collaborative effort by individuals and institutions to track progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 to reduce child and maternal mortality. Both events gave rise to many valuable examples of how parliaments can push for the attainment of the MDGs.

At the same time, delegates met to discuss the worsening economic outlook. A panel discussion offered stern warnings of a global economic crisis in the making. Six months later, the 119th Assembly held an emergency debate on the global financial and economic crisis in which delegates called for stronger parliamentary involvement in the transparency and accountability of the financial sector. They also enjoined the IPU governing bodies to convene a global parliamentary conference on the crisis.

The IPU celebrated the first International Day of Democracy on 15 September. The organisation mobilized Parliaments everywhere and many of them set up events to mark the day. Materials were produced to assist the parliaments which highlighted the *1997 Universal Declaration on Democracy*. The President addressed a special session of the Hellenic Parliament and a panel discussion took place at Headquarters that for the first time in IPU's history was webcast to the world. The Day was used to reach out to young people, inform citizens about the work of parliament, and debate challenges to democracy.

Building on its ground-breaking study *Parliaments and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: A Guide to Good Practice* the IPU released a self assessment toolkit to help parliaments identify their strengths and weaknesses. It also began work on mapping the representation of minorities in parliament as part of a multi-year program to develop the five core definitions of a democratic parliament set out in the guide: representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective.

The IPU commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* at a meeting of members of the parliamentary human rights community where they discussed the Declaration's achievements and challenges. The 118th Assembly debated human rights in relation to migrant workers, trafficking and xenophobia, while the Governing Council adopted a policy to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the work of the Organization.

The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians handled a growing workload and undertook missions in support of members of parliament under threat in Sri Lanka. The IPU also implemented a programme to empower French speaking parliaments in West Africa to address their respective country's compliance with international human rights conventions and commitments.

Work to promote gender equality and women's participation in political life continued unabated. For the third consecutive year, the IPU held a regional conference on women in decision-making in the Gulf region, while starting similar activities in the Pacific region. The organization also started a program of activities to help parliaments address violence against women and held a first debate on the subject at a special meeting of members of parliamentary committees on the status of women.

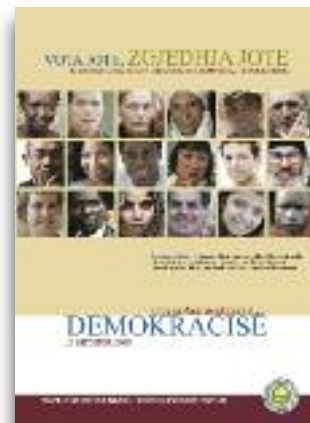
Significant advances were made in the quest to establish more robust cooperation between parliaments and the United Nations. A steadily growing partnership is developing, with the IPU now mobilizing parliamentary involvement in several United Nations processes, notably the Peacebuilding Commission, the Democracy Fund and the Development Cooperation Forum. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on cooperation between the two institutions which acknowledges this new reality and sets an ambitious agenda for future cooperation.

Much of what the IPU achieved in the course of the year was carried out in collaboration with the United Nations System and frequently with its direct support. Particular mention may be made of IPU's cooperation with UNICEF which manifested itself in a series of activities on a broad variety of child protection issues. The Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs became operational in 2008 and undertook its first field mission in support of the agenda set by the Committee to examine United Nations reform.

The IPU made significant strides towards achieving universality. A record number of eight parliaments joined the Organization in 2008 bringing the membership total to 154 parliaments. Together they represent a strong and committed membership that participates actively in the Organization's activities and nurtures its further development. Their commitment and support and that of a growing number of donors will be paramount as the IPU sets out to meet the challenges of an unstable world.



Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General





Working for better democracies

Democratization is a continuing process for all parliaments, and much of the IPU's recent work has been devoted to promoting sound democratic practice within parliaments. To do this effectively, the IPU relies upon the collective expertise of its members. The exercise also draws on the principles set out in the landmark 2006 publication *Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century* which illustrates a set of criteria for a democratic parliament by quoting a wide range of good practices from many parliaments. This practical approach was taken a step further with the publication of a self-assessment toolkit for parliaments in September. The toolkit was showcased at a workshop on parliamentary benchmarks and indicators in Brisbane, and formed the basis for a successful workshop during the IPU Assembly in October. The first two self-assessments were then held in Rwanda and Sierra Leone in December.

Recent years have seen a surge in efforts by parliaments to establish standards of integrity for their members through principles or codes of conduct with a view to curbing declining public confidence in parliamentarians and their institution. In general such codes recognize that membership of parliament is a public service, and set standards of behaviour for members. They assist MPs in avoiding or confronting the ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest that arise in the course of parliamentary work. The IPU has helped parliaments develop their own codes, drawing both on international best practice and the traditions of the parliament in question.

In seeking to meet modern criteria for sound practice, an increasing number of national parliaments are also developing strategic or corporate plans which set out their vision, mission and values, and identify medium-term priorities and strategies to achieve them. These strategic plans then inform annual work-plans, which tie activities to agreed objectives and overall institutional development. Strategic planning activities were held in Timor-Leste and Sierra Leone in 2008, and plans are afoot to undertake a similar exercise in the Maldives.

Alongside these efforts, a joint project with UNDP, funded by Canada's CIDA, is currently looking at the representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliament. The project aims to find out more about the representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliament and fashion tools for parliaments and others on promoting inclusive parliaments. A first meeting of its Advisory Group in September prepared a questionnaire to be distributed to parliaments in early 2009.



2008 also saw the publication of an IPU study on parliamentary oversight that examines the machinery that drives oversight activities. It gives an inventory of the tools that are commonly found in plenary and in committee work, where detailed scrutiny of government policies tends to be done best. By developing a catalogue of tools for parliamentary oversight, the study invites parliaments to examine their own practices, and offers a range of examples from national parliaments that may be of wider interest.

Research has also been conducted into parliamentary careers, professional development and capacity building programmes for parliamentarians. An international review was made of the nature, content and andragogy of induction and professional development programmes for parliamentarians. This project is being built into a comprehensive applied research programme, investigating, developing and communicating effective induction and career development models according to the particular needs of members of parliaments, having regard to the constitutional structure, stage of democratisation and other features.

In a first effort to establish a baseline of how parliaments are using, or planning to use ICT to help them fulfil their responsibilities and to connect to their constituencies, the World e-Parliament Report 2008 was published in February in partnership with the United Nations and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The Report is based on the responses and comments provided by 105 assemblies.

Parliaments and reconciliation

The bulk of the IPU's parliamentary strengthening work is done with parliaments in countries emerging from wars and conflict. These parliaments often encounter crises deriving from their members' failure to agree on strategies for moving the parliament's work forward. The IPU has increasingly provided fast-track assistance to such parliaments to enable them to cope with these pressing challenges. It has also been increasingly involved in assisting parliaments in devising more inclusive approaches to decision-making, helping to strengthen post-conflict reconciliation. There are also activities to help parliaments play a role in the national reconciliation agenda, by - for example - providing the legal framework and resources for transitional justice.

An strong parliament sends a clear sign to the people that the democratic order that broke down in a conflict is being restored and that the country's public institutions can be trusted once again. A regional seminar was held in June in Sierra Leone to help strengthen the role of parliaments in English-speaking Africa in their national reconciliation processes. Organised by the IPU and hosted by the Parliament of Sierra Leone, it was the first activity under a three-year IPU project aimed at helping the Parliaments of Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda establish, monitor and follow up on the work of transitional justice mechanisms and strengthen inclusive political processes.

Just prior to this, the IPU held a panel discussion on "Parliaments, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation" in New York, working jointly with the UN's Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The key speakers were Dr. Ginwala, former Speaker of the South African Parliament, Senator Ntibantunganya, former President of Burundi, Senator Green of Mexico, and Ambassador Takasu of Japan, Chairman of the PBC. General Assembly resolution A/63/24 invited the PBC to continue to work closely with the IPU in countries under consideration by the Commission in efforts to promote democratic governance, national dialogue and reconciliation.

Oversight of the security sector

The IPU also seeks to promote a culture of civilian control of the security sector in each country. In this endeavour, it has developed a fruitful partnership with the Geneva-based Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF). 2008 saw the expansion of this partnership to include the Institute for Security Studies of South Africa, with which the IPU and DCAF organised a sub-regional seminar in Angola for parliaments of the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum in February. This two-day seminar on *The Role of National Parliaments and the SADC Parliamentary Forum in Ensuring Security in Southern Africa* was attended by chairpersons and members of parliamentary defence and security committees, officials and staff from Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia. Participants debated the region's security challenges. They recognised that security has become a collective responsibility and parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, must be involved in the interests of transparency and accountability.





Engaging with the United Nations

Today the world faces a confluence of terrible crises that require radical changes in the international political and financial architecture. The food, energy and financial crises, all linked with climate change, are man-made problems and we must assume responsibility for solving them. Achieving these changes requires courageous, even heroic leadership at the national level. Visionary leadership is needed to assure that the breakdown we are witnessing does not turn into a prolonged tragedy for all humanity. Both Secretary-General Ban and I recognize that parliamentarians can provide crucial guidance and support to the United Nations to make sure that this Organization can meet the responsibilities that billions of people have entrusted in us.

Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann, President of the 63rd General Assembly of the United Nations

UN Member States endorse closer parliamentary involvement

Every second year, United Nations Member States review the cooperation between their Organization and the IPU. 2008 was one such year and both the UN Secretary-General's report and the discussions in the General Assembly were instructive. The extent, content and depth of the cooperation have grown significantly over the years to unprecedented levels. The resolution (A/63/24) that UN Member States adopted by consensus on 18 November invites the UN to consolidate its work with the IPU and amplify it still further.

Specifically, the resolution invites the IPU to extend its cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission, the Development Cooperation Forum and the Human Rights Council. It asks the IPU to fortify its contribution to the work of the General Assembly and the UN reforms. It supports the inclusion of members of parliament in national delegations to major United Nations summits and conferences in a more regular and systematic manner. The resolution also proposes a further enhancement of the annual joint UN/IPU Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations.

In a clear departure from previous years' resolutions, the 2008 version makes two proposals to build a more strategic relationship between the UN and the IPU. It endorses a proposal to bring

Photo : Newly elected IPU President Theo-Ben Gurirab, Speaker of the Parliament of Namibia, meets UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.

greater coherence to the work of the two organizations and maximize parliamentary support for the UN by instituting an annual exchange between the United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination and the IPU leadership. It also decides to include a dedicated item on the agenda of the UN General Assembly in two years time solely to discuss cooperation between the UN, parliaments and the IPU. The debate will allow UN Member States to concentrate on how best to build a strong parliamentary interaction with the United Nations system.

Development cooperation

Much of the work carried out at the 118th Assembly in Cape Town focussed on parliament's involvement in achieving the Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty, achieving gender equality, fostering maternal, child and infant health, and providing assistance towards development cooperation (see section 3 below). All of this fuelled the IPU's work with the United Nations during 2008 and throughout the year.

Annual parliamentary hearing

Under the joint auspices of the IPU and the Office the President of the UN General Assembly, the 2008 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations focused on "*Effective peacekeeping and the prevention of conflict: Delivering on our commitments*". The meeting was attended by over 250 legislators together with UN officials and representatives from the diplomatic community. There was a valuable exchange on the Responsibility to Protect, sexual violence against women and children in conflict, the human security approach to UN activities, and major challenges facing UN peacekeeping operations.

As proposed by the IPU and endorsed by the UN General Assembly, the summary report of the hearings will henceforth become an official document of the General Assembly.

The hearing followed the briefing which the IPU had organized in late September at UN Headquarters for members of parliaments accompanying heads of State and government attending the opening of the General Assembly. The briefing debated the question of democratization of the United Nations, which featured high on the agenda of the new President of the General Assembly, Fr. D'Escoto Brockmann. It also served as an encouragement for parliamentarians to attend meetings of the United Nations as part of their national delegations.

Human Trafficking

In Vienna in February the UN held a Global Forum to Fight Human Trafficking. An IPU Parliamentary Forum, hosted by the Austrian Parliament, took place as a prelude to the Forum.

The Parliamentary Forum provided an opportunity to examine ways in which parliaments and parliamentarians can be more actively involved in the global drive against human trafficking. It included a mock trial featuring British actress Emma Thompson to dramatize the need to give better care to the victims of human trafficking. The IPU and the UN are now preparing a handbook for parliamentarians on human trafficking.

Trade and development

The IPU was present at UNCTAD XII (Accra, 20-25 April), where it circulated a Parliamentary Message which the 118th IPU Assembly had adopted a few days earlier. The message, presented by the Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, reiterated the support of the IPU for the work of UNCTAD while conveying the views of parliaments with respect to the social and economic risks of globalization.

The IPU has continued to play a pivotal role in the process known as the *Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization* (WTO) - a permanent mechanism for parliamentary oversight of this inter-governmental body, its de facto parliamentary dimension. The annual 2008 session took place in Geneva on 11 and 12 September and was hosted by the IPU. It came at a crucial moment for the Doha Round of trade negotiations, with the future of the entire multilateral trading system hanging in the balance. The discussion focused on international trade and climate change, the role of trade in defusing the threat of conflicts over food and energy, trade in the era of digital revolution, and the long-term consequences of a protracted stalemate in WTO negotiations. The conference ended with a strong call for progress towards an agreement.



Children

Sexual exploitation

IPU and UNICEF teamed up to hold a regional seminar for parliaments of the CEE-CIS countries on sexual exploitation of children, which was hosted by the Parliament of Albania. It debated parliament's role in legislating to prevent and combat sexual exploitation of children. The meeting was organized as a contribution to the Third World Congress on Sexual Exploitation of children held in Rio de Janeiro in November.

Legislative reform

In New York in November, UNICEF held a two-day conference on making legal systems work to achieve children's and women's rights, with the IPU providing support on the parliamentary side.

Handbook on violence

Since the launch of the English version of the *Eliminating Violence against Children* handbook at the 116th Assembly, other language versions have been published, bringing to eight the number of translations, the latest being the Arabic version which came out in July.



Development and the Millennium Development Goals

Poverty reduction

The overriding theme of the Cape Town Assembly was poverty. Poverty is perhaps the single most acute handicap afflicting the world, the prime reason why human aspirations so rarely find fulfilment. Poverty paralyses democracy; when a person is hungry, no amount of freedom of speech will meet his or her basic needs. As U.S. Congressman Donald Payne said at the opening session, three billion people are living on less than two dollars a day; the rich are getting richer and the poor becoming ever more impoverished. More resources than ever before are available to combat poverty and the world should distribute its riches more equitably. Parliament should play its part in that endeavour. In an allied initiative, the Committee on United Nations Affairs addressed the global food crisis at its meeting in Geneva in October. It heard presentations from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization on the food crisis and its health implications. It held a debate on the topic, and identified possible avenues for action and cooperation by national parliaments.

Maternal and Newborn Health: Parliamentary action on MDGs 4 and 5

A meeting was held at the Assembly on maternal, newborn and child deaths in developing countries. Few of the 68 developing countries that account for 97% of maternal and child deaths worldwide provide the health care needed to save the lives of these women and children. The special session, set up with the support of the IPU's partners from the *Countdown to 2015* organisation, agreed that the IPU would assist parliaments to take action over the following twelve months and report on progress to the 120th IPU Assembly in 2009. Country specific information on the status of women and children was subsequently sent out and each parliament was encouraged to hold briefing sessions to see how to make more progress.

After an IPU/UNICEF panel discussion on the same subject, UNICEF organised a field visit to reinforce the theme. In the Western Cape members of parliament were shown an organisation that trains HIV-positive mothers with healthy babies to become community health advisors, the Isibindi programme which aims to create a caring community for children and youth who have been made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, especially in child-headed households, and Mount View Primary School, which implements the Safe and Caring Child Friendly School model.

Later in the year, the IPU, the World Health Organization and the Parliament of the Netherlands held a three-day conference on the theme of Maternal and Newborn Health and Survival in The Hague, in the presence of HRH Princess Máxima of the Netherlands.

HIV and AIDS

In June 2008, the IPU Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS attended the High Level Review Meeting of the General Assembly that reviewed progress in the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and

the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. In close cooperation with its partners UNDP and UNAIDS, the IPU organized a parliamentary briefing for members of parliament attending the high-level meeting, with a special focus on stigma and discrimination, criminalization of HIV transmission, access to treatment and HIV-related travel restrictions.

A parliamentary briefing was also organized at the XVII International AIDS Conference, the largest regular conference on any health or development issue, which took place in August in Mexico City. The participants urged parliaments to strengthen their own institutional capacity to address the epidemic, review existing laws and repeal discriminatory provisions. The IPU initiated and developed cooperation with other international actors active in the field, including participation in the International Task Team on HIV-related Travel Restrictions, an advisory group that established a set of recommendations towards the elimination of HIV-specific restrictions on entry, stay and residence.

Development financing

The 118th IPU Assembly discussed parliamentary oversight of State policies on foreign aid. The ensuing resolution recalled that the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness said that the role of parliaments in drawing up and overseeing national development strategies should be invigorated; that both donors and partner countries have a mutual responsibility for development outcomes; and aid must be aligned on the national development strategies of the partner countries. The parliamentarians invited donor country parliaments to ensure that their governments acted transparently and did not earmark resources in a way that was detrimental to the recipient countries' development. They invited donor and beneficiary country parliaments to sharpen their scrutiny of their respective government's foreign policy while ensuring that the policies of other ministerial departments likely to have an impact on developing countries were aligned with it; and stressed the importance of both donor and beneficiary country parliaments ensuring that ODA increases are backed by an improvement in good governance and measures to combat corruption.



In the same spirit, the IPU joined the group of organizations and countries that worked to develop the new United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). The IPU helped the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs organize a "Stakeholder Forum" on aid quality and effectiveness in Rome in June. The meeting included about forty members of parliament and produced several recommendations for the first substantive session of the DCF that took place in New York at the beginning of July.

The IPU participated actively in the DCF, reiterating the responsibility of parliaments in developing country ownership of aid. One key recommendation from the members of parliament was that aid should ideally be given to developing countries in the form of budget support. Only then would it be possible to perform proper parliamentary scrutiny to make sure that the money goes towards the priorities established by the recipient countries.

Dovetailing the IPU's work in the field of development cooperation, a parliamentary field mission to Tanzania took place on 8-10 September to report on the progress of the "One UN" strategy, as the streamlining of UN country operations is called, and the manner in which the UN works with parliament at the national level.

The mission was carried out by the Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on UN Affairs. It gathered information at first hand on how the UN is retooling at the country level to achieve more impact and maximize the benefit of the development funds it administers. It also helped to make sure that the national parliament is geared to the process and interacts directly with the United Nations in the country. The mission served to raise the political profile of the UN reform process and its recommendations were presented to the UN at a meeting in November. The exercise also responds to the recognition that parliaments have to play their part in ensuring national ownership of the development agenda and exercise oversight of development aid. Parliamentarians participated actively in the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra, Ghana in early September, and after that meeting, the OECD's DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness decided to extend its membership to the IPU. The IPU attended a meeting of the Working Party in December where follow-up to Accra was discussed.

The IPU ended the year with a substantive contribution to the financing for development process. President Gurirab delivered a parliamentary message to the Follow-up International Conference to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus that was held in Doha from 29 November to 2 December. The message stressed the need to re-focus financing on key development priorities such as employment, women, and agriculture.

To help mobilize parliaments on development financing issues, the IPU held a Parliamentary Hearing at the Doha conference on 28 November. Some fifty members of parliament attended the whole conference and interacted with government delegations at a number of round tables and side events. Dr. Gurirab presented a statement at the opening session, leading to a new acknowledgment by the conference of the role of parliaments in the Doha Declaration.

Climate change

Parliaments are at the forefront of efforts to tackle the challenge of climate change. "Greener" budgets, cleaner technologies and carbon offsetting all require solid legislative regulation. Within the IPU, a consensus has been mustered on the need for coordinated action to avert dangerous human interference in the climate system. After the Presidential Declaration on climate change, endorsed by the 116th Assembly in 2007, the IPU is trying to address it in a broader context, through linkages with various other aspects of economic, social and human development. An example of this was the thematic discussion on the subject *Can international trade help mitigate climate change?* held during the annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO in September.

Another panel discussion, on the theme *Climate change, sustainable development models, and renewable energies*, was held during the 119th IPU Assembly in October as part of the preparatory work on a resolution to be debated by the forthcoming IPU Assembly. The lively debate was useful inter alia for sketching a long-term strategy for the extensive use of renewable energies.

At the initiative of the Danish Folketing, the IPU has started preparing its contribution to the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which will take place in Copenhagen in December 2009. COP15 is expected to adopt a post-Kyoto accord, setting new terms for global climate cooperation.





Defending Human Rights

In 2008 the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians worked on 73 cases in 37 countries concerning 305 parliamentarians. Once again, the Committee was handling a heavy case-load, but it was encouraged by progress towards a satisfactory settlement in several cases. For the first time in its history the Committee helped arrange international forensic assistance for a longstanding murder investigation, that of Mongolian MP Zorig Sanjasuuren. Other cases saw more notable developments. In its longest-running case, that of Honduran MP Pavón Salazar, slain in 1988, the Committee's insistence that the murder of an MP should not go unpunished finally paid off. The Committee was also pleased at the release of certain members of parliament. Mr. Hussam Khader, a Palestinian parliamentarian, was finally freed by the Israeli authorities, as was his Palestinian colleague, Ms. Mariam Saleh. Six former Colombian MPs regained their freedom from Colombia's main guerrilla group, the FARC. These cases, outlined further below, are visible examples of the results produced in 2008, but the Committee handles and often resolves a great many situations under its confidential procedure which never become known to the wider public.

However, there were mounting concerns in several other cases. 2008 saw large-scale dismissals of parliamentarians in Ecuador, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A woman MP in Afghanistan continued to suffer the unjustified suspension of her parliamentary mandate. The IPU also remained preoccupied with the continued detention in Israel of 35 Palestinian MPs, and the murder of several parliamentarians in Sri Lanka.

When an MP is subject to legal action, whether through criminal proceedings or the revocation of the parliamentary mandate, the Committee's main concern is to ensure that such steps are taken in full accordance with the law and international legal standards. When parliamentarians are killed or under threat, the major challenge confronting the Committee is the impunity that often marks these abuses. It therefore systematically urges the authorities to carry out an investigation that will identify and bring the culprits to trial and, as appropriate, provide MPs with the protection they need.

Cases making decisive progress

Provision of forensic assistance in elucidating murder of Mongolian MP

Mr. Zorig Sanjasuuren was murdered in October 1998. Police investigations have reached a standstill and the source has always feared that the authorities may not be conducting the investigation with due diligence. During a Committee visit to Mongolia, the Mongolian authorities agreed that technical assistance from other countries would be helpful. Following a favourable answer from the German Chancellor, a Mongolian delegation went to Germany in June to analyse some of the evidence. The German authorities remain on stand-by to help their Mongolian counterparts with analysis of other items.

Honduras: persistence in longstanding murder case pays off

Mr. Miguel Angel Pavón Salazar, a member of the Honduran Congress, was shot dead on 14 January 1988. The judicial investigations, which established a link between his murder and evidence he gave in 1987 before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in cases against the Government of Honduras concerning disappearances, were finally reopened by the Public Prosecutor in July 1996. One of the two presumed murderers was later officially declared dead. The other, Jaime Rosales, was apprehended in 2003, and acquitted in 2004. The Appeals Court revoked the acquittal in 2006 and sentenced Mr. Rosales to a 20 year prison term. A petition in cassation was dismissed in 2007 by the Supreme Court, and Mr. Rosales is now serving his term at the San Pedro Sula national prison.

Freedom for six kidnapped Colombian MPs

In 2008, a small group of the roughly 700 hostages held by FARC, the main guerrilla group in Colombia, regained their freedom. They included the six (now former) parliamentarians who had been kidnapped between August 2000 and February 2002. Five of them were released by FARC at the beginning of 2008 after lengthy mediation by the regional and international community. Events took a spectacular turn when the Colombian armed forces freed Ms. Ingrid Betancourt, a former presidential candidate, and 14 others on 2 July.

On 25 October, the only remaining parliamentarian, Mr. Lizcano, escaped from the FARC camp where he was held along with a FARC member. His health had seriously worsened in captivity and his escape came just in time.



Release of two Palestinian members of parliament

Mr. Hussam Khader was convicted and sentenced to a seven-year prison term in 2005 on the basis of a plea bargain. The IPU trial observer, Mr. Simon Foreman, concluded that Mr. Khader "has not, since his arrest in March 2003, had the benefit of compliance with the international rules of fair trial". The IPU has consistently called for Mr. Khader's release. A second IPU observer, Mr. Sadakat Kadri, attended and reported on the proceedings for Mr. Khader's application for early release, which was dismissed in February, and concluded that the release committee's ruling was founded on allegations which the defendant and his lawyer "were not permitted to know, let alone test. Mr. Khader was released by the Israeli authorities on 25 August along with 199 other Palestinian prisoners as a goodwill gesture to the Palestinian Authority.

A member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Ms. Mariam Saleh, was arrested on 13 November 2007 and accused of membership in the Change and Reform bloc; membership in the Huda Society for Women; travelling abroad while Minister for Women's Affairs and meeting with Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and Khaled Mashaal; and other acts which the prosecution classified as confidential and refused to disclose to the defence. Following her release in mid-year, the IPU decided to close her case while deploring her arbitrary arrest and detention for seven months.

Situations of particular concern to the Committee

The unlawful dismissal of parliamentarians

Throughout its existence, the Committee has been seized with cases involving the allegedly unlawful dismissal of parliamentarians. The year 2008 saw the Committee examining three cases in each of which significant numbers of parliamentarians were ousted from parliament.

In Ecuador, more than half of the members of the national parliament were dismissed by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal in 2007 under a decision which the IPU qualified as legally unfounded. In 2008, two new cases were added to the Committee's docket. In Burundi, following internal dissent within the majority party, 22 members were expelled or resigned from their party and continued to sit in the National Assembly as independent members. Together with other opposition parliamentarians, they abstained from regular participation in the work of the Assembly, thereby denying it a quorum. Acting on a request from the Chairman of the majority party, the President of the National Assembly filed an application with the Constitutional Court to rule that the dissident majority parliamentarians held their seats unconstitutionally. The Court concurred and the parliamentarians were expelled. The IPU, along with the independent expert of the United Nations on the human rights situation in Burundi, expressed deep concern at this ruling, which failed to take account of the constitutional provisions on the loss of the parliamentary mandate. Moreover, the other members of parliament who were in the same situation did not suffer the same fate.

In another case, the mandates of 18 members of parliament, all declared elected in the first multiparty elections held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in July 2006, were invalidated by the Supreme Court of Justice in May 2007. The Supreme Court later recognized material errors in its decision and reinstated two of them, but took no action on requests for reinstatement by the

others. The IPU expressed concern at the arbitrary invalidation of the election results and considered that the Supreme Court's refusal to rule on all the applications for correction of material error was a denial of the fundamental right of access to justice. The Congolese authorities have since offered financial compensation to the victims for the prejudice suffered.

Woman parliamentarian in Afghanistan



Ms. Malalai Joya, one of the few woman parliamentarians in Afghanistan and a staunch critic of the former warlords, human rights violations and discrimination against women in her country, is no stranger to death threats. On 21 May 2007 the House of the People of Afghanistan suspended her parliamentary mandate until the end of her term after she spoke disparagingly of fellow members of parliament in a TV interview. In October, the Deputy Speaker of the House of the People told the Committee that the suspension was unlawful and that Joya should be reinstated as soon as possible. However, despite assurances that parliament would make every effort to reinstate her before the closure of the session in early December 2008, this has not yet happened.

Worsening human rights situation in Sri Lanka



In the past two years, an increasing number of cases of members of the parliament of Sri Lanka have gone to the Committee. Systematic harassment of opposition members of parliament, death threats, attacks on their offices, assassination attempts and killings were becoming almost routine. The Committee therefore welcomed the invitation from the Parliament of Sri Lanka to gather first-hand information on the situation of the 17 parliamentarians whose cases it was examining. The delegation, led by Canadian Senator and Committee Chair Sharon Carstairs, visited Colombo from 21 to 24 February, where they met President Rajapakse and most of the authorities and parliamentarians concerned. The delegation was able to clarify certain issues but remained deeply concerned at the impunity enjoyed by the culprits and the selective provision of security to parliamentarians under threat. Less than two weeks after the mission, Mr. K. Sivanesan, an opposition Tamil National Alliance MP was killed by a roadside bomb, and one month later Mr. Fernandopulle, Minister and Chief Government Whip, was murdered.

Continued detention of Members of the Palestinian Legislative Council

Thirty-five members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), all elected in the January 2006 legislative elections on the Change and Reform party list, were arrested by the Israeli authorities in the West Bank on or after 29 June 2006. PLC Speaker Dr. Abdel Aziz Dweik was arrested in August 2006. The charges brought are membership, leadership and action on behalf of a terrorist organization, Hamas. The IPU has always considered that their arrest and detention has nothing to do with any criminal activity on their part but is linked to their election on the Change and Reform list in a free and fair election, and has systematically called for their immediate release.

Other activities

Seminar for members of parliamentary human rights committees: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 60 years on

The seminar, a joint initiative of the IPU and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, offered a series of recommendations for parliamentary action to implement the vision that the Universal Declaration championed sixty years ago, urging parliaments and their members to become more actively involved in the work of the United Nations to promote and protect human rights.

Promoting human rights action by French-speaking African Parliaments

In 2008, IPU pursued its implementation of a project aimed at involving parliaments in the work of human rights treaty bodies with a series of follow-up seminars.

The follow-up seminar held in Togo in October yielded a number of results. Laws enabling ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons were passed and the two Protocols were finally ratified. Implementation of the national strategy elaborated by the Parliament of Mali included a forum on intercommunity dialogue and the promotion of human rights in Mopti in November 2008. Participants at the follow-up seminar in Brazzaville learned that the Steering Committee had set up three committees to provide it with technical support in carrying out its mission. Their work yielded a number of results, notably the reopening of the *Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature*, the establishment of an anti-rape squad, dissemination through the media of anti-torture Acts in police stations and army centres, visits by medical personnel to penitentiaries, and examination of legal instruments in the Congo to assess their compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.



Women in politics

The IPU provides sustained support to women in parliament. During the year, particular efforts were made in the direction of parliaments in the Arab and Pacific regions where women are very poorly represented. Meanwhile, the IPU gender programme continued to work closely with the United Nations, organizing an annual parliamentary contribution to the proceedings of the Commission on the Status of Women and bringing a growing parliamentary dimension to the CEDAW Convention and its reporting procedure. Valuable research was done on women in politics, and the IPU continues to be the prime source on the subject of women in parliament for the Millennium Development Goals Report and the UNDP Human Development Report. Much has also been achieved during the year in the area of violence against women. Last but not least, switching from its past practice of meeting in New York, the 2008 meeting of Women Speakers was held at the IPU Assembly in Cape Town, where it discussed combating poverty and investing in women.

Supporting parliaments in countries with poor female representation

Arab states

Women politicians from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen met to discuss partnership with the media and women's associations at the invitation of the IPU and the Shura Council of Oman. The conference took place in December in Muscat during the Third Regional Conference of Women Parliamentarians and Women in Political Decision-making Positions of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States. The discussion centered on how the media can highlight the ascendant role of women, and encourage the younger generation to enter the political arena.

Other events during the year included a seminar on CEDAW in Amman, and IPU participation in a UNDP regional conference on Women in Parliament in Arab States in Beirut.

Pacific Islands

At the Cape Town Assembly, the IPU Gender Partnership Group recommended that action be taken in the Pacific region which has the lowest worldwide overall representation of women. The IPU met with parliaments in Tonga and Papua New Guinea, and with regional and international organizations based in Fiji to discuss a programme to assist Pacific Island parliaments in bringing more women into parliament. Another workshop in Papua New Guinea targeted parliamentarians and officials in the Melanesian region.

Support to women in post-conflict countries

In partnership with the Parliament of Burundi, the IPU's most recent activities sought to promote legislative action in the area of equality and women's rights in Burundi. The women MPs also provided guidelines for a study to define priority laws. A resource centre on women's rights, gender issues and equality has been set up at the parliamentary library. More recently, MPs debated the role of parliament in implementing regional and international conventions on women's rights.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

In keeping with its yearly practice, the IPU and UNDAW held a joint event on the occasion of 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the CSW 2008 theme of financing for gender equality. The meeting looked at how parliamentarians can support gender equality by allocating more resources to women's issues, and the chair, Senator M. Xavier (Uruguay), reported on its conclusions to the plenary of the Commission. Meanwhile, a panel discussion organised with UNIFEM on political accountability to women and the role of women in politics discussed the conditions under which women in parliament have been able to improve public accountability to women and represent women's needs and interests.

CEDAW Annual seminar

The aim of the annual seminars is to seek opportunities for involving parliament more in both the reporting process that is inherent to the Convention, and the follow-up to the CEDAW Committee's concluding comments in regard to the reporting State. The sixth seminar was organised in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in October. The sessions focused on the role of parliaments in addressing laws that discriminate against women, and in overseeing proper implementation of the Convention.

Training for parliamentarians in ensuring the enforcement of the Convention is also part and parcel of IPU technical assistance projects. As mentioned above, the IPU fielded a project in Burundi, and after its government had reported to the UN Committee, a seminar was held in the country to discuss how parliament could act on the Committee's comments.

Research

Data released on International Women's Day

The 2008 World Map of Women in Politics was released at the United Nations to coincide with International Women's Day. The map is based on a yearly IPU survey to track the progress of women in politics by country and region. It reveals that a mere 17.7 percent of all parliamentary seats are occupied by women. The global figures conceal some interesting national and regional nuances. Improving on the figure of 18 three years ago, there are now 20 countries where women hold over 30 per cent of the seats in lower or single chambers. Importantly, there are now more countries passing the 40 per cent mark. Rwanda continues to top the list at 48.8 per cent women members, followed closely by Sweden with 47 per cent and Finland with 41.5 per cent. At the other end of the scale, there are seven parliaments with less than three per cent women members, and eight with no women at all in the legislature.



Survey on Equality in Politics

Conducted between 2006 and 2008, the survey collates the views on gender equality in politics of nearly 300 parliamentarians, both women and men, from 110 countries. More than 90 percent of the parliamentarians surveyed believed that women bring different views, talents and perspectives

to politics. Within parliaments, women are seeking to refashion legislative priorities to give more scope to their concerns. They are at the forefront of efforts to combat gender-based violence and are instrumental in bringing issues such as parental leave and child care, pensions and gender-equality onto the legislative agenda. They are least influential on legislation concerning finance, foreign affairs, national security and defence.

The study also found that the gender-based policies that women wish to pursue are sometimes at odds with party policy, suggesting a need for change at this level.

iKNOWPolitics

The IPU has continued to collaborate in the growing International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (www.iKNOWPolitics.org) with its partners, UNDP, UNIFEM, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

Latin America

A regional conference for parliamentarians from Latin America on how women are making a difference in parliaments was hosted by the Parliament of Uruguay in March, in cooperation with the IPU, International IDEA and the *Parlamenta* project.

Violence against Women

Signing up to the UNIFEM Campaign on Violence against Women

In October, Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, newly elected as IPU President, joined 200 other parliamentarians signing up to UNIFEM's *Say NO to Violence against Women* campaign at the 119th IPU Assembly in Geneva. In December, the IPU held a three-day conference on the parliamentary response to violence against women, bringing together members of parliamentary committees on gender issues to look at key priorities for MPs.

FGM event on 6 February

On the International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), representatives of international organizations, civil society and the cantonal authorities of Geneva gathered at the House of Parliaments for a panel discussion on female genital mutilation. The IPU called for international organizations, political and religious leaders, the media, civil society and the medical profession to join forces so that, within a generation, FGM would no longer be considered normal practice.





Technical cooperation projects

Through its technical cooperation programme, the IPU and its members¹ provide advice, guidance and technical support for parliaments, often in countries that are in political transition or emerging from wars, in order to help them fulfil their constitutional mandates. In 2008, the technical cooperation programme played an active part in reinforcing parliaments in Algeria, Burundi, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Laos, Maldives, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo and the United Arab Emirates, as detailed below.

Description of projects

Algeria

In November the IPU organised a mission to audit the administration of the parliament. The exercise encouraged staff members to assess their work and proposed recommendations to improve efficiency.

Burundi

In May and November the IPU fielded missions to work with the parliament in resolving the paralysis after a boycott by some of the members. The missions sought to encourage the parliament to develop more inclusive modes of decision-making which are much needed in post-conflict Burundi. This was done in the framework of the IPU good offices mechanism, which in the case of Burundi provides complementary support to the UN's peace-building efforts in the country.

Cambodia

The IPU worked with the UNDP in October to deliver an orientation seminar for the newly elected members of the National Assembly. Its objective was to provide participants with information and comparative legislative experience focusing on four topics: the overview of the institution and relationships, the role and responsibilities of a Member of Parliament, services available to Members of Parliament, and the functioning of parliament.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

In 2008, the IPU continued to work with UNDP with a view to putting in place a programme of assistance to the national and provincial parliaments. A mission was organised for this purpose in November to identify priorities, establish a work plan and secure agreement on its implementation, starting in 2009.

¹ In 2008 vital support for technical cooperation projects was received from the parliaments of Australia, Belgium, Benin, Burkina Faso, Denmark, France, Ireland, Kenya, South Africa, Switzerland, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe.

Equatorial Guinea

In December 2008, the IPU concluded a new agreement with the European Commission and the Government of Equatorial Guinea for the second phase of a project which will provide technical assistance to the parliament. The project is part of a wider programme for the improvement of governance and will strengthen the capacities of parliamentarians, particularly through parliamentary committees; train parliamentary staff; support and encourage women parliamentarians' political activity and build the parliament's potential to promote gender equality; and strengthen the parliament's representational capacity.

Laos

The IPU built on previous efforts initiated with UNDP to design and implement a project for assistance to the parliament. A joint IPU/UNDP mission took place in February to finalise the project. It will upgrade the capacity of parliamentarians and committees to understand and exercise their functions, while improving the efficiency of the National Assembly secretariat in delivering services to the parliament.

Maldives

Following an IPU needs assessment mission in October, the IPU and UNDP concluded an agreement in December to implement a three-phase project that will assist the parliament in preparing a code of ethics, drafting a strategic plan and devising a staff development plan.

Pakistan

In May the IPU organised a mission to review project activities and assist the project management unit to develop a work plan for activities in 2008. The project has been designed jointly by IPU and UNDP, after consultations with the Senate and National Assembly during a formulation mission in November 2003. The main aim of the project is to support effective and efficient parliamentary procedures, services, management and administration to help members and staff of both houses to perform their oversight, legislative and representative functions.

Sierra Leone

The IPU and UNDP continued to work together to design and implement a project for assistance to the Parliament of Sierra Leone taking into account the challenges it faces working in a post-conflict environment. In December, the two organizations organised a mission which provided the parliamentary authorities and senior secretariat staff with a basic understanding of the purpose of strategic plans, and assisted the authorities through participatory exercises in developing a draft mandate, mission, and vision as well as identifying the parliament's core values for inclusion in the parliament's strategic plan.



Thailand

Thailand's new constitution gives the parliament enhanced new powers in overseeing the government's treaty-making activities and external relations in general. In November 2008, the IPU and the King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI) teamed up with the parliament to set up a workshop for members on this issue. It served to examine the role of the legislative and executive branches in the treaty making process and compared parliamentary experiences.

Timor-Leste

May 2008 saw the organisation of a workshop for staff of the parliament. The outcome was an increased understanding by staff of their role and contribution to a functioning parliament; and improved support to legislators to perform their functions effectively. The activity is one of four being implemented in cooperation with UNDP in Dili under the framework of a wide-ranging project of assistance to the parliament being implemented by UNDP. In September there was a strategic planning workshop that provided the parliamentary authorities and senior secretariat staff with a deeper understanding of the purpose of strategic plans (see main photo).

Togo

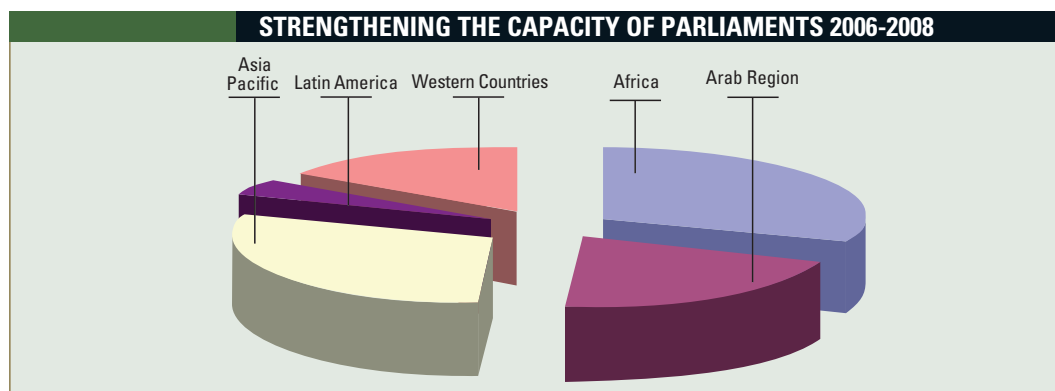
In recent years Togo has been sidelined by the international community on account of its poor record of governance. Recently, however, the authorities have resolved to improve things, and the international community has responded swiftly. The IPU has sought to accompany this change by giving assistance to the parliament in conjunction with UNDP. In 2008, the two organizations made an assessment of needs and designed a project document which will serve as a framework for multi-donor support to the parliament. They also initiated some activities, including a seminar for members on human rights (see section 3 of this report).

United Arab Emirates

In response to the authorities' determination to promote greater democracy in the country, the IPU has worked with the parliament to help modernize it. A number of training activities were organised in 2008 for members and parliamentary staff, including seminars on the functioning of committees and on relations between parliament and the media. The IPU also assisted the parliament with the design of a code of ethics for members, which is currently under discussion with the parliament.

Global mapping of legislative strengthening programmes

In September 2008 the IPU began a study to assess the feasibility of creating a database to map legislative strengthening projects. The feasibility study reflects the IPU's belief that a reliable centralized source of information would facilitate more efficient planning, reduce the risk of overlap and duplication and enhance sharing of expertise and lessons learnt.



Informing democracy:
Building capacity
meet parliamentarians'
and knowledge needs

(Ireland) | 16 October 2008

Contribuer à la démocratie :
renforcer les capacités pour
répondre aux besoins des parle
en matière d'information et de

Genève (Suisse) | 16 octobre 2008

International Federation
of Library Association
and Institutions



Inter-Parliamentary
Union



Association of
Secretaries General
of Parliaments



Disseminating information

Internet

The bilingual website of the IPU (<http://www.ipu.org>) is the best channel for disseminating information about the activities of the Union. During periods of peak activity, the website receives tens of thousands of hits every day. The aggregate number of hits received in 2008 grew by 35.6% over the previous year and is now close to 14 million per annum.

New information pages are constantly added to the website, covering almost all IPU events, campaigns and publications, and providing a wealth of data about the structure and functioning of national parliaments. Among thematic sections added to the website in 2008 are those on finance and administration of the IPU, the International Day of Democracy, representation of minorities in parliament, and the role of parliaments in the implementation of the UN Human Rights Treaties. The IPU website is currently ranked at the top of nearly all popular search engines for "parliamentary democracy and human rights".

The IPU publishes a bi-monthly electronic newsletter which is distributed via e-mail on a subscription basis. In 2008, the total number of subscriptions grew by another 20% and is now close to 2600. A complete collection of past issues of the e-Bulletin can be consulted on the IPU website.



Much time and effort is devoted by the IPU Secretariat to updating and improving the Union's flagship database, PARLINE. This unique on-line information tool provides access to easily comparable data about all of the world's 188 national parliaments. Country-specific data pages in PARLINE were completely redesigned in 2008 and are now graphically more attractive and user-friendly. The technical features have also been improved. For the first time, it is possible to compare data across parliaments, and there is new data on the mode of designation of parliamentarians (directly elected, indirectly elected, appointed, other).

Information modules in PARLINE database

- General information about each parliamentary chamber
- Electoral system
- Results of last elections
- Parliamentary mandate
- Presidency of parliament
- Parliamentary oversight
- Specialized parliamentary bodies

Recently added functions

- Data export in CSV and Excel formats
- Filtering search results by multiple criteria
- Aggregate "at a glance" viewing of data globally or by region
- Photo gallery of parliament buildings

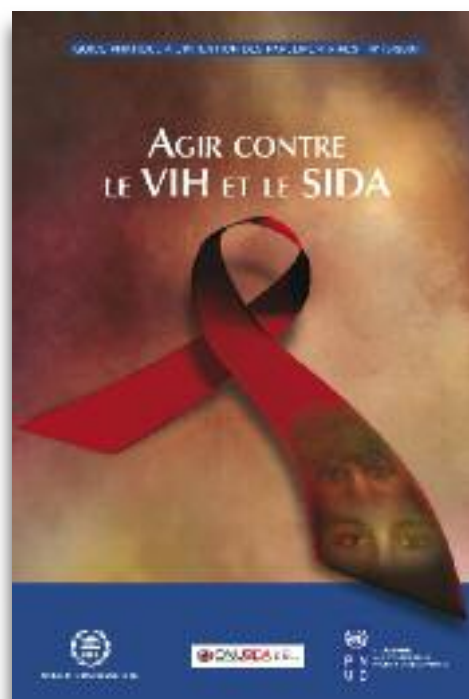
The popularity of the specialized IPU bibliographic database "Women in politics" is on the rise. At present, the database comprises over 3100 bibliographic references, some 225 of which were added during 2008. In addition to providing succinct bibliographic data, the database includes, whenever possible, links to third-party websites from which publications can be downloaded free of charge or for a fee.

Publications

Regular publications include the Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections, the Panorama of Parliamentary Elections, and the World Directory of Parliaments. As in previous years, work continued to draft, update, translate and disseminate IPU Handbooks. To quote two examples, the Handbook on HIV and AIDS was revised to take account of new statistics and translated into French, and new translations of the Handbook on Nationality and Statelessness were published in Azeri, Chinese, and Japanese.

Library and research services

A conference was held at the 119th Assembly on library and research services for parliamentarians. Access to reliable, timely information is essential to the proper functioning of democratic legislatures. Parliamentary libraries and research services contribute to the effectiveness of parliament by providing authoritative, independent and non-partisan information. These services have in many places evolved greatly in recent decades, in parallel with new information and communications technologies that have fundamentally changed how parliaments manage knowledge and information. The conference was held in conjunction with the ASGP and IFLA (see main photo).





Annex

Resource mobilization

The IPU is funded by its members and associate members through annual assessed contributions and through voluntary funds provided by donors. The IPU is not dependent on voluntary funds to cover its basic operational needs. However, to realize its full potential and meet increasing demands for assistance, additional funds are required. The expanded agenda, which includes programmes to promote democracy, development and peace, requires more funding that is both predictable and flexible.

The IPU's programmes and the requirements to carry them out are presented in a document entitled "Promotion of Democracy, Development and Peace: Activities and requirements 2009-2010". The plan is revised annually and provides the basis for discussions with donors about support.

As a result of efforts to obtain predictable and stable funding from voluntary sources, the IPU has established multi-year partnerships with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Irish Aid, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), which have all committed programme funds for 2008-2010. Other government donors, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) and the European Commission contribute to specific projects. Projects to strengthen national parliaments are often carried out in cooperation with UNDP.

Commitments have been made by the following donors:

- Irish Aid: An agreement concluded in 2008 commits Euro 1.1 million for 2008-2010 (Euro 400,000 in 2008, Euro 350,000 in 2009 and Euro 350,000 in 2010) for the IPU's programme on gender equality in politics.
- SIDA: An agreement concluded in 2008 commits SEK 9 million with no earmarking and SEK 900,000 for case studies on parliamentary oversight of development aid for 2008-2010.
- CIDA: An agreement concluded in 2007 commits CAD 669,600 over three years (April 2007- March 2010) to a programme to assist parliaments in reconciliation efforts. A second agreement concluded in 2008 commits CAD 1.2 million over three years (2008-2010) for the IPU's programme on gender equality and for a project on the representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliaments.
- UNDEF: Two agreements concluded in 2006 commit US\$ 673,800 in 2007 and 2008 for projects to support women parliamentarians in Burundi and to strengthen awareness among parliamentarians in francophone Africa of the UN human rights treaty bodies.
- Finland: An agreement concluded in December 2008 commits Euro 60,000 for human rights activities to be implemented in 2009.

Management's Responsibility for Financial Reporting

The management of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is responsible for the reliability, integrity and objectivity of the accompanying financial statements. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards. Where necessary, the statements include amounts that are based on judgments and estimates by management. To assist management in fulfilling its responsibilities, a system of internal accounting controls has been established to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements are accurate and reliable and that assets are safeguarded.

The Governing Council is responsible for approving the annual financial statements. The Governing Council has delegated certain responsibilities to the Internal Auditors, including the responsibility for reviewing the annual financial statements and meeting with management and the external auditor, as necessary, on matters relating to the financial reporting process.

These financial statements have been audited by the external auditor appointed by the Executive Committee.



Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General



John Piper
Director, Support Services

External Auditor's Opinion

In execution of the mandate granted to me, I have audited the accounts of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for the year ending 31 December 2008.

The book-keeping was duly made available to me at the Union's Headquarters. The audit consisted of verifying the income and expenditure operations of the financial year and the content of the balance sheet. My examination included a general review of the accounting records by spot checks and other supporting evidence as I considered necessary in the circumstances. Furthermore, the audit consisted of checking administrative practices and procedures where they could have economic implications.

I certify that the accounts and financial statements present fairly the financial operations of the Organization during 2008 and its financial situation at the end of 2008.



Lars Christian Møller
Deputy Director General
Riksrevisjonen, Norway

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Statement of Financial Position at 31 December 2008 in CHF (Swiss francs)

	2008	2007
ASSETS		
Cash on Hand	25,646	38,329
Cash on Deposit	2,758,255	1,388,697
Term Deposits	5,488,851	5,057,037
Investments	<u>1,384,071</u>	<u>1,521,103</u>
	9,656,823	8,005,166
Accounts Receivable		
from Members (Notes 3 & 4)	769,629	1,105,877
from Staff	31,673	39,053
from Donors (Note 5)	27,833	22,463
from Tax Reimbursements	69,457	40,792
Others (Note 3(b))	<u>168,070</u>	<u>172,434</u>
	1,066,662	1,380,619
Prepaid Expenses (Note 6)	72,851	58,105
Inventories of Official Gifts	15,056	23,390
Fixed Assets (Note 7)		
Building and Grounds	9,356,495	9,356,495
Furnishings	774,704	1,041,862
IT Equipment	276,152	
Vehicles	78,534	
Less Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(2,001,106)</u>	<u>(1,684,651)</u>
	8,484,779	8,713,706
Total Assets	19,296,171	18,180,986
LIABILITIES AND RESERVES		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Payables	576,172	506,193
Advances from Donors (Note 5)	1,287,629	1,070,148
Advances from Members	<u>786,255</u>	<u>572,729</u>
	2,650,056	2,149,070
Loans (Note 9)		
Current Portion	189,600	189,600
Long Term	8,152,800	8,342,400
Pension Fund Liability (Note 10(a))	1,386,000	90,000
Deferred Liabilities (Note 10(b))	1,691,570	1,558,813
Total Liabilities	14,070,026	12,329,883
Restricted Funds (Note 12)	143,894	55,000
Working Capital Fund (after contribution)	5,082,251	5,796,103
Total Liabilities and Reserves	19,296,171	18,180,986

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2008
in CHF (Swiss francs)

	2008	2007
Operating Income		
1 Assessed Contributions	11,507,755	11,060,266
2 Staff Assessment (Notes 2(f), 14)	1,176,484	1,220,985
3 Voluntary Contributions (Notes 5, 15)	1,852,342	1,383,395
4 Investment income (Note 8)	75,237	117,222
5 Other Income (Note 16)	39,417	10,267
Total Operating Income	14,651,235	13,792,135
Operating Expenses		
1 Executive Office	1,220,807	1,169,266
2 Assembly Affairs and Relations with Member Parliaments	2,784,456	2,849,840
3 Promotion of Democracy	3,487,751	3,528,468
4 External Relations	2,314,828	2,041,365
5 Project Direct Costs (Notes 5, 15)	1,736,991	1,350,000
6 Support Services	2,371,870	2,214,160
7 Allowance for Doubtful Accounts	0	277,075
8 Grants	51,184	48,021
9 Reserves and Provisions (Notes 10, 12)	101,200	55,000
Total Operating Expenses	14,069,087	13,533,195
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	582,148	258,940
Actuarial Gain/(Loss) on Pension Fund	(1,296,000)	(90,000)
Net Movement in Working Capital	(713,852)	128,845
Working Capital Fund, Beginning of Year	5,796,103	5,627,163
Working Capital Fund, End of Year	5,082,251	5,796,103

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Statement of Cashflows for the year ended 31 December 2008
in CHF (Swiss francs)

	2008	2007
Opening Cash Balance	8,005,166	6,955,333
Cash provided by (used in) Operations		
Operating Surplus	582,148	168,940
plus non-cash expenditures	538,107	577,645
Changes in Receivables	324,737	(80,522)
Changes in inventories and prepaid expenses	(6,413)	(14,552)
Changes in Payables	490,206	669,919
Total cash from operations	1,928,785	1,321,430
Cash used in Financing Activities		
Loan from (Repayment to) Swiss Federal Government	(189,600)	(189,600)
Change in Trust Fund Balance	0	(35,609)
Total cash from Financing	(189,600)	(225,209)
Cash used in Investing Activities		
Other Assets	(87,528)	(46,388)
Total cash used in investments	(87,528)	(46,388)
Closing Cash Balance	9,656,823	8,005,166

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Nature of Organization

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is the international organization of the Parliaments of sovereign states and has a unique inter-state character. It is the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue. Since 1889, the IPU has worked for peace and cooperation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative institutions. The Union shares the objectives of, and works in close cooperation with, the United Nations where it is an official observer. It also cooperates with regional inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as with international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which are motivated by the same ideals.

The IPU is an international parliamentary political organization and possesses international legal personality. The IPU is representative in character and organization, subject to the rule of law, and governed by its constitution. States and international organizations dealing with the IPU have recognized its standing, authority and capacity to act on the international plane, within the area of its functional responsibilities, as the international organization of parliaments.

Since 1 January 2005, the IPU is affiliated with the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF).

The "Financial Regulations of the Inter-Parliamentary Union" is the overall governing instrument of the IPU's financial administration.

2. Accounting Policies and Basis of Presentation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of International Public Sector Accounting Standards applicable to a going-concern, which assume that the organization will continue in operation for the foreseeable future and will be able to realize its assets and discharge its liabilities in the normal course of operations.

a) Revenue Recognition

Assessed contributions are recognized as revenue when they come due. Other revenues are recognized when services are performed or when products are shipped.

Voluntary contributions, interest earnings, and contributions from new or reaffiliated members are recognized as revenues.

b) Investments

Investments in mutual funds are reported at lesser of market value or book value.

c) Inventories

Stocks of publications for future distribution are written down to a net realizable value of nil in each reporting period. Official gifts are valued at cost.

d) Property, Plant, Equipment and Depreciation

The value of the Headquarters building and office equipment is recorded at cost, which includes interest costs and project management costs incurred during the construction or acquisition. Capital costs are reduced by the amounts of any capital grants received. The Union reviews the value of its property, plant and equipment at the end of each reporting period to determine whether carrying values are recoverable with any resulting write-downs charged as an expense.

Buildings and each class of equipment are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their useful estimated lives which are as follows:

Category	Useful Life
Buildings	50 years
Furnishings	10 years
Vehicles	5 years
IT hardware and software	4 years

e) Taxes

The IPU has been expressly recognized by the two countries in which it is physically located, Switzerland and the USA, as an international organization entitled to the appropriate privileges and immunities. It enjoys a special international organization tax-exempt status in both countries. In Switzerland, under the terms of a 1971 Accord, the IPU is exempt from direct and indirect federal, cantonal, and community taxes and is subject to the same duties as other international organizations. In the United States, the IPU is exempted from direct federal taxes and duties under the terms of the International Organizations Immunities Act and is exempted from the payment of New York State and local sales and use taxes.

Any recoverable taxes paid in either jurisdiction are recorded as Accounts Receivable.

f) Staff Assessment

Staff salaries are taxed internally for the benefit of all member parliaments. The gross amount of staff salaries is reported as an expense, while the internal staff assessment is reported as revenue. The amount of staff assessment is determined in accordance with the United Nations common system of salaries, allowances and benefits based upon the average tax rates of Geneva, London, Montreal, New York, Paris, Rome and Vienna.

g) Pension and Retirement Allowance Expenses

The IPU has a pension fund for staff members who retired before 2005, which is operated as a separate entity and which is governed by its own Pension Board. The IPU's representative on the Pension Board provides a report to the Executive Committee each year on the activities of the pension fund.

Active employees participate in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF). The liability of the IPU in respect to the pensions of active employees is limited to the annual contributions and any deficiency payment determined by the Fund.

Other retirement allowances earned by employees are reported as expenses in the year they are earned (Note 10).

h) Foreign Currency Translations

The IPU uses Swiss francs as its functional currency. Revenue and expense items arising from transactions in US dollars are converted into Swiss francs at the UN exchange rate for the month. Transactions in euros are converted into Swiss francs at the rate posted by the European Central Bank. Transactions in other currencies are converted into Swiss francs at the spot rate quoted on the internet at the time of posting. Monetary assets and liabilities are translated into Swiss francs at the exchange rate in effect at the balance sheet date. Exchange gains or losses from translations of monetary items are recognized as expenses.

i) Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with IFAC International Public Sector Accounting Standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statements and accompanying notes. These estimates are based on management's best knowledge of current events and actions that the IPU may undertake in the future. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

j) Consolidation

The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of the Union and the accounts of technical cooperation projects carried out with third party funding. All internal transactions and balances are eliminated on consolidation.

k) Changes in accounting policies

The net actuarial liability of the legacy staff pension fund is the difference between the estimated actuarial value of the fund and the estimated present value of the future pension payments. The actuarial value of the fund has been calculated as the three year moving average of the fair market value of the assets of the fund at year end. The comparable figure for 2007, which was calculated using the spot fair market value of assets at the end of the year, has not been restated.

3. Accounts Receivable

- a) At 31 December 2008, there were 33 Members and Associate Members with accounts in arrears. Seven^(a) of them would be deprived of their voting rights subject to Article 5.2 of the Statutes. Three Members ^(b) were liable for suspension under Article 4.2 of the Statutes.

Member or Associate Member	2008	2007	2006	2005	Special Debt	Total
Afghanistan	20,600	1,410	-	-	-	22,010
Albania	16,922	-	-	-	-	16,922
Bolivia ^a	21,610	22,400	5,823	-	-	49,833
Cambodia	20,129	-	-	-	-	20,129
Cape Verde ^a	20,490	21,880	-	-	-	42,370
Comoros	10,250	-	-	-	-	10,250
Congo	20,600	17,752	-	-	-	38,352
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	24,150	-	-	-	-	24,150
Democratic Republic of the Congo	17,137	-	-	-	-	17,137
Ecuador	25,180	-	-	-	-	25,180
Gambia	20,490	11,685	-	-	-	32,175
Guatemala	25,160	-	-	-	-	25,160
Guinea	20,600	-	-	-	-	20,600
Iran (Islamic Republic of) ^a	90,200	95,220	-	-	-	185,420
Lebanon	25,010	-	-	-	-	25,010
Liberia ^{a,b}	20,490	21,880	23,370	8,405	38,166	112,311
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1,919	-	-	-	-	1,919
Mauritius	22,080	-	-	-	-	22,080
Montenegro	20,600	-	-	-	-	20,600
Niger	2,492	-	-	-	-	2,492
Palau	20,490	11,327	-	-	-	31,817
Palestine	10,250	-	-	-	-	10,250
Papua New Guinea ^{a,b}	20,900	22,100	23,370	-	-	66,370
Paraguay	-	-	-	-	17,452	17,452
Rwanda	1,615	-	-	-	-	1,615
Sao Tome and Principe ^a	20,490	21,880	-	-	-	42,370
Sierra Leone	10,250	-	-	-	-	10,250
Somalia ^{a,b}	20,490	21,880	23,370	-	-	65,740
Sudan	3,383	-	-	-	-	3,383
Tajikistan	21,320	96	-	-	-	21,416
Togo	14,990	-	-	-	-	14,990
Andean Parliament	1,576	-	-	-	-	1,576
Latin American Parliament	2,690	2,340	-	-	-	5,030
Totals 2008	594,553	271,850	75,933	8,405	55,618	1,006,359
<i>Comparative Figures 2007</i>	<i>783,571</i>	<i>325,122</i>	<i>94,783</i>	<i>50,911</i>	<i>88,220</i>	
						Less doubtful accounts (236,730)
						Net receivable from members 769,629

^a Subject to Article 5.2 of the Statutes

^b subject to Article 4.2 of the Statutes

- b) The IPU advanced 20,000 euros to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean that is being repaid in four annual instalments ending in 2011.

4. Allowance for Doubtful Accounts

The IPU has established an allowance for doubtful accounts. This allowance is the best estimate of accounts, including Member contributions, that have been recorded as income and set up as accounts receivable, but which may never be received.

At the beginning of 2008, the provision for doubtful accounts was CHF 236,730. There was no movement in the account during 2008 and at the end of the year the provision was equal to 16 per cent of the Members' outstanding arrears.

	2008	2007
Opening Balance	236,730	272,049
Revaluation	-	1,478
Provision	-	277,075
Statutory Write-Offs	-	-
Write-Off uncollectible debt	-	(313,872)
Closing Balance	236,730	236,730

5. Advances and Receivables from Donors

The Inter-Parliamentary Union receives funds from several donors for the implementation of various activities. Total disbursements from voluntary funds in 2008 were CHF 1,852,342, including 1,736,991 of direct costs. At 31 December 2008 the net advance of voluntary contributions was CHF 1,259,796.

Project	Funder	Unexpended Balance of Prior Commitments	New/ (Expired) Commitment in 2008	Funds used in 2008	Balance of Commitment	(Advances)/ Receivables
Equatorial Guinea	Equatoria Guinea	€178,661	-	€13,858	€164,803	€(164,803)
	European Community	-	€500,000	-	€500,000	-
Subtotal	EUROS	€178,661	€500,000	€13,858	€ 664,803	€(164,803))
Pakistan	UNDP	38,247	(8,671)	10,955	18,621	(18,621)
Timor Leste	UNDP	106,918	(44,603)	62,315	-	3,060
Maldives	UNDP	-	52,300	-	52,300	-
Violence against Children	UNICEF	10,920	(4,344)	6,576	-	-
Security Sector	DECAF	20,000	-	20,000	-	-
Budget Seminar	ACIC	5,833	-	-	5,833	(5,833)
Handbook on Statelessness	UNHCR	36,527	-	-	36,527	(34,342)
Disabilities	UNHCR/UNDESA	25,112	-	25,112	-	-
E-Parliament	UNDESA	31,589	985	32,574	-	24,774
Map of Women in Parliament	UNDESA	-	24,507	24,507	-	(2,213)
Burundi Women	UNDEF	290,890	(34,342)	195,371	61,177	(61,177)
Human Rights	UNDEF	300,465	(34,595)	265,870	-	-
Human Rights	DFAE	-	108,000	72,459	35,541	(17,541)
Human Rights	Finland	-	90,000	-	90,000	-
Global Programme Support	SIDA	-	654,030	421,737	232,293	(232,293)
Gender Issues	Irish Aid	-	652,000	422,731	229,269	(229,269)
Gender and Minorities	CIDA	-	404,981	176,019	228,962	(228,962)
Reconciliation	CIDA	268,060	200,880	85,320	383,620	(182,740)
Female Genital Mutilation	Norway et al	29,624	10,500	10,217	29,907	(29,907)
Subtotal	CHF	1,164,185	2,071,628	1,831,763	1,404,050	(1,015,064)
Grand Total	CHF	1,429,496	2,814,128	1,852,342	2,391,282	(1,259,796)
			Indirect costs	(115,351)	Receivable	27,833
			Direct costs	1,736,991	Advanced	(1,287,629)

6. Prepaid Expenses

The IPU has already paid some expenses that relate to 2009 such as rent, subscriptions and postage meter deposits. These disbursements have been reported as current assets.

7. Property, Plant and Equipment

- The IPU has a Headquarters building and annex in Grand-Saconnex, Switzerland. The building is located on land owned by the Canton of Geneva, which has been set aside for the use of the IPU for the next 44 years. A lease agreement for the property is currently the subject of three-way negotiations between the Canton of Geneva, the Federal Government of Switzerland and the IPU.
- The IPU invested CHF 9,356,495 on new construction and renovations of the property, not counting grants received.
- Depreciation is recorded in accordance with the policy described in note 2(d). A detailed inventory is kept for all computer-related hardware and software as this is routinely replaced and upgraded and represents a significant investment.

Year	Buildings and Grounds		Furnishings		Information, Technology and Communications Equipment		Vehicles	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
Opening Balance	8,420,845	8,607,975	217,699	322,776	67,350	68,828	7,810	15,621
Additions	-	-	6,230	19,066	41,818	30,320	39,480	-
Depreciation	(187,130)	(187,130)	(93,399)	(124,143)	(28,115)	(31,798)	(7,810)	(7,810)
Closing Balance	8,233,715	8,420,845	130,530	217,699	81,052	67,350	39,480	7,811
Gross Carrying Amount	9,356,494	9,356,495	774,704	768,473	276,152	133,962	78,533	39,053
Accumulated Depreciation	(1,122,779)	(935,650)	(644,174)	(550,774)	(195,100)	(66,612)	(39,053)	(31,242)
Net Carrying Amount	8,233,715	8,420,845	130,530	217,699	81,052	67,350	39,480	7,811

8. Investment Income

In accordance with the financial regulations and the investment policy approved by the Executive Committee, monies not needed for immediate requirements are invested in a portfolio of term deposits and diversified mutual funds. Total returns on investments in 2008 were CHF 75,237.

	2008	2007
Interest	223,476	118,003
Capital Gains (Losses)	(148,239)	(781)
Total Investment Income	75,237	117,222

9. Long term debt

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has a CHF 9,480,000 loan from the Federal Government of Switzerland for the construction and renovation of the Headquarters premises, of which CHF 8,342,400 is outstanding. The loan has a 50-year term maturing in 2052 and is interest free.

The principal amounts payable in each of the next five years are:

Year	CHF
2009	189,600
2010	189,600
2011	189,600
2012	189,600
2013	189,600

10. Other long term liabilities

- a) The IPU guarantees a legacy pension fund that will pay pensions to former employees and some current employees of the IPU based on various factors, including the number of years of service and salary at retirement. The pension liability, which is the difference between the adjusted market value of the assets of the pension fund and the present value of the accrued pension liabilities is shown as a net liability on the balance sheet of the IPU. The adjusted market value of the assets has been determined using a three year moving market average method based on the year end valuation of the fund for the current and preceding two years adjusted for cash flow. The present value of the accrued pension liabilities is estimated by management using 2007 Swiss life tables and a 3 per cent discount rate. The net actuarial liability shown on the balance sheet is CHF 1,386,000.

Amount in CHF	2008	2007
Accrued Pension Liability	13,756,000	14,050,000
Pension Fund Assets	12,370,000	13,960,000
Net Liability	1,386,000	90,000

- b) The IPU has contracts with employees that require the payment of certain benefits upon retirement or separation. These benefits include grants for removal expenses and a reinstallation premium as well as allowing employees to carry forward and eventually cash out up to 60 days of annual leave credits. At 31 December 2008, the total liability of benefits payable to staff was:

Amount in CHF	2008	2007
Reinstallation Premiums	623,596	541,947
Encashment of unused leave	707,974	656,866
Grants for Removal Expenses	360,000	360,000
Total	1,691,570	1,558,813

11. Commitments and Contingencies

- a) The IPU has a nine-year lease expiring in 2012 for office accommodation at 220 East 42nd Street in New York, USA. Projected future lease payments are as follows:

Year	Agreement amount	Equivalent
2009	USD 124,968	CHF 130,717
2010	USD 127,852	CHF 133,733
2011	USD 130,803	CHF 136,820
2012	USD 11,004	CHF 11,510

12. Restricted Funds

- a) The Inter-Parliamentary Union has established a reserve to pay for major repairs to the Headquarters building at some later date. In September 2001, the Governing Council resolved to contribute CHF 55,000 per annum to this reserve beginning in 2007. During 2008, the fund was used to replace air conditioning equipment for the computer server room.

	2008	2007
Opening Balance	55,000	0
Contributions	55,000	55,000
Expenditures	(12,306)	0
Closing Balance	97,694	55,000

- b) The Inter-Parliamentary Union has established a reserve for offsetting carbon emissions from IPU activities, especially those involving travel. In 2008, an amount of CHF 46,200 was contributed to the reserve to compensate for emissions of 866 tonnes of CO₂e from regular activities.

	2008	2007
Opening Balance	0	0
Contributions	46,200	0
Expenditures	(0)	0
Closing Balance	46,200	0

13. Contingent Liabilities

- a) Several staff members have received notices of tax assessment from the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry of France relating to income earned from the IPU between 2001 and 2007. The IPU is contractually obligated to reimburse to staff members any national taxes paid in respect to income earned from the IPU. Discussions between the Swiss and French authorities may result in a satisfactory resolution of the taxation issue, which is also being contested before the Administrative Tribunal in Lyons, France.
- a) The Headquarters of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Grand-Saconnex is on land owned by the Canton of Geneva. Three way negotiations between the Canton of Geneva, la "Fondation des Immeubles pour les Organisations Internationales" (FIPOI), and the IPU are continuing on the terms of a lease. Under the most recent proposal, the IPU will take a sub lease from FIPOI giving a right of occupancy of the lands at no cost to the IPU until the year 2052.

14. Staff Assessment

The total amount of staff assessment on staff salaries was CHF 1,255,312. In accordance with contractual obligations, an amount of CHF 52,614 was rebated to cover national income taxes that were imposed on staff members who were deemed fiscal residents of France and the United States.

	2008	2007
Gross Staff Assessment	1,229,098	1,255,312
Reimbursements		
– France	52,005	29,777
– United States of America	609	4,550
Total	52,614	34,327
Net Staff Assessment	1,176,484	1,220,985

15. Administrative Fees

The IPU charges program support costs for the projects it implements with funding from other agencies. In 2008, the IPU collected fees in the amount of CHF 115,351 on project direct costs of CHF 1,736,991.

16. Other Income

Other income of CHF 39,417 includes sales of publications, room rentals, and extraordinary income. The IPU had extraordinary income of CHF 23,042 resulting from the cancellation of a rental contract for office accommodation in New York, for which an accrual had been made when the Governing Council adopted the accrual method of accounting in 2002.

17. Comparative amounts

Certain comparative amounts have been reclassified to conform to the financial statement presentation adopted in the current year.

Current composition of the Executive Committee (31 March 2009)

	Members	Expiry of term
<i>Ex-officio President</i>	Mr. Th.-B. Gurirab (Namibia)	October 2011
<i>Vice-President of the Executive Committee</i>	Ms. E. Papadimitriou (Greece)	October 2009
<i>IPU Vice-Presidents</i>	Mr. J.A. Coloma (Chile)	October 2011
	Ms. Z. Drif Bitat (Algeria)	October 2011
	Mr. A. Toha (Indonesia)	October 2010
	Mr. A. Kozlovskiy (Russian Federation)	October 2009
<i>Members</i>	Mr. R.M.K. Al Shariqi (United Arab Emirates)	October 2012
	Mr. A. Alonso Díaz-Caneja (Mexico)	October 2012
	Ms. P. Cayetano (Philippines)	April 2010
	Mr. Young Chin (Republic of Korea)	October 2011
	Mr. Ngo Anh Dzung (Viet Nam)	October 2011
	Ms. J. Fotso (Cameroon)	October 2010
	Ms. Á. Möller (Iceland)	April 2012
	Mr. M.C. Nago (Benin)	October 2011
	Mr. R. del Picchia (France)	October 2011
	Mr. T. Toga (Ethiopia)	October 2011
	Mr. G. Versnick (Belgium)	October 2010

Standing Committees: composition of the bureaux PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

<i>President</i>	Mr. T. Boa (Côte d'Ivoire)	<i>African Group</i>
<i>First Vice-President</i>	Mr. S.P. Morin (Indonesia)	<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>
<i>Vice-Presidents</i>	T I T U L A R	S U B S T I T U T E
<i>African Group</i>	<i>Current President</i>	Mr. Z. Madasa (South Africa)
<i>Arab Group</i>	Mr. B. Boutouiga (Algeria)	Vacancy
<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	<i>Current First Vice-President</i>	Mr. J.D. Seelam (India)
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	Mr. V. Likhachev (Russian Federation)	Mr. V. Popov (Belarus)
<i>Latin American Group</i>	Mr. A. Gutiérrez Cueva (Peru)	Mr. A. Santos (Brazil)
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	Lord Morris of Aberavon (United Kingdom)	Mr. R. Podgorean (Romania)

Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee to the 120th Assembly

Mr. R. Price (Australia)
Mr. J.J. Mwiimbu (Zambia)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, FINANCE AND TRADE

<i>President</i>	Mr. P. Martin-Lalande (France)	<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>
<i>First Vice-President</i>	Mr. O. Abu Ghararah (Saudi Arabia)	<i>Arab Group</i>
<i>Vice-Presidents</i>	TITULAR	SUBSTITUTE
<i>African Group</i>	Mr. S. Jackou (Niger)	Mr. K. Mporogomyi (United Republic of Tanzania)
<i>Arab Group</i>	<i>Current First Vice-President</i>	Mr. M. El Said (Egypt)
<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	Ms. S. Tioulong (Cambodia)	Ms. D. Vale (Australia)
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	<i>Vacancy</i>	Mr. B.Z. Zhambalnimbuev (Russian Federation)
<i>Latin American Group</i>	Mr. A. Lins (Brazil)	Mr. R. Machuca (El Salvador)
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	<i>Current President</i>	Mr. F. Notari (Monaco)

Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee to the 120th Assembly

Mr. H.-J. Fuchtel (Germany)
Mr. A. Lins (Brazil)

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

<i>President</i>	Mr. D. Cánepa (Uruguay)	<i>Latin American Group</i>
<i>First Vice-President</i>	Mr. Y. Zhumabayev (Kazakhstan)	<i>Eurasia Group</i>
<i>Vice-Presidents</i>	TITULAR	SUBSTITUTE
<i>African Group</i>	Mr. A.K. Bagbin (Ghana)	Ms. M.G. Chetima (Niger)
<i>Arab Group</i>	Mr. Z. Azmy (Egypt)	Mr. J. Fairouz (Bahrain)
<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	Mr. C.S. Atwal (India)	Mr. T.J. Wan Junaidi (Malaysia)
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	<i>Current First Vice-President</i>	Mr. A. Felaliev (Tajikistan)
<i>Latin American Group</i>	<i>Current President</i>	Mr. D. Cortez (Panama)
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	Ms. R.M. Albernaz (Portugal)	<i>Vacancy</i>

Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee to the 120th Assembly

Mr. K. Malaisamy (India)
Mr. A. Dismore (United Kingdom)

Specialised meetings in 2008

- **Third Regional Conference of Women Parliamentarians and Women in Decision-making Positions of the GCC States**
MUSCAT (Oman), 21-22 December 2008
- **Regional seminar on the theme "Developing a Protective Framework for Children: the Role of Parliamentarians to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents"**
Tirana (Albania), 14-15 December 2008
- **Third Conference for members of parliamentary committees on the status of women and other committees dealing with gender equality**
Geneva (Switzerland), 2-4 December 2008
- **Parliamentary Hearing at the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus**
Doha (Qatar), 28 November 2008
- **Seminar on Maternal Health and Child Survival**
The Hague (The Netherlands)
26-28 November 2008
- **Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations**
New York (UN Headquarters), 20-21 November 2008
- **Conference on "Legislative Reform to Achieve Human Rights", organized by UNICEF with the support of the IPU**
New York (Millennium UN Plaza Hotel), 19 November 2008
- **Panel discussion on "Progress in implementing One UN reform: Political challenges, parliamentary perspectives"**
New York (UN Headquarters), 19 November 2008
- **Seminar for members of parliamentary human rights committees**
Geneva (IPU Headquarters), 3-5 November 2008
- **Informing democracy: Building capacity to meet parliamentarians' information and knowledge needs**
Geneva (Switzerland), 16 October 2008
- **Parliamentary Seminar on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**
Geneva (Switzerland), 16 October 2008
- **Briefing for members of parliament attending the opening of the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly**
New York (UN Headquarters), 26 September 2008
- **Panel discussion on the occasion of the International Day of Democracy**
Geneva (IPU Headquarters), 15 September 2008
- **Annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO**
Geneva (Switzerland), 11-12 September 2008
- **Parliamentary Briefing at the XVII International AIDS Conference**
Mexico City (Mexico), 5 August 2008
- **Meeting of the Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs**
Geneva (UN Headquarters), 18 July 2008
- **Regional seminar on the role of parliaments in national reconciliation processes in English-speaking Africa**
Freetown (Sierra Leone), 23-25 June 2008
- **Panel discussion on parliaments, peace-building and reconciliation**
New York (UN Headquarters), 13 June 2008

- **Stakeholder Forum on "The role of national and local stakeholders in contributing to aid quality and effectiveness"**
Rome (FAO Headquarters), 12-13 June 2008
- **Parliamentary briefing on HIV/AIDS**
New York (UN Headquarters), 9 June 2008
- **Conference organized by the African Parliamentary Union in cooperation with the IPU on "Africa and migration: Challenges, problems and solutions"**
Rabat (Morocco), 22-24 May 2008
- **Seminar on Reconciliation and Rule of Law in Central America**
San Salvador (El Salvador), 6-7 May 2008
- **Regional seminar for Latin American Parliaments on the theme "Women shaping politics: gender, parliamentary representation and legislative agenda"**
Montevideo (Uruguay), 10-11 March 2008
- **The role of parliaments in financing for gender equality. Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women**
New York (UN Headquarters), 27 February 2008
- **Regional seminar on the role of national parliaments and the SADC Parliamentary Forum in enhancing security in Southern Africa**
Luanda (Angola), 20-21 February 2008
- **Parliamentary Forum to Fight Human Trafficking**
Vienna (Austria), 12 February 2008

TEN-YEAR EVOLUTION IN IPU ACTIVITIES



Membership

In 2008, the Governing Council approved requests for affiliation from the Parliaments of Iraq, Mauritania and Timor-Leste. It also approved a request for affiliation from the National Assembly of Lesotho and suspended the membership of the Parliament of Bangladesh, which is not longer functioning. The Council welcomed the return of the Parliament of Thailand to full participation in the activities of the IPU, and reinstated the membership of the Parliament of Guinea, which had expeditiously defrayed its arrears. The Council also approved a request for associate membership from the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), bringing the number of Associate Members to eight. The Governing Council also approved the request for affiliation of the Parliament of Oman and the requests for reaffiliation of the parliaments of Comoros and Sierra Leone. It approved the affiliation of the Parliament of Palestine. The IPU currently comprises 154 Member Parliaments.

Members (154)

Afghanistan, **A**lbania, **A**lgeria, **A**ndorra, **A**ngola, **A**rgentina, **A**rmenia, **A**ustralia, **A**ustria, **A**zerbaijan, **B**ahrain, **B**elarus, **B**elgium, **B**enin, **B**olivia, **B**osnia and Herzegovina, **B**otswana, **B**razil, **B**ulgaria, **B**urkina Faso, **B**urundi, **C**ambodia, **C**ameroon, **C**anada, **C**ape Verde, **C**hile, **C**hina, **C**olombia, **C**omoros, **C**ongo, **C**osta Rica, **C**ôte d'Ivoire, **C**roatia, **C**uba, **C**yprus, **C**zech Republic, **D**emocratic Republic of the Congo, **D**emocratic People's Republic of Korea, **D**enmark, **D**ominican Republic, **E**cador, **E**gypt, **E**l Salvador, **E**stonia, **E**thiopia, **F**inland, **F**rance, **G**abon, **G**ambia, **G**eorgia, **G**ermany, **G**hana, **G**reece, **G**uatemala, **G**uinea, **H**ungary, **I**celand, **I**ndia, **I**ndonesia, **I**ran (Islamic Republic of), **I**raq, **I**reland, **I**srael, **I**taly, **J**apan, **J**ordan, **K**azakhstan, **K**enya, **K**uwait, **K**yrgyzstan, **L**ao People's Democratic Republic, **L**atvia, **L**ebanon, **L**esotho, **L**iberia, **L**ibyan Arab Jamahiriya, **L**iechtenstein, **L**ithuania, **L**uxembourg, **M**adagascar, **M**alaysia, **M**aldives, **M**ali, **M**alta, **M**auritania, **M**auritius, **M**exico, **M**onaco, **M**ongolia, **M**ontenegro, **M**orocco, **M**ozambique, **N**amibia, **N**epal, **N**etherlands, **N**ew Zealand, **N**icaragua, **N**iger, **N**igeria, **N**orway, **O**man, **P**akistan, **P**alau, **P**alestine, **P**anama, **P**apua New Guinea, **P**araguay, **P**eru, **P**hilippines, **P**oland, **P**ortugal, **Q**atar, **R**epublic of Korea, **R**epublic of Moldova, **R**omania, **R**ussian Federation, **R**wanda, **S**amoa, **S**an Marino, **S**ao Tome and Principe, **S**audi Arabia, **S**enegal, **S**erbia, **S**ierra Leone, **S**ingapore, **S**lovakia, **S**lovenia, **S**omalia, **S**outh Africa, **S**pain, **S**ri Lanka, **S**udan, **S**uriname, **S**weden, **S**witzerland, **S**yrain Arab Republic, **T**ajikistan, **T**hailand, **T**imor-Leste, **T**he former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, **T**ogo, **T**unisia, **T**urkey, **U**ganda, **U**kraine, **U**nited Arab Emirates, **U**nited Kingdom, **U**nited Republic of Tanzania, **U**ruguay, **V**enezuela, **V**iet Nam, **Y**emen, **Z**ambia, **Z**imbabwe.

Associate Members (8)

Andean Parliament, Central American Parliament, East African Legislative Assembly, European Parliament, Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, Latin American Parliament, Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP)

The ASGP is a consultative body of the IPU comprised of senior parliamentary officials who are in charge of parliamentary services. The Association and the IPU Secretariat endeavour to develop synergies to advance their respective agendas. Since 2003, the President of the ASGP has reported annually to the IPU Executive Committee on the Association's activities.

The Association's purposes and activities include the study of the law, practice and procedure of parliaments. It makes suggestions for cooperation between parliaments and for improving their working methods. The agenda for ASGP meetings includes discussion on current themes on the IPU agenda; past examples have included the role of parliaments in promoting reconciliation after civil strife, parliamentary ethics and the development of information and communication technologies in parliaments.

Another purpose is to ensure cooperation, when requested and in conjunction with the IPU, in providing legal and technical assistance to parliaments. Many of the programmes of assistance conducted by the IPU in 2008 were implemented with substantial support from the ASGP through its members, who provided the necessary expertise. Since 2006, the IPU and the ASGP have jointly organised a major conference in Geneva, following the October Assembly, on a topical issue related to the work of parliament. In October 2008, the conference was on parliamentary library and research services.

The Association has an Executive Committee, whose members must belong to different parliaments. The President is Mr. Hafnaoui Amrani Secretary General of the Council of the Nation, (Senate) of Algeria.

