



Activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2005

Annual report of the Secretary General

Inter-Parliamentary Union – 2006

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Foreword

A backward glance over 2005 shows a hectic year in which events followed one another in rapid succession. In fact, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has never undertaken so many activities in a single year.

The focus of the IPU's work in recent years has been on promoting democracy. 2005 was no exception. Particularly worthy of mention is the new project to prepare a guide setting out good practices for democratic parliaments, which will be issued in 2006. Traditional activities continued unabated: there were four needs and review missions to different parliaments, eight projects to strengthen parliaments and four new parliamentary handbooks.

The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians examined the situation of 222 members of parliament and dispatched two trial observer missions. The Union organized a host of regional and sub-regional seminars and workshops aiming to bolster parliaments. Special emphasis was placed on women and the budget process, parliamentary oversight of the security sector and the role of parliament in upholding human rights.

At the global level, the IPU pursued its mission to bring more democracy to international relations. The Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments took place on the eve of the United Nations World Summit of Heads of State and Government. The Speakers issued a declaration setting out an agenda for parliamentary action to bridge the democracy gap in international relations.

In the trade sphere, the IPU is already committed to building a parliamentary dimension to international negotiations. Last year, working in cooperation with the European Parliament and the parliament of China, the Union organized the latest session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO on the occasion of the sixth WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong.

2005 got off to a rapid start with the Organization present in the Middle East for the election of a new President of the Palestinian Authority and, immediately thereafter, observing the out-of-country voting for the Iraqi Transitional Assembly. The pace of events continued unabated and by the time the year came to a close, the IPU had organized twenty-one meetings attended by over 4,000 members of parliament, an all time record.

Against this backdrop of parliamentary meetings, the IPU is becoming increasingly better known, and much is being done to upgrade its public relations work to a level commensurate with its new responsibilities. The bi-lingual web site, continuously updated, now features 180,000 documents and three inter-active data bases. In 2005, the site received 600,000 hits per month, an increase of twenty five percent over the previous year. Meanwhile, painstaking efforts are being made to produce more attractive publications to reach out to a wider audience.

These successes do not come without a cost. The Secretariat is working under considerable pressure to keep pace with the frantic regime. In the longer term, it will be necessary to find

new sources of funding both to sustain this level of activities and embark on new ventures. It is my intention to address these needs immediately.

2005 also saw a change of command at the helm of the Organization. After the completion of his term as President of the IPU, Senator Sergio Pérez Verdugo stepped down in October and was replaced by the President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Pier Ferdinando Casini. President Casini will now guide the further development of the IPU over the coming three years.

There is no shortage of challenges facing the IPU. I can think of at least five. We need to consolidate the modernization of the Organization that was undertaken a few years ago. We should develop a strategy that would enable us to derive greater benefit from the expertise that is available in parliaments when it comes to discussing issues of direct relevance to their work. We need to expand on IPU's work to promote democracy and help build democratic institutions. We must build a truly strategic partnership with the United Nations. And, last but not least, we need to enter the new information age with resolution, making full use of ICT and ensuring that the IPU has a more immediate public presence.

The IPU can be proud of its achievements and enter 2006 with confidence, while knowing that there is no respite around the corner. Just more work.



Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General

Article 1 of the IPU Statutes states that the Union shall work for peace and cooperation among peoples. In practice, this mission statement is put into effect through a variety of activities that vary as the world evolves and different needs are expressed by the IPU constituents. Some are still at an embryonic stage, such as work on HIV/AIDS. Others derive their focus from Assembly resolutions or parliamentary meetings convened alongside major United Nations events. In addition to these there is the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, jointly organized by the IPU and the European Parliament. The following paragraphs detail some of these endeavors. A full list of IPU specialized meetings, the number of which grew exponentially in 2005, can be found in the annex to this Report.

Working for Peace, Fostering Development

National reconciliation

Many African countries emerging from conflict face daunting challenges that require immediate action. A searching examination of past events may not be considered the highest priority. What is more, some countries may fear that old wounds will be reopened that could otherwise have healed with time. However experience has shown that facing the scars of the past is the best way to guarantee that it does not happen again. These thoughts were debated by African parliamentarians who attended the Regional Seminar on the Role of Parliaments in National Reconciliation in Africa, held in Bujumbura in November at the invitation of the Parliament of Burundi and in cooperation with International IDEA.

The painful history of Burundi, the host country, epitomizes the hardship that comes with conflict. Today, Burundi is at a crossroads. The difficult decisions that the Burundians face became the starting point for a debate on the use of transitional justice mechanisms for reconciliation, which, in addition to truth commissions, include trials, reparation program-



mes for victims and institutional reform. All participants concurred that members of parliament everywhere in Africa were ideally placed to initiate a national debate on identifying the right mix of these mechanisms that would serve the reconciliation process in their own countries.

In July, the IPU and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) released a publication entitled *Making reconciliation work: the role of parliaments*. It provides insights into the role played by parliaments in coming to terms with the legacy of abuse that so often marks sustained periods of internal strife. It provides a number of innovative examples of transitional justice experiences and concrete suggestions for parliamentarians as they support reconciliation.

Parliamentary oversight of the security sector: Latin America

In the 1970s and 1980s, all too often the response to political crisis in Latin America was a military coup d'état. Since then, there has been a shift towards the integration of the armed forces into a democratic structure under civilian authority, though such control often remains erratic. This was the theme of a Seminar on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in Latin America, held in Montevideo in July. The event was organized by the IPU, the parliaments of Argentina and Uruguay and the Geneva-based Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).





The Seminar looked carefully at the role of parliament in addressing the legacy of human rights abuse in the aftermath of an authoritarian regime. At the time, the two host countries, Argentina and Uruguay, were both at a crucial phase in re-examining the scars of the past. Only two weeks before, the Supreme Court of Argentina had scrapped an amnesty law protecting former military officers suspected of human rights abuses under the Argentine military government, a ruling triggered by an earlier decision by the Argentine Congress. At the same time, in an unprecedented move, criminal charges were filed against a former Uruguayan President and his Minister of Foreign Affairs for killings committed under military rule.

Migration

The 113th IPU Assembly debated the question of migration and development, following up on a panel discussion on migration and development in Manila.

In compiling their report, the co-Rapporteurs from Mexico and Switzerland came to Geneva for talks with the International Organization for Migration, the Global Commission on International Migration, the International Labour Office, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Meanwhile, the Migration report commissioned by the UN Secretary-General was being finalised by the Global Commission on International Migration. It was presented to the IPU Assembly by Dr. M. Ramphela, the Commission's Co-chair, and Dr. R. K. Jenny, its Executive Director.

The Assembly went on to adopt a resolution that called for a holistic approach based on shared responsibility which should address both the causes and the consequences of migration. It reminded States of their obligation to protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants and their families regardless of their status. It invited governments to explore possibilities to open up their labour markets by increasing legitimate channels of access to them for migrants. Finally, it called for laws to end exploitation and abuse of foreign workers, in particular women migrants, and institute criminal sanctions for perpetrators of violence against women migrant workers.

The IPU resolution on migration and development was later circulated at the United Nations as an official document of the UN General Assembly. It will also be used as the Union's contribution to the high-level dialogue on international migration and development, to be held by the United Nations in 2006.

Combating child trafficking

Every day children are bought, sold and taken from their homes. The trafficking of human beings is a multibillion dollar business that continues to flourish. Despite important progress in the global fight to end child trafficking, much more needs to be done.



At the Manila Assembly, the IPU and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched a handbook for parliamentarians entitled *Combating Child Trafficking*. Attending the launch, UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy said that legislators « can make decisions that ensure the protection of children, or they can make decisions that leave children vulnerable to being exploited and abused. The first choice virtually guarantees strong national development; the second choice virtually guarantees the continuation of poverty».

Violence against women and children in conflicts

Armed conflict remains a serious impediment to the fulfilment of women's and children's rights. Modern warfare brutalises women and children in a multitude of ways. Whether as soldiers, forced labourers, sex slaves, or as casualties, women and children suffer the most from the wars that they do not instigate.

The IPU joined forces with UNICEF to set up a panel discussion on the issue at the Assembly in Manila. Panellists included Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, now President of Liberia, who described the predicament of child soldiers and explained Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

Several recommendations emerged from the debate, urging members of parliament to legislate to address violence against women and children in conflict zones; to exercise effective oversight and improve supervisory and monitoring mechanisms for violations; to



provide funding for support programmes; and to run educational and sensitisation campaigns to prevent violations. The role of the military and peacekeepers was also extensively debated.

Female genital mutilation

Eradicating female genital mutilation (FGM) has been a prime objective over the past years. Nevertheless, the success rate remains low, and it is estimated that 3 million girls still undergo FGM every year. In the battle against FGM all forces must be marshaled, and parliaments can be crucial. Enacting legislation is a first step in the fight, but overseeing proper implementation, adopting adequate budgets and helping to change mentalities are complementary factors which fall within the power of parliamentarians.

As part of its action to put an end to excision the IPU and UNICEF supported the African Parliamentary Union conference on *Violence against women, abandoning female genital mutilation: the role of national parliaments*. The event, hosted by the National Assembly of Senegal in December, was attended by parliamentarians from more than 20 parliaments, traditional and religious leaders, and representatives of United Nations agencies and civil society movements.

The objective of the conference was to secure the political commitment of members of parliament in Africa to relinquishing FGM. At the close of debate, the parliamentarians unanimously adopted a Final Declaration to end female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C). Acknowledging that the abandonment of FGM/C can be achieved only as a result of a comprehensive movement involving all stakeholders in society, public and private, they pledged to do everything possible to eradicate FGM/C within a generation. There will be sub-regional and national follow-up activities in 2006.

HIV/AIDS

As HIV/AIDS continues to cause havoc throughout the world, and especially in the poorest regions, there have been many calls for the IPU to do more to harness the potential of parliamentarians in fighting the pandemic. As a start, the IPU joined the High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in early June, where it delivered a statement that drew on the comprehensive resolution on HIV/AIDS that had been adopted at the Assembly in Manila.

On 12 September, the IPU partnered with UNAIDS and UNDP in setting up a lunchtime discussion in New York on *The role of parliamentarians in national policy and the AIDS response*. The event was moderated by Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS. The objective was to enlist the potential of parliaments in combating HIV/AIDS, both as policy makers and through outreach to their constituents.

Further HIV/AIDS related activities will get under way in 2006.



The Information Society

The second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) brought together more than 18000 participants from governments, civil society, the private sector and international organisations in the search for acceptable solutions to complex issues such as Internet governance and financing mechanisms to ensure that the benefits of information and communication technology (ICT) are spread equitably across the globe. In parallel, parliamentarians from 29 countries attended the parliamentary meeting organized by the IPU and the Tunisian Chamber of Deputies, in cooperation with UNESCO. The meeting focused on one of the core elements of the Information Society: access to information.

Many of the structural and technological barriers to access to information are being challenged by the WSIS process. Panellists at the parliamentary meeting spoke of their experience in developing Freedom of Information Acts, and the principles underlying such legislation. More than 60 countries have now adopted laws on Freedom of Information, which can be seen as a formidable tool for increasing governmental transparency and accountability.

Participants also underlined the potential of the Internet to enrich and renew democracy. A whole generation sees the Internet as its natural means of receiving information and communicating with others. It was considered that parliaments need to continue their efforts to harness the potential of the Internet as an interactive channel of communication



between citizens and their elected representatives. The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, launched at WSIS as a joint initiative of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the IPU, is designed to offer a timely boost to parliaments' capacity to make effective use of ICT.

Parliamentary dimension of the WTO

In a globalizing world in which transnational trading conglomerates are increasingly setting the agenda, the common citizen is demanding a voice in the shaping of international trade policy. There is a major stake for parliaments here, as the legitimate representatives of the citizen, to institute greater control and oversight of the negotiations that determine such policies. The Parliamentary Conference on the WTO is jointly organized by the IPU and the European Parliament. It meets once a year, and whenever the WTO convenes its Ministerial conferences.

The latest session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO was held in conjunction with the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in December 2005. It was attended by members of parliament from 72 countries. Conceived as a platform for dialogue of parliamentarians with government negotiators and with civil society, the Hong Kong parliamentary session included a series of interactive panels. Speakers included Mr. John C. Tsang, Chairman of the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference and Secretary for Commerce of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and Mr. Peter Mandelson, European Commissioner for External Trade.

At the end of its proceedings, which were also addressed by the IPU President, Mr. Casini, and the WTO Director-General, Mr. Lamy, the parliamentary session adopted a declaration in

which they lamented the sluggish progress made in key sectors of WTO negotiations and especially the major development issues. Dismayed at the inconclusive result of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong and the uncertainty over the future of the multilateral trading system, the IPU and the European Parliament agreed to step up their efforts in mobilizing the world parliamentary community to focus on WTO activities in 2006, which is supposed to be the concluding year of the Doha Round.

The IPU also organized a parliamentary panel in April at the WTO Public Symposium. Here, participants from governments, parliaments, civil society, the business sector, academia and the media discussed the multilateral trading system and analyzed the institutional state of the WTO under the theme: *The WTO at 10. The perceived loss of sovereignty due to WTO accords: should parliamentarians be concerned?*

The IPU Secretariat also continued its project to publish an on-line directory of parliamentary bodies dealing with international trade. The first phase of the database will be made accessible on-line in early 2006.

Water, climate change, energy

In April the IPU and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) held the inaugural conference of their joint capacity-building initiative for parliaments on sustainable development. The event took place in Paris at the French Senate. Parliamentarians met to discuss topics such as water, climate change and energy, as well as trade for sustainable development. A second event of the series took place in November in Beirut, organized by the two partners in cooperation with the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, and hosted by the Lebanese parliament. The meeting looked at water management as an essential factor in achieving sustainable development in the Arab region.

Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean

The Inter-Parliamentary Union organized a Fourth Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean in Nafplion, in February. The Conference was hosted by the Hellenic Parliament. The main outcome of the Fourth CSCM was the adoption by consensus of the draft Statutes of the future Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. The participants requested the President and the two co-Rapporteurs of the CSCM process to remain in their functions until the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean had met and elected its officers; they also asked the IPU to provide secretarial support to the newly established Assembly during a brief transition period.

The observation of the out-of-country polls for the Transitional National Assembly of Iraq and the Presidential elections in Palestine were exceptional instances of IPU involvement in election monitoring in areas of international attention. As a backdrop to these activities, the year saw a number of meetings focussing on the theoretical side of elections and the broader functions of parliaments. The IPU also continued its traditional work of providing technical and advisory assistance to parliaments throughout the world.

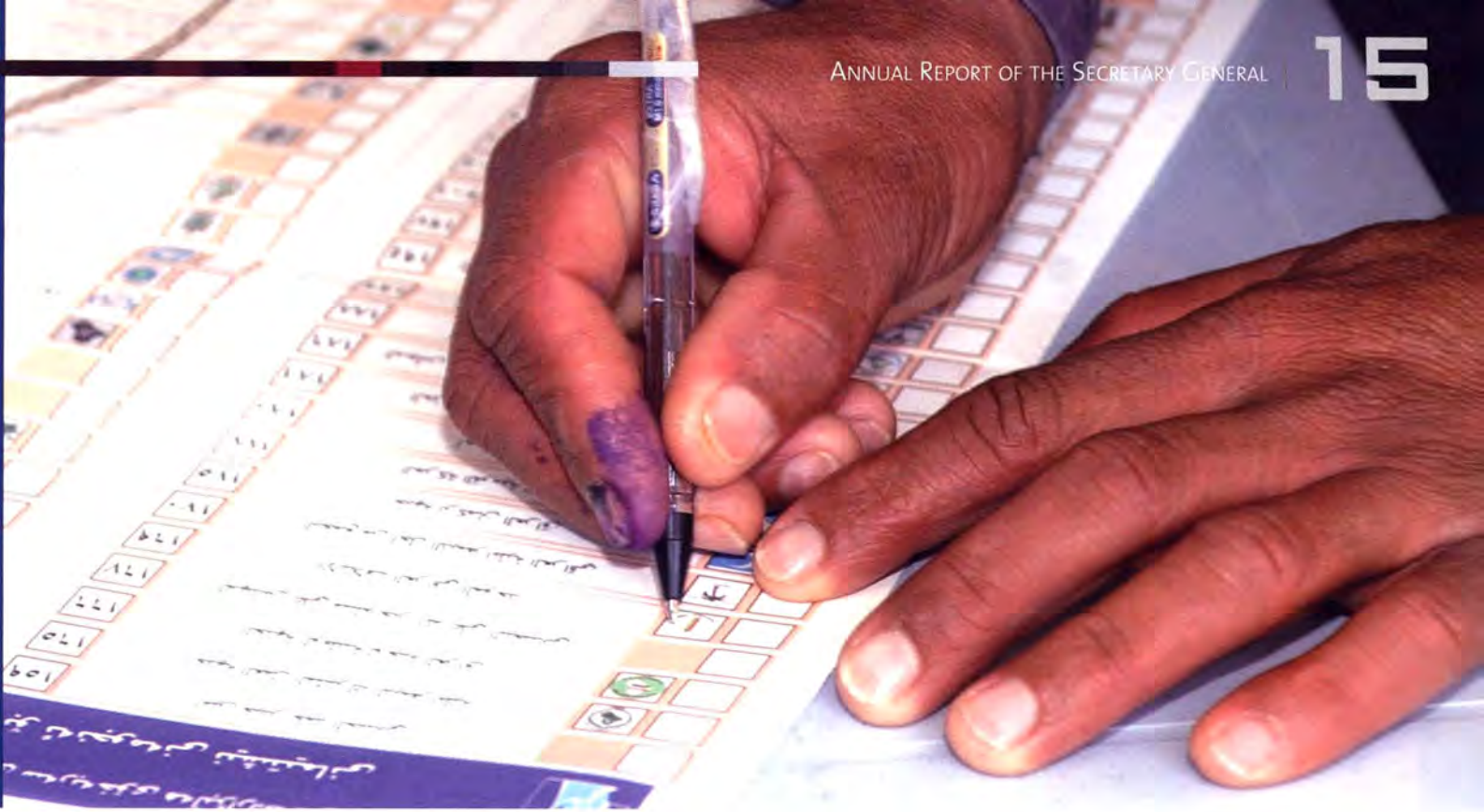
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Promoting Democracy, Assisting Parliaments

Observing the out-of-country polls for the Transitional National Assembly of Iraq

The out-of country polls for the Transitional National Assembly of Iraq held on 28 January 2005 were organised by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The poll was held in 14 countries in which there were sizeable expatriate Iraqi populations. The IPU was asked to assist in the out-of-country election monitoring, and was one of the few international organizations to agree to do so. The Union wrote to all the parliaments of the countries concerned asking them to field parliamentarians to act as monitors in their respective countries, and received a favourable response from seven: Canada, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Netherlands, Sweden, and the Syrian Arab Republic. IPU staff coordinated the observer mission from the Jordanian capital Amman.

Broadly speaking, the polls observed in these countries were considered to be well organised and free of any noteworthy irregularities. There were no recorded cases of interference by national authorities, who provided valuable assistance. One reservation expressed by the observers concerned the presence of the media in the polling stations. The elections for the Transitional Assembly of Iraq were exceptional because of the risks involved for Iraqi citizens



who went out to vote. Although most of the dangers affected people inside Iraq, many who were voting outside the country did so against a backdrop of fears for their families and friends in Iraq, and therefore wished to remain anonymous. Their wish was not always respected.

Approximately 280,000 voters registered worldwide to vote in the out-of-country elections, from a total of over one million eligible persons. The most likely explanation for the low registration rate was that expatriate Iraqis were afraid of divulging their personal details to the authorities of their country of residence.

Presidential elections in Palestine

The President of the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions spent one week in Israel and Palestine on the occasion of the Palestinian presidential elections in January. The visit provided an opportunity to follow the poll on election day, as well as the preparations and the post-election evaluation. During the visit, Mr. Vallersnes, who subsequently reported to the IPU Committee in Manila, also met several Palestinian leaders in Ramallah and in Gaza, and the leader of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). While the IPU was not formally observing the election process in the same way as a number of multilateral institutions, many parliaments heeded its call to observe the 9 January presidential polls in Palestine which resulted in the election of Mr. Mahmoud Abbas.

Principles for international election observation

On 27 October the IPU joined the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD), the Carter Center, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and others at



the United Nations in New York to endorse the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Elections Observers.

The Declaration and Code reaffirm the body of norms that have been evolved by the international community, including the IPU, to develop guidelines that guarantee free and fair elections. The newly approved principles and criteria are already well articulated in the IPU's own Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections.

In another related development, the IPU's November 2004 International Round Table on Electoral Standards was an opportunity to assess the impact of the two standard-setting works: a study on *Free and Fair Elections: International Law and Practice*, and *the Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections*, both published by the IPU in 1994.

The issues raised during the Round Table discussions also fed in to the process of producing a new, expanded edition of the 1994 Free and Fair Elections study, which is widely recognized as a groundbreaking work. Continuing financial support for the IPU's work on free and fair elections has been received from the Ford Foundation.

2

Parliaments' contribution to democracy

The IPU is working to produce a guide to good parliamentary practice in the field of democracy. The year began with a meeting of a group of experts to prepare a framework conceptualising democracy as practised by parliaments. The framework does this in three ways: by viewing democracy as a network of relationships, in which parliaments have a key representative role in mediating between the people on the one hand, and other institutions of governance on the other; by looking at how effectively parliaments perform their functions; and by suggesting a set of values governing the manner in which parliament relates to the people, addressing issues related to accessibility and accountability to citizens as well transparency of proceedings.

The first four chapters of the new guide were reviewed by the group of experts in June 2005, then presented to the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments which took place in New York in September. The final version will be issued in 2006. The guide will be discussed at the 6th International Conference of New or Restored Democracies scheduled to take place in Doha in late 2006.

Strengthening parliaments in post-conflict management

In 2005, the IPU worked with UNDP in developing guidelines designed to boost the capacity of parliaments in countries devastated by conflict. The two organisations conducted several regional studies on the functioning of parliaments in conflict and post-conflict environments

and the role of such parliaments in helping to instil peace. The IPU participated in June 2005 in a regional workshop in Nairobi designed to distil lessons from the studies.

In July 2005, the IPU hosted a working group meeting in Geneva in co-operation with UNDP. The participants looked at the findings of the studies and discussed guidelines that could be useful to donors and providers of assistance to parliaments. The guidelines are due to be presented at a major conference in Brussels in April 2006.

Technical assistance

The IPU also continued its traditional work of providing technical and advisory assistance to parliaments throughout the world. Highlights for 2005 included projects in the parliaments of Afghanistan, Equatorial Guinea, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Uruguay. These activities are carried out under projects that entail cooperation with other partners, mainly the United Nations Development Programme and the European Commission. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency is another strong sponsor.

■ Afghanistan

Along with UNDP, the IPU has been working towards the establishment of a new parliament in Afghanistan since late 2004. After an IPU-led assessment mission in November 2004, the SEAL programme (Support to the Establishment of the Afghan Legislature) was implemented under UNDP supervision. The IPU is providing the UNDP/SEAL project team with advice on standards in the assistance provided to members in respect of allowances, equipment and staff. The Union also organised study visits for staff of the Afghan parliament to the parliaments of Indonesia and Morocco, a seminar for staff on parliamentary processes and best practices, and training sessions in Kabul for parliamentary staff on recording of proceedings. Last December, the IPU participated in working sessions with various stakeholders in Kabul prior to the first session of parliament in Afghanistan in more than 30 years.

■ Algeria

At the request of the UNDP, the IPU helped select resource persons and documentation for a training workshop on legislative drafting which took place in Algiers in November. The workshop was attended by members of both Houses of the Algerian Parliament and by parliamentary staff.

■ Equatorial Guinea

The project in Equatorial Guinea aims to help modernise the parliament. The second in the series of sensitisation seminars for members of parliament went ahead in Bata from 16 to 18 March 2005. Focussing on the legislative function of the parliament, the seminar examined the finer points of law-making and the resources required. It was held in conjunction with a technical assistance mission to Malabo by the former Secretary General of the French



National Assembly, who assisted the parliamentary authorities in reviewing the various rules of the House including those governing staff, and in proposing a realistic staff organisational structure. In June, the French and Spanish parliaments hosted a study visit for the Secretary General of the Parliament of Equatorial Guinea. A third seminar, this time focussing on the budgetary function of the parliament, took place in Bata in September, at which members studied the parliament's role in ensuring transparency and accountability in the preparation and implementation of the national budget. In December, the IPU fielded a mission to Malabo to prepare a training programme for verbatim reporters, due to start in early 2006.

■ Iraq

Sustained work in Iraq is constantly impeded by major security concerns. Nevertheless, the IPU has been in contact with the Iraqi authorities, and along with UNDP, has designed an assistance programme to meet the immediate needs of the interim legislature and lay the groundwork for a longer-term programme for a permanent parliament. The IPU Secretary General travelled to Baghdad to discuss the project, and attended the inaugural session of Iraq's Transitional National Parliament. By the end of the year, the IPU and UNDP were planning a mission to finalise the project and agree with the Iraqi authorities on its implementation. This mission should take place following the convening of the new parliament elected in December 2005.

■ Nigeria

This project was launched in August 2004 with the signing of an agreement between the Federal Government of Nigeria, the European Commission and the IPU. It aimed to build the capacity of the National and six State Assemblies of Nigeria and ensure that legislative decisions are informed by the thinking of society at large. Project activities got underway in earnest in June last year. Several training workshops were run during the year for members of parliament and staff of these legislatures.

■ Pakistan

In November the IPU signed a memorandum of understanding with the Parliament of Pakistan to implement part of a previously agreed IPU/UNDP project. In December, the IPU organised a study visit to the parliaments of Thailand and the Philippines for a cross-party and gender-balanced delegation of members of both Houses of the Parliament of Pakistan and support staff. The delegation studied the functioning of committees and their role in parliamentary processes. The IPU also organised a Training of Trainers programme on parliamentary procedures, which took place in December in the Parliament of Australia, and was attended by parliamentary staff. Once trained, these staff will serve as resource persons in induction and orientation programmes for members of the Parliament of Pakistan.

■ Uruguay

In 2005 a new assistance project was launched for the Parliament of Uruguay, designed in co-operation with UNDP and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. It entailed the second phase of a programme designed to help the parliament improve its working methods, partly through more active involvement of civil society. This second phase will strengthen the constitutional functions of the Parliament, especially oversight, and its administrative and human resource capacities. Human rights are a major area of focus.

■ Viet Nam

Together with UNDP, the IPU assisted the Committee on Economic and Budgetary Affairs of the National Assembly of Viet Nam in organizing a high-level policy forum on The role of legislatures in public finance oversight which took place in October in Nha Trang City. The forum allowed parliamentarians to exchange views and experiences on ways to increase the parliament's powers in the budget process.

Some Figures

- **Afghanistan:** The project has a total budget of US\$ 15,501,906, managed by the Kabul-based UNDP/SEAL project.
- **Equatorial Guinea:** The project has a total budget of Euro 736,000 of which Euro 483,000 is being contributed by the European Commission and Euro 256,000 by the government of Equatorial Guinea.
- **Iraq:** The UNDP and IPU have agreed to commit an initial amount of \$1million to the project.
- **Nigeria:** Funding available from the European Commission and the Federal government of Nigeria was Euro 8,600,000. Total expenditure during the operational period of the project amounted to over Euro 2,000,000. Under expenditure of the total amount available was mainly due to the very short duration of the operational period of the project, which closed on 31 December 2005.
- **Uruguay:** The project has a total budget of \$ 129,050 and is being co-funded by the IPU, UNDP and the OHCHR.

In 2005 the Committee grappled with 61 cases in 30 countries concerning 222 parliamentarians who had been subjected to abuses of their rights. If there is one constant, it is that the right to freedom of speech is at stake in each of these cases. Parliamentarians have been murdered, made to disappear, tortured or held in prolonged arbitrary detention for voicing divergent opinions. A major challenge continuously confronting the Committee is the impunity that marks these abuses. It therefore systematically urges the authorities to carry out their duty of ensuring an investigation that will identify and bring the culprits to trial.

Defending Human Rights

The work of the Committee

It has become commonplace to take legal steps to silence outspoken members of parliament. There are a number of cases where individual parliamentarians or sometimes even the entire opposition have been prevented from exercising their mandate. Among the methods used are the undue revocation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate, politically motivated bankruptcy proceedings and revocation of the parliamentarian's citizenship.

In other cases, parliamentarians have fallen victim to unfounded legal proceedings. Some of these proceedings are locked into paralysis. A dormant case that can be activated at whim becomes a permanent threat, giving parliamentarians a subtle but unmistakable warning that their career could be expeditiously terminated if they continue to openly question the authorities. In cases in which proceedings have run their course, parliamentarians have frequently been prosecuted without any respect for fundamental fair trial standards. Irrespective of whether or not the case comes to trial, due process is at issue in each of these different scenarios.

While freedom of expression is under threat in one way or another in all cases before the Committee, only some 20 percent of the cases relate to undue action taken as a direct response to criticism voiced by parliamentarians. In such situations defamation laws allowing



Very narrow interpretation of the right to freedom of expression are often used to deal with unwanted criticism.

In 2005, the Committee brought 31 cases of particularly serious concern to the attention of the IPU Governing Council in a public report. The following five cases were submitted for the first time:

■ **Murder of Bangladeshi parliamentarian Mr. Shah Kibria**

Mr. Kibria, a member of parliament of the opposition Awami League and a former Finance Minister and Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, was killed in a grenade attack on 7 January 2005. The IPU Council was alarmed at this high-profile murder and is keeping a close eye on efforts by the authorities to conduct a full investigation.

■ **Call for the release of Cambodian parliamentarian, Mr. Cheam Channy**

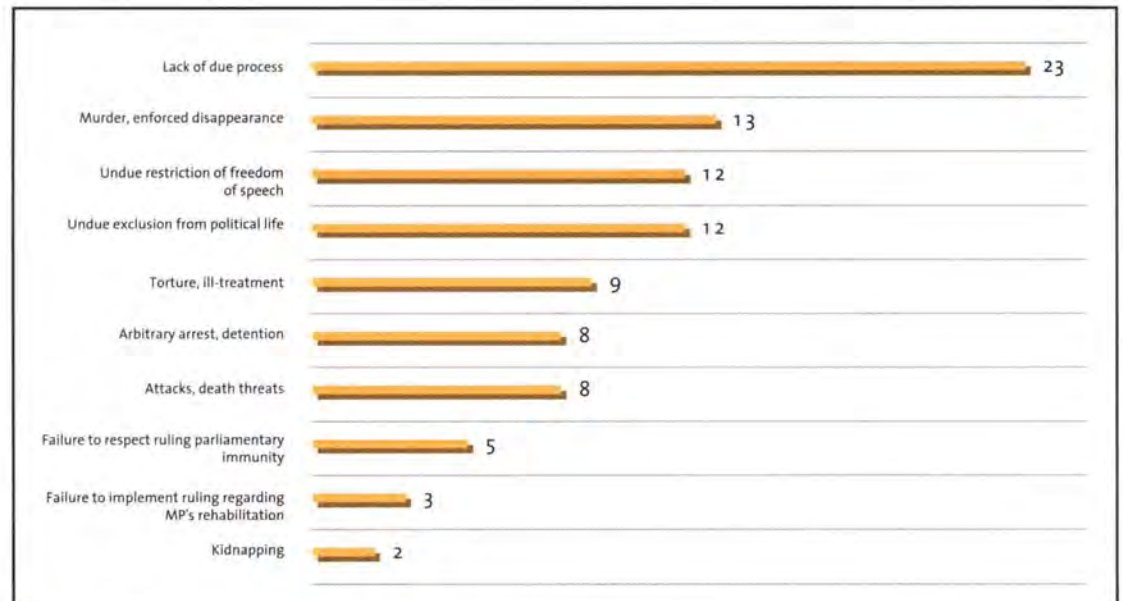
On 9 August 2005, Mr. Cheam Channy, a member of the Sam Rainsy Party, the opposition party in the Cambodian Parliament, was sentenced by a military court to a seven-year prison term for fraud and for setting up an illegal armed force. The IPU Member Parliaments expressed deep concern at his trial and called for him to be released so that he could resume his parliamentary mandate. Mr. Cheam Channy regained his freedom early in 2006.

■ **Mr. Joshua Jeyaretnam's exclusion from Singaporean politics**

The IPU membership deeply regretted that Mr. Jeyaretnam, a former member of the Parliament of Singapore, had not been granted a discharge from bankruptcy. They concluded that the bankruptcy proceedings indicated clearly that Mr. Jeyaretnam was being targeted for the purpose of making him bankrupt, thereby debarring him from politics.

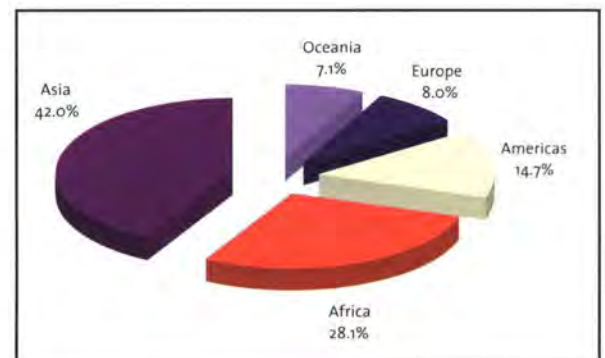
■ Sentencing and imprisonment of Sri Lankan parliamentarian Mr. D.M.S.B. Dissanayake

On 7 December 2004, Mr. Dissanayake, then a member of the Sri Lankan Parliament, was sentenced by the Supreme Court to two years' imprisonment for contempt of court after he had voiced critical remarks about the judiciary. The international parliamentary community is deeply concerned at Mr. Dissanayake's sentence and the resulting loss of his parliamentary mandate.



■ Mr. Jorge Tadeo Lozano Osorio unable to challenge legal defects in Colombia

Mr. Lozano was convicted and sentenced to a heavy prison term as a result of deeply flawed proceedings which started when he was a member of the Colombian Congress. The IPU is concerned at this state of affairs especially since parliamentarians do not have the right under Colombian law to appeal in criminal cases.



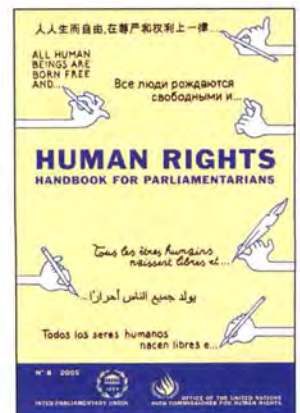
Compilation of parliamentary initiatives on Myanmar

The IPU has consistently condemned the refusal of the military rulers in Myanmar to convene the Parliament that was democratically elected in 1990 and has called on them to release all detained MPs-elect immediately and unconditionally. It has also called on member parliaments to stand up for the MPs-elect and work for the restoration of democracy in Myanmar.

Many parliaments have responded. A noteworthy example is the recent establishment of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC) comprising parliamentarians from Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand. The IPU distributed a compilation of similar parliamentary initiatives to national parliaments and to regional and international bodies working for change in Myanmar.

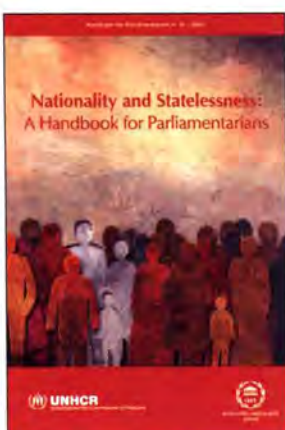
Handbook on Parliament and Human Rights

At the 113th IPU Assembly in Geneva, the IPU President launched the IPU/OHCHR Handbook on Human Rights for Parliamentarians. The Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Mehr Khan Williams, spoke at the event. The publication outlines the international and regional instruments and mechanisms designed to promote and protect human rights and offers special suggestions for parliamentary action to ensure respect for fundamental rights.



The rights of indigenous peoples

The IPU and the OHCHR held a seminar at IPU Headquarters on 25 and 26 July on the challenges in implementing legislation affecting indigenous peoples. In the past decade, many countries with indigenous peoples have adopted laws, including constitutional reforms, which include formal recognition of their existence, identity and rights. However, because enforcement is slow, the reforms have not necessarily meant a real improvement in the human rights of indigenous peoples. At the seminar members of parliaments and representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations and governments talked about ways to close this "implementation gap". The conclusions of the debate will be fed into the next report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people to be submitted to the UN Commission on Human Rights in 2006.



Nationality and statelessness

Despite the body of international law relating to citizenship, some eleven million people around the world have no nationality. They are stateless. Statelessness may result from conflicting laws, the transfer of territory, marriage laws, administrative practices, discrimination,

lack of birth registration, or other causes. Many of the world's stateless persons are also victims of forced displacement.

The best way that parliamentarians can demonstrate their determination to reduce or eliminate the incidence of statelessness is to adopt appropriate national legislation. Parliamentarians can also play an important watchdog role by helping to ensure that the policies of a State do not inadvertently or deliberately render individuals stateless, by encouraging their governments to resolve the cases of individuals who are stateless, and by raising awareness about the problems associated with statelessness among their constituents.

The IPU/UNHCR Handbook presents the issues, proposes possible solutions, and suggests actions that members of parliament can take without losing sight of the human dimension of statelessness.

At the 113th Assembly in October, a panel discussion on the subject was moderated by Mrs. E. Feller, the Director of the Department of International Protection of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and included Mr. A. Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression is one of the cornerstones of human rights and of parliamentary democracy. Parliamentarians who oppose the government, denounce abusive practices, or lobby for change may find themselves under attack. They also run the risk of being denied access to State-funded media and to information held by public authorities. This is not to say that the right to freedom of expression is unlimited: certain precisely defined limits may be justifiable or, as is the case with the prohibition of incitement to hatred, even necessary.

The adequate protection of the freedom of speech of members of parliament and the legitimate restrictions on this freedom were the main points of debate among members of parliamentary human rights bodies and regional and international experts at the seminar on freedom of expression. It was held in Geneva in May and organized by the IPU and Article 19, an expert organisation in the field.



“ Freedom of expression is the
cornerstone of democracy. ”

Emile Guirieoulou (Côte d'Ivoire) summing up
the conclusions of the seminar on freedom of
expression

How can a democracy deserve the name without balanced participation of men and women in the management of public affairs? The IPU has long been convinced that the objective should be equal participation of men and women in politics. In 2005, the Organization continued activities aimed at supporting women in national parliaments, promoting women's rights in parliament, and collecting and disseminating information on women in parliament. Cooperation with the United Nations was also strengthened. The organisation itself has also blazed its own trail, and the year 2005 marked the 20th anniversary of its Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. It was also the first year when women legislators accounted for more than 30% of the parliamentarians attending an IPU Assembly.

4

Women in Politics

Assisting women running for parliament

The Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Supreme Council for Women (SCW) of Bahrain staged a seminar entitled *The Roles and Responsibilities of National and Local Representatives* in September in Manama, Bahrain. The objective was to improve women candidates' understanding of their roles as representatives at the national and local level in view of the 2006 legislative and local elections. The seminar included sessions on parliamentary mandates, the legislative, oversight and budgetary functions of parliament, and the international dimension of parliamentary work. In addition a session was held on the role of local representatives.

The seminar was attended by 80 potential women candidates, together with members of parliament and representatives from municipal councils, from all political tendencies. Current and former members of parliament from Bahrain, the United Kingdom, Kenya and Morocco launched the debates, which were graced by a surprise visit from Her Majesty the Queen of Bahrain.

Parliament, budget and gender

Enhancing women's presence in parliament is a first step. Changing the parliament to make it reflect the interests and needs of both genders is the next.



In cooperation with UNIFEM, the IPU held a regional seminar on *Parliaments and the budgetary process, including from a gender perspective* for Latin American Parliaments, in September. The National Assembly of El Salvador hosted the seminar, the sixth regional event in the series. The seminar offered parliamentarians of eight Latin American and Caribbean countries an opportunity to exchange views, compare their experiences and deepen their understanding of the budgetary process and of the tools they can use to make an effective contribution in this field.

The Spanish version of the Handbook for Parliamentarians entitled *Parliament, the Budget and Gender*, produced by the IPU, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNIFEM and the World Bank Institute, was also presented at the El Salvador seminar.

Promoting respect for women's rights

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the most comprehensive international legal instrument addressing women's rights. It brings together in a single binding document provisions requiring the elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex, and in so doing is key to the promotion of gender equality. A United Nations treaty body, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, monitors the implementation of the Convention.

Once again, in October, the IPU and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women held an information seminar at IPU Headquarters on the role of parliaments in implementing the CEDAW. The seminar primarily targeted members of parliaments of those States parties to the Convention whose reports were considered in 2005 or will be considered in 2006.

The IPU has continued its practice of writing to parliaments whose country reports to the CEDAW have been or are due to be considered, to draw their attention to the need for parliamentary involvement in the process of drafting and follow-up to the report. The United Nations Committee has also begun to systematically request information with regard to parliamentary involvement when considering each country report.

49th Commission on the Status of Women

The IPU and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) organised a parliamentary event entitled *Beyond Beijing: Towards Gender Equality in Politics* on the occasion of the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The meeting provided an opportunity for parliamentarians to contribute to the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Preparing the UN debate on the equal participation of men and women in politics

The IPU joined UNDAW to set up an Expert Group Meeting on “*Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes, with particular emphasis on political participation and leadership*”, which took place in Addis Ababa in October. The results of the meeting served as a reference document for the UN Secretary-General’s report to the 50th session of the CSW in 2006 which took women in decision-making as its major theme.

A unique source of data on women in politics

Monitoring and assessing women’s situation in politics remains one of IPU’s tasks in the field of gender equality. Throughout the year the IPU produced its monthly statistics on women in parliament. These provide the source for data used by the United Nations Human Development Report. The IPU is also the organisation responsible for the indicator on women in parliament, for Goal 3 (Gender Equality) of the Millennium Development Goals.



In 2005, the IPU and the United Nations produced the latest issue of a world map entitled *Women in Politics: 2005*. With data on women in the legislative and executive branches, it was released in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian on the occasion of the 49th session of the CSW in New York. Also released on that occasion was a kit prepared by the IPU Secretariat on *Women in Politics, 1945-2005*, which complemented the information on the map.

Progress and setbacks for women in Parliament – a brief overview

In 1995:

- 11.3 per cent of all legislators across both houses of parliament were women
- The parliament of Sweden had the highest proportion of women (40.4%)
- The proportion of parliaments whose female membership was less than 10 per cent was 63 per cent
- Women were not at all present in a total of 12 parliaments

In 2005:

- 16.3 per cent of all legislators across both houses of parliament were women
- The National Assembly of Rwanda had the highest proportion of women (48.8%)
- The proportion of parliaments whose female membership was less than 10 per cent was 32 per cent (60 of 187 parliaments).
- Women were absent in a total of nine parliaments (Bahrain has no women members of its Lower House but six women Senators)

Women parliamentarians at the IPU reach the 30% target

The participation of women parliamentarians at the IPU has continued to advance, reaching the 30% target at the 113th Assembly. The amendments to the Statutes and Rules adopted in 2003 have thus brought significant progress. The IPU is the only international organization that has measures guaranteeing a minimum presence of women within its structures.

Dialogue with parliaments that have no women parliamentarians

The Gender Partnership Group continued to hold dialogue sessions with delegations from countries where women are not present in parliament. This year, attention focused on the Arabic Gulf States. A dialogue session was held with the delegation from Kuwait during the 112th Assembly. At the same time, a national debate was taking place in Kuwait on granting suffrage to women. In April, the IPU Assembly publicly expressed its support for action taken in Kuwait to give women the right to vote. In May 2005 the National Assembly of Kuwait finally granted women the right to vote and stand for election.

IPU President Sergio Páez then made an official visit to Kuwait, where he paid tribute to the parliamentarians who had supported the measure and to the women who had waged a long campaign for political rights. He talked with women's groups in Kuwait and with members of parliament, and committed the IPU to the provision of assistance in support of women in politics.

20th anniversary of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

In 1889, the founders of the IPU included no women. Only a few countries had granted women the right to vote and stand for election. Two women, from Germany and Denmark, were the first to take part in an IPU Conference in 1921, alongside 108 men. If the beginnings may have been inauspicious, the situation is greatly improved today: women parliamentarians now account for 30 per cent of delegates at IPU Assemblies.

One of the driving forces of this progress is the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, which fêted its twentieth anniversary during the Manila Assembly. When the first Meeting was held in Lomé in 1985, only 26 women legislators were present, and women's concerns and rights were considered marginal both to the IPU and mainstream politics in many countries. Fast-forward now to the Manila Meeting: 160 women from 120 countries were present to debate issues such as domestic violence and the impact of HIV/AIDS on women's lives.

The women's movement at the IPU has been a strong factor for progress. Over time, the Meeting has gained in legitimacy and force. It has also given the IPU a trademark all of its own. It has helped to change thinking among male colleagues and brought gender issues into the mainstream in IPU resolutions. It has also pressed for gender analyses of parliaments' budgets – including that of the IPU. An exhibition on the history of women at the IPU was mounted in Manila to celebrate the twentieth anniversary.



“ We are a long way from
achieving parity and the numbers
concerning women in parliaments
and governments have barely moved
in the last five years. ”

Joan Fraser (Canada) presenting the IPU
report to the UN Commission on the Status
of Women

"Over the last decade, spurred on by globalization, we have developed the instruments of parliamentary diplomacy. Now, if we want to provide an effective response to the challenges of the modern world, we must take a leap forward. Our fellow-citizens' needs extend beyond national borders. Nowadays, any day-to-day occurrence has global consequences. International politics therefore represents the new frontier of parliamentarianism. We must make sure we are equipped to tackle it." The words of IPU President Casini at the World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments throw down a gauntlet before the world parliamentary community which many are keen to grasp. The IPU has launched an expanded and more diverse program of activities in New York, thus pushing forward in consolidating the bonds between the world's legislatures and the United Nations.

5

Cooperation with the United Nations

Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments

The Speakers' Conference that took place from 7-9 September in the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations reinforced the growing relationship between the IPU and the United Nations. It brought to New York the leaders of some 150 national parliaments and hundreds of accompanying parliamentarians for a three-day event just days before the United Nations held its own World Summit of heads of State.

At the close of their business the Speakers adopted a declaration that began by stating that parliament was the embodiment of democracy and the central institution through which the will of the people was expressed, laws were passed and government was held to account. The Speakers went on to assert that the United Nations had to remain the cornerstone of global cooperation and that national parliaments were ready and willing to engage with its efforts. They then proposed a strategic partnership between the IPU and the United Nations, calling upon the latter to resort more frequently to the political and technical expertise which the IPU could provide. The IPU, for its part, should avail itself more systematically of



that expertise. Parliaments should be active in international affairs by contributing to and monitoring international negotiations, overseeing the enforcement of what is adopted by governments, and ensuring national compliance with international norms and the rule of law. Similarly, parliaments should be more vigilant in scrutinizing international organizations. To achieve those objectives, the Speakers concluded, they should work ever more closely with the IPU, a unique global parliamentary counterpart of the United Nations.

Through the declaration which was introduced officially to the UN World Summit by the IPU Secretary General, the Conference secured a broad consensus among the parliamentary leaders as to how they intend to construct a parliamentary dimension to the United Nations in the years to come. Recognizing the contribution of parliaments and the IPU to the work of the United Nations, the Outcome Document adopted at the UN World Summit states: *We (Heads of State and Government) call for strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and national and regional parliaments, in particular through the Inter-Parliamentary Union, with a view to furthering all aspects of the Millennium Declaration in all fields of work of the United Nations and ensuring the effective implementation of United Nations reform.*

Perhaps the only point marring the Conference was the refusal by the host country to grant an entry visa to a Speaker of Parliament who had received an official invitation to attend the Conference, and its failure to issue visas to two other Speakers of Parliament in time for them to attend the Conference. The Speakers adopted a declaration expressing outrage at the decision, pointing out that the event had been convened to promote dialogue, above and beyond differences, without which there could be no true democracy or international cooperation. Those, indeed, were the principles upon which the IPU was founded.

Bringing the voice of parliaments to the United Nations

A number of official IPU statements were made before the various bodies of the United Nations during the year, including an unprecedented appearance before the Security Council on the subject of women, peace and security [see box].

In March, the IPU presented the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, and IPU activities to involve parliamentary human rights committees in promoting freedom of expression and the rights of the child, to the plenary of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

Early in the summer, the IPU and the UN Division for Economic and Social Development (FFD Secretariat) organized a parliamentary panel on innovative sources of financing for development. The event aimed at providing the United Nations with a direct impression of the political support in parliaments for innovative sources of development financing. The panel consisted of seven parliamentarians from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Gabon, Mexico, Thailand and the United Kingdom. The final report of the panel was submitted to the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

During the year IPU representatives were invited to participate in meetings of the United Nations where IPU expertise on issues related to democracy, human rights, or women's rights was particularly relevant. Such meetings included:

- the event held by the UN Division for Electoral Assistance to launch the *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation*, which the IPU endorsed at its 113th Assembly;
- a panel discussion on *Women & Elections: the participation of Women in Post-Conflict Elections*, organized by the UN Department of Political Affairs and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues;
- a panel discussion on *Governance in Least Developed Countries*, held by the Office of the High-Representative for the Least Developed Countries.

A few months prior to the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, a parliamentary delegation (which included the Speakers of Parliament of Sweden and Mali, and the personal representative of the President of the Mexican Senate) travelled to New York for meetings with senior UN officials and leaders of geographical groups to put the case for more parliamentary involvement in the United Nations.

Official IPU statements at the UN in 2005 by broad subject areas:

Democracy and human rights: implementation of human rights instruments; advancement of women (in politics); efforts to assist new or restored democracies;

Peace and security: arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation; women, peace and security;

Sustainable development: information technology; international migration; financing for development; HIV/AIDS.

The full text of IPU statements at the UN can be found online at <http://www.ipu.org/un-e/un-docs.htm>.



Annual Parliamentary Hearing

The evolution of the annual Parliamentary Hearing

Over the years, the Hearing has adapted its format to make the dialogue between legislators and United Nations officials more interactive and more focused. The relevant UN Departments have been encouraged to submit background documents in advance of the meeting, and the panels have come to include prominent parliamentarians with experience in the field.

In recent years, the conclusions of the Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations have been shared with the IPU membership and the broader UN community. This year, with the assistance of the Italian Mission, these have also been circulated – free of cost – as an official document of the UN General Assembly.

This year's Parliamentary Hearing took place under the theme of *Our Shared Responsibility for a Stronger United Nations to Meet the Challenges of the 21st Century*.

After a first session that focused on the latest proposals for United Nations reform, the Hearing continued with sessions on some of the outcomes of the United Nations World Summit: the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission, the principles of the responsibility to protect, and the renewed commitment by all States in the global fight against terrorism.

The Parliamentary Hearing was chaired by the President, Pier Ferdinando

Casini, who also met the United Nations Secretary-General and other high-ranking officials to discuss the IPU-UN relationship. The Hearing's final report was circulated to all members of the United Nations.

Office of the Permanent Observer

In addition to organizing events and presenting IPU positions at the United Nations, the Office

- monitored the meetings of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and several other special high-level meetings or roundtables,

- followed the meetings of member states on UN reform, and the establishment of the new Peace-Building Commission and of the Human Rights Council,
- represented the IPU at interagency meetings in preparation for the 2006 Mid-term Review on the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries.

A new initiative in 2005 was the organization of parliamentary delegations to the United Nations in order for them to gain first hand knowledge of specific issues. A case in point was the visit of the two rapporteurs of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, who travelled to New York to attend a United Nations meeting on small arms and light weapons and to meet with experts from the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs, UNICEF, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

On the information front, 2005 saw various new activities. An electronic bi-monthly newsletter, IPU News, was produced. The plan for 2006 is to expand this newsletter into a bilingual product reaching thousands of MPs around the world.

Overseeing the liaison between the IPU and the US Congress, the Office worked during the year to familiarize members of Congress with the work of the IPU. It was thanks to this work that the President Pro-tempore of the Senate and the Chairman of the House Rules Committee (on behalf of the Speaker of the US House of Representatives), as well as the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (Congressman Alcee Hastings of Florida), were able to attend and address the September Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

In March, the Office worked with the Women's Caucus of the United States House of Representatives to set up a briefing on women in politics that featured a member of the IPU Executive Committee, Senator Mensah-Williams of Namibia, and a parliamentarian from Sweden, Mr. Anders Bengtsson.

Upon his election as President of the IPU, Speaker Casini paid an official visit to US House of Representatives Speaker Dennis Hastert and other prominent members of the United States Congress. Agreement was reached on a process that would allow a more careful consideration by the leadership of the US Congress of the possibility for renewed membership in the IPU.



I invite Speakers of Parliament
to commit to putting action behind
the words of the declaration.

This means giving the necessary
human and financial resources to
the IPU and making the best possible
expertise in parliament available to
the Organization. ””

Senator Sergio Páez, IPU President, opening
the Second World Conference of Speakers
of Parliament

In April, the Executive Committee studied a report by the communications consultants Saatchi and Saatchi. The consultants recommended an extensive overhaul of IPU communications in order to better portray the Union's diverse work, for the benefit of both parliaments and the public at large. Although most of the activities below predate the report, they are currently being pursued with renewed vigour, and new image-building projects are planned for 2006.

Information and Publications

Making effective use of the Internet

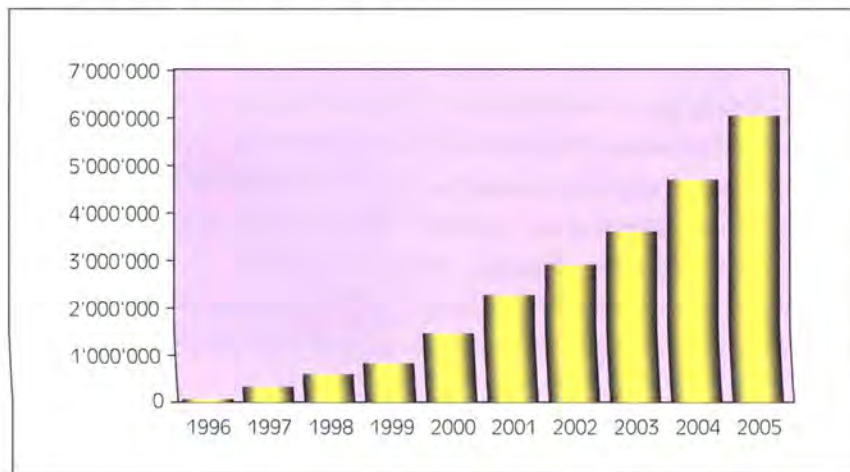
The IPU maintains a fully bilingual English-French website (<http://www.ipu.org>), which has become a primary source of information about the Union, its activities and relations with other international organizations. The site also provides detailed information about the structure and functioning of each of the world's 187 national parliaments comprising 262 parliamentary chambers. In addition to information of a general nature, the site offers a wealth of country-specific data on parliamentary elections, the percentage of women in parliaments, the control and oversight functions of parliaments, and so forth.

IPU website at a glance

- Inaugurated on 1 August 1996
- Two language versions: English and French
- Nearly 1'800 documents in each language
- Three interactive databases
- Over 23 million hits since creation
- Nearly 600'000 hits per month (end of 2005)

The IPU Secretariat devotes special attention to ensuring that the Union's website enjoys high ranking on all popular Internet search engines, such as Google, Yahoo and AltaVista. The IPU website is currently ranked as number one on nearly all of these search engines when search criteria is set to "parliamentary democracy and human rights".

IPU website hits per year



The IPU website is constantly extended and updated. During 2005, a number of new sections were added, including one on relations with the United Nations (<http://www.ipu.org/strct-e/un.htm>). To provide a one-stop access to information about current IPU activities in different fields, a page called "Latest News" (<http://www.ipu.org/news-e/latest.htm>) was added in May. It has quickly become one of the most popular entry points to the site.

Many more documents – including drafts of Assembly resolutions – are now posted on the website in advance of statutory Assemblies and other IPU events. Extensive usage of the Union's website is supplemented by the growing reliance on e-mail as a means of communication between IPU Member parliaments, the Secretariat, and the IPU Office in New York. Out of 143 IPU Members only 9 do not have a public e-mail address.

Top 10 most popular pages of the IPU website

- PARLINE database
- Parliaments on the Web
- Women's suffrage
- «Women in Politics» bibliographic database
- What is the IPU?
- Latest news
- Women in national parliaments
- IPU publications
- IPU functioning and documents
- Quick search

Specialized databases

IPU website provides easy access to the Union's three on-line databases: PARLINE, PARLIT and the «Women in politics» bibliographic database.

PARLINE provides multi-layered information on the structure and functioning of national parliaments. Collection and verification of such information necessitates research using a variety of sources, primarily the parliaments themselves. This has become a permanent research activity in the IPU Secretariat.

The most recent addition to the PARLINE database, its «specialized parliamentary bodies» module, is tailored to storing information about the structure and working methods of parliamentary committees, sub-committees and similar bodies specializing in such fields as human rights, environment, international trade, status of women and gender equality. Collection of information about parliamentary bodies working in the latter two fields is currently under way.

A sixth module, on parliamentary oversight, has been added. It provides data from 80 parliaments on oversight mechanisms, processes and modalities (see

<http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp> for more information on the PARLINE database). The data is also being analysed with a view to the publication of a monograph on the subject in 2006, as has been done with previous modules.

Thematic modules of PARLINE database

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

In the course of 2005, the IPU Secretariat significantly advanced its work on the on-line archive of data on parliamentary elections held in the last twenty years. Once this work is completed in 2006, the entire archive will be made accessible via PARLINE.

Discontinued in 2002 as a result of the reorganisation of the Union's library, the bibliographic database PARLIT should one day be replaced by an alternative on-line tool, giving access to full electronic versions of documents and publications as opposed to their mere bibliographic descriptions. The feasibility of this approach is currently under study from the point of view of cost implications and copyright rules.

Unlike PARLIT, the "Women in politics" specialized bibliographic database already contains abstracts of all referenced publications and is therefore less affected by such problems. Whenever possible, it also provides links to third-party websites where publications are in an electronic form and can be downloaded either free of charge or for a fee. The database currently counts some 2'200 bibliographic references, 300 of which were added during 2005.

Resource Centre

The Resource Centre was established in late 2004 as part of the modernisation of the information and research function at the IPU. This involved the reorientation of a traditional library service towards a modern parliamentary resource centre that would provide access to information on parliaments, including via the Internet. The Resource Centre also regroups some existing activities such as the PARLINE database and research on parliaments.

The Resource Centre carried out various activities in 2005, some of which are described elsewhere in this report. The Centre oversaw increased collaboration between the IPU and

the ASGP, under the presidency of Mr. Ian Harris. With its network of expertise in the role, functions and working methods of parliaments, the ASGP is a natural partner for the IPU's information activities. Collaboration has been materialized in a number of ways: secondment of staff from the Australian House of Representatives to liaise between the IPU and the ASGP, and support the IPU's research work; regular exchange of information between Secretariats; the scanning of 20 years of back issues of the ASGP review, *Constitutional and Parliamentary Information*, for the benefit of a wider audience; the drafting of a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on parliaments, which will enable the IPU to reach a broader audience of secondary school students and upwards. The new President of the ASGP, Mr. Anders Forsberg, is equally committed to strengthening and deepening links between the two organizations.

Meanwhile, two major reference tools, the *World Directory of Parliaments* and the *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections*, have been produced according to their annual schedule.

Publications

In 2005, four issues of the Union's quarterly review, *The World of Parliaments*, were published. No less than 4,000 copies of the review are circulated throughout the world. Many recent publications have been placed on the IPU web site in electronic format, where they are available for immediate consultation. Some 40 press releases were issued during the year to about 850 journalists (who are on the mailing list of the Geneva press service and the IPU Office in New York), to the heads of the information services at United Nations specialized agencies and to parliamentary libraries. Diplomatic missions based in Geneva and New York and the Member Parliaments of the IPU also receive this information.

The latest situation for IPU Handbook distribution is as follows:



Refugees

The IPU/UNHCR handbook on refugee protection, *Refugee Protection: A Guide to International Refugee Law*, is now available in more than 30 languages.

Volunteerism

The Guidance Note on Volunteerism and Legislation published by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the IPU was produced in Arabic and Russian. It is now available in five languages.



Child protection

The IPU/UNICEF Handbook on Child Protection has met with great success. Since its launch in April 2004, it has been produced in Arabic, English, French, Hindi and Turkish and reprinted twice. Seven other language versions are in the pipeline.

Various parliaments organised a national launch of the Handbook. In India, Speaker Chatterjee of the Lok Sabha launched the Hindi version of *Child Protection - a Handbook for Parliamentarians* in the Parliament Library Building in New Delhi. The Speaker committed himself to promoting the early passage of a bill for establishing a National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and a Parliamentary Forum for Children.

Annex

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 and annual financial report. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards. Where necessary, the statements include amounts that are based on judgements 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 2005.

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 statement present fairly the financial operations of the Organization during 2005 and its financial situation at the end of 2005.



Lars Christian Møller
Deputy Director General
Riksrevisjonen, Norway

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Statement of Financial Position

at 31 December 2005

In CHF (Swiss francs)

	2005	2004
ASSETS		
Cash on Hand	32,274	23,447
Cash on Deposit	1,464,485	2,238,713
Term Deposits	3,658,822	3,493,259
	<u>5,155,581</u>	<u>5,755,419</u>
Accounts Receivable		
from Members (Notes 3 & 4)	1,339,368	1,011,259
from Staff	76,927	67,865
from Funders (Note 5)	1,254,133	62,784
from Tax Reimbursements	19,084	26,498
Others	36,003	90,360
	<u>2,725,515</u>	<u>1,258,766</u>
Prepaid Expenses (Note 6)	159,739	69,168
Inventories of Official Gifts	16,570	15,473
Fixed Assets (Note 7)		
Building and Grounds	9'356'495	9,356,495
Furnishings	738,030	683,718
IT Equipment	287,504	390,061
Vehicles	42,053	42,053
less Accumulated Depreciation	(1,077,694)	(824,076)
	<u>9,346,388</u>	<u>9,648,251</u>
Total Assets	<u>17,403,793</u>	<u>16,747,077</u>
LIABILITIES AND RESERVES		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Payables	538,661	613,891
Advances for Technical Cooperation (Note 5)	1,294,929	486,248
Advances from Members	155,466	555,730
	<u>1,989,056</u>	<u>1,655,869</u>
Trust Funds (Note 8)	18,270	0
Loans (Note 9)		
Current Portion	189,600	190,000
Long Term	8,721,600	8,910,000
Deferred Liabilities (Note 10)	1,438,313	1,438,313
Total Liabilities	<u>12,356,839</u>	<u>12,194,182</u>
Working Capital Fund (after contribution)	5,046,954	4,552,895
Total Liabilities and Reserves	<u>17,403,793</u>	<u>16,747,077</u>

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Statement of Financial Performance

for the year ended 31 December 2005
In CHF (Swiss francs)

	2005	2004
Operating Income		
1 Assessed Contributions	10,156,910	9,815,530
2 Staff Assessment (Note 2(ii))	1,243,291	1,194,861
3 Sales of Publications	16,567	19,012
4 Administrative Fees (Note 12)	135,949	66,847
5 Other income (Note 13)	6,504	66,158
Total Operating Income	11,559,221	11,162,408
Operating Expenses		
1 Executive Office	934,358	875,429
2 Assembly Affairs and Relations with Member Parliaments	2,843,134	2,395,385
3 Promotion of Democracy	2,436,840	2,271,079
4 External Relations	1,687,177	1,525,044
5 Support Services	2,110,990	2,567,762
6 Unallocated Staff Costs (Note 2(ii))	1,243,291	1,194,861
7 Allowance for Doubtful Accounts	27,518	50,127
8 Grants	57,068	93,583
Total Operating Expenses	11,340,376	10,973,270
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	218,845	189,138
Working Capital Fund, Beginning of Year	4,552,895	4,221,599
Operating Surplus	218,845	189,138
Interest earned (Note 14)	39,341	38,699
Other Contributions (Note 14)	235,873	103,459
Working Capital Fund, End of Year	5,046,954	4,552,895

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Statement of Cashflows

for the year ended 31 December 2005

In CHF (Swiss francs)

	2005	2004
Opening Cash Balance	5,755,418	5,487,101
Cash provided by (used in) Operations		
Operating Surplus	218,845	189,138
plus non-cash expenditures	393,040	565,328
Changes in Receivables	(1,466,749)	(211,567)
Changes in inventories and prepaid expenses	(91,667)	119,523
Changes in Payables	333,188	(252,553)
Total cash from operations	(613,343)	409,869
Cash provided by the Working Capital Fund		
Other Contributions	235,873	103,459
Interest	39,341	38,699
Total cash from Working Capital Fund	275,214	142,158
Cash used in Financing Activities		
Loan from (Repayment to) Swiss Federal Government	(188,800)	(190,000)
Change in Trust Fund Balance (Note 8)	18,270	0
Total cash from Financing	(170,530)	(190,000)
Cash used in Investing Activities		
Other Assets	(91,178)	(93,710)
Total cash used in investments	(91,178)	(93,710)
Closing Cash Balance	5,155,581	5,755,418

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Nature of the 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.

The "Financial Regulations of the Inter-Parliamentary Union" is the overall governing instrument of the Union'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. Reimbursements for disbursements made under grant agreements are not recognized as revenue.

(b) 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.

(c) Property, Plant, Equipment and Depreciation

The value of the headquarters building and office equipment are 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	6 years
Vehicles	5 years
IT hardware and software	3 years

(d) 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. The wages of non-US employees are likewise exempted from direct taxation in both countries.

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

(e) Pension and Retirement Allowance Expenses

The Union has a pension fund for past retirees which is operated as a separate entity and which is governed by its own Pension Board. The Union's representative on the Pension Board provides an oral 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. The liability of the Union 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 11).

(f) Foreign Currency Translations

The Union 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.

(g) 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 Union may undertake in the future. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

(h) 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 inter-company transactions and balances are eliminated on consolidation.

(i) Changes in accounting policies

The gross amount of staff salaries has been reported as an expense, while the internal staff assessment has been 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.

3. Accounts Receivable

At 31 December 2005, there were 40 Members and Associate Members with accounts in arrears. Five of them (a) would be deprived of their voting rights subject to Article 5.2 of the Statutes. One parliament (b) was liable for suspension under Article 4.2 of the Statutes.

Member or Associate Member	2005	2004	2003	2002	Special Debt	Total
Albania	660	-	-	-	-	660
Angola	22,690	652	-	-	-	23,342
Argentina	78,290	36,865	-	-	-	115,155
Bolivia	22,690	-	-	-	-	22,690
Bosnia and Herzegovina	26,100	-	-	-	-	26,100
Botswana	22,690	-	-	-	-	22,690
Cambodia ^a	22,690	22,030	4,019	-	-	48,739
Colombia	33,235	-	-	-	-	33,235
Congo ^a	22,690	22,030	19,035	-	-	63,755
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	26,100	25,340	-	-	-	51,440
Democratic Republic of the Congo	22,690	22,030	-	-	-	44,720
Djibouti ^{a, b}	22,690	22,030	21,391	4,111	-	70,222
Dominican Republic	-	-	-	-	43,062	43,062
El Salvador	8,672	-	-	-	-	8,672
Gabon	22,690	-	-	-	-	22,690
Georgia	-	-	-	-	54,193	54,193
Ghana	22,690	-	-	-	-	22,690
Guatemala	670	-	-	-	-	670
Guinea	22,690	22,030	-	-	-	44,720
Kyrgyzstan ^a	24,970	24,240	21,690	-	-	70,900
Liberia	22,690	22,030	-	-	38,165	82,885
Lithuania	34,040	-	-	-	-	34,040
Madagascar	273	-	-	-	43,062	43,335
Mali	22,690	-	-	-	-	22,690
Mauritius	22,690	22,030	-	-	-	44,720
México	53,837	-	-	-	-	53,837
Nicaragua	22,690	-	-	-	-	22,690
Niger	22,690	4,849	-	-	-	27,539
Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States	1,180	-	-	-	-	1,180
Republic of Moldova	34,040	3,532	-	-	-	37,572
Samoa	660	-	-	-	-	660
Senegal	22,202	-	-	-	-	22,202
Serbia and Montenegro	36,350	-	-	-	-	36,350
Suriname	22,690	20,448	-	-	-	43,138
Tajikistan	19,519	-	-	-	-	19,519
Togo	22,690	-	-	-	-	22,690
Uzbekistan ^a	41,980	40,760	30,996	-	-	113,736
Venezuela	70,350	1,731	-	-	-	72,081
Viet Nam	22,690	-	-	-	-	22,690
Zimbabwe	22,690	-	-	-	-	22,690

Totals 2005	944,238	312,627	97,131	4,111	178,482	1,536,589
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<i>Comparative Figures 2004</i>	<i>744,761</i>	<i>298,925</i>	<i>132,270</i>	<i>28,941</i>	<i>38,165</i>	
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Less doubtful accounts	(197,221)
Net receivable from members	1,339,368

^a subject to Article 5.2 of the Statutes

^b subject to Article 4.2 of the Statutes

4. Allowance for Doubtful Accounts

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

At the beginning of 2005, the estimate of doubtful accounts was CHF 235,803. Following contributions and write-offs, the balance of the fund was CHF 197,221, which is 13 per cent of the arrears outstanding at year end.

	2005	2004
Opening Balance	235,803	185,677
Provision	27,518	50,126
Statutory Write-Offs	(66,100)	0
Closing Balance	197,221	235,803

5. Receivables for Technical Cooperation

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has grant commitments from numerous funding agencies in order to implement programmes of technical cooperation. Total disbursements under the grant commitments in 2005 were CHF 2,321,124. Disbursements include an amount of CHF 50,262 as a provision for doubtful accounts and exchange losses relating to the technical cooperation programme. At 31 December 2005 the net receivable under the grant commitments was CHF 9,466.

Project	Funder	Unexpended Balance of Prior Commitments	New/ (Expired) Commitment in 2005	Funds used in 2005	Balance of Commitment	(Advances)/ Receivables
Equatorial Guinea	European Commission	€ 429,081	€ 256,000	€ 61,297	€ 623,784	(€ 471,185)
Nigeria		€ 1,041,159	€ 51,348	€ 1,092,507	€ -	€ 814,762
Subtotal	EUROS	€ 1,470,240	€ 307,348	€ 1,153,804	€ 623,784	€ 343,577
Refugee Handbook	UNHCR	28,734	20,000	27,801	20,933	(20,933)
Handbook on Statelessness		-	50,000	19,883	30,117	(27,932)
Global Programme Support	SIDA	341,800	246,315	195,431	392,684	(393,098)
Pakistan	UNDP	-	39,628	39,628	-	-
Seminar on Conflict		-	65,500	-	65,500	(65,500)
Human Rights Seminar		-	7,134	7,134	-	7,134
Reconciliation Handbook		4,616	-	4,616	-	-
	IDEA	-	1,573	1,573	-	-
		-	13,055	13,055	-	5,526
Female Genital Mutilation	NORAD	-	60,414	29,698	30,716	(30,716)
Budget Seminar	UNIFEM/ACIC	-	20,741	14,908	5,833	(5,833)
Parline Database	World Bank Institute	36,227	-	36,227	-	-
Child Protection Handbook	UNICEF	28,051	-	9,638	18,413	(18,413)
Human Rights Manual	UNHCHR	28,929	2,925	31,854	-	-
Women in Politics Map	UNDAW	-	25,107	25,107	-	25,107
Seminar on the Information Society	UNESCO	-	5,715	5,715	-	-
Oversight of the Security Sector	DCAF	-	10,000	10,000	-	-
Free and Fair Elections	Ford Foundation	55,152	-	55,152	-	-
Subtotal	CHF	523,509	568,107	527,420	564,196	(524,658)
Grand Total	CHF	2,809,144	1,045,910	2,321,124	1,533,930	9,466
						1,294,929
						(50,262)
						1,254,133

plus advances From Funders
less Doubtful Accounts

Accounts Receivable from Funders

6. Prepaid Expenses

The Union has already paid some expenses that relate to 2006 including rents, postage meter deposits and grants. These disbursements have been reported as current assets.

7. Property, Plant and Equipment

- (a) The Union owns 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 Union for the next 47 years. The Union has agreed to purchase the existing building and annex on the site for CHF 1'205'000. Including registration fees the purchase will cost CHF 1,253,450.
- (b) The Union has undertaken new construction and renovations of the property at a net cost of CHF 9,356,495 after deducting grants received.
- (c) Depreciation is recorded in accordance with the policy described in note 2(c). 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	
	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004
Opening Balance	8,982,235	9,217,011	494,044	620,955	139,530	279,502	32,442	2,400
Additions	0	0	54,313	20,869	36,865	33,789	0	39,053
Depreciation	(187,130)	(187,130)	(113,953)	(110,475)	(83,546)	(118,757)	(8,411)	(8,411)
Revaluations	0	(47,646)	0	(37,305)	0	(55,004)	0	(600)
Closing Balance	8,795,105	8,982,235	434,404	494,044	92,848	139,530	24,031	32,442
Gross Carrying Amount	9,356,495	9,356,495	738,030	683,718	287,504	390,061	42,053	42,053
Accumulated Depreciation	(561,390)	(374,260)	(303,626)	(189,673)	(194,656)	(250,532)	(18,022)	(9,611)
Net Carrying Amount	8,795,105	8,982,235	434,404	494,044	92,848	139,529	24,031	32,442

8. Trust Funds

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is holding funds in trust for the main participants in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean. Ten participating parliaments made contributions towards the process. After disbursements, the balance held in trust was CHF 18,270.

Receipts

– Voluntary Contributions	89,600
Total Receipts	89,600

Disbursements

– Transportation	3,584
– Interpreters	17,250
– Other meeting costs	496
– Staff support	50,000

Total **71,330**

Balance of Trust Fund **18,270**

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 8,911,200 is outstanding. The loan has a fifty-year term maturing in 2052 and is interest free.

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

Year	CHF
2006	189,600
2007	189,600
2008	189,600
2009	189,600
2010	189,600

10. Other long term liabilities

The Union 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 2005, the total liability of benefits payable to staff was:

Amount in CHF	2005	2004
Grants for Removal Expenses	466,745	324,000
Reinstallation Premiums	571,927	634,428
Unused Leave Entitlements	360,000	479,885
Provision for Unforeseen	39,641	0
Total	1,438,313	1,438,313

11. Commitments and Contingencies

- (a) The Union has undertaken to purchase the building that houses the new headquarters from the Canton of Geneva for an amount of CHF 1'205'000. The vendor has offered to take back a 100 per cent mortgage on the property repayable over 25 years with no interest. The principal amounts payable in each of the next five years will be:

Year	CHF
2006	48,200
2007	48,200
2008	48,200
2009	48,200
2010	48,200

- (b) The Union 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
2006	USD 112,745	CHF 146,696
2007	USD 115,342	CHF 151,098
2008	USD 120,444	CHF 157,782
2009	USD 124,968	CHF 163,708
2010	USD 127,852	CHF 167,486

12. Contingent Liabilities

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 Union in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. The Union is contractually obligated to reimburse to staff members any national taxes paid in respect to income earned from the Union.

13. Administrative Fees

The Union charges administrative fees for the projects it implements with funding from other agencies. In 2005, the Union collected fees in the amount of CHF 135,949.

14. Other Income

Other income of CHF 6,504 includes room rentals and other charges.

15. Other contributions

According to the financial regulations, the Working Capital Fund receives:

- (a) Corresponding appropriations included in the annual budget as its replenishment and/or its increase;
- (b) Contributions from newly affiliated or re-affiliated Parliaments for the current year;
- (c) Income derived from its investments;
- (d) Any other amount as decided by the Council.

During 2005, the Union assessed contributions to the Working Capital Fund of CHF 235,873 for the affiliation of the Maldives and for the re-affiliations of Dominican Republic, Georgia and Madagascar. Interest earnings on the Working Capital Fund were CHF 39,341.

16. Comparative amounts

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

CURRENT COMPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(31 March 2006)

	Members	Expiry of term
<i>Ex-officio</i>		
<i>President:</i>	Mr. P.F. Casini (Italy)	October 2008
<i>Vice-President:</i>	Ms. M.N. Mensah (Namibia)	October 2007
<i>Members:</i>	Mr. H. Al Hadi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)	October 2006
	Mr. J. Austin (United Kingdom)	October 2007
	Mr. J. Jorge (Brazil)	October 2007
	Ms. J. Fraser (Canada)	May 2006
	Mr. T. Kawara (Japan)	October 2007
	Ms. K. Koml (Finland)	April 2008
	Mr. A. Kozlovskiy (Russian Federation)	October 2009
	Ms. L. Lerksamran (Thailand)	October 2007
	Mr. Lü Congmin (China)	October 2007
	Mr. O.F. Natchaba (Togo)	October 2007
	Mr. F.X. Ole Kaparo (Kenya)	October 2007
	Ms. E. Papadimitriou (Greece)	October 2009
	Mr. A. Radi (Morocco)	October 2008
	Ms. K. Serrano Puig (Cuba)	October 2008
	Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary)	October 2006

STANDING COMMITTEES – COMPOSITION OF THE BUREAUX

President:	Mr. N. El-Ghanem (Syrian Arab Republic)	<i>Arab Group</i>
First Vice-President:	Mr. Eduardo Menem (Argentina)	<i>Latin American Group</i>
Vice-Presidents:	TITULAR	SUBSTITUTE
<i>African Group</i>	Mr. Albert Ndjavé-Djoye (Gabon)	Mr. Thiémélé Boa (Côte d'Ivoire)
<i>Arab Group</i>	<i>Current President</i>	Ms. Zahra Bitat (Algeria)
<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	<i>Vacancy</i>	Mr. Simon Patrice Morin (Indonesia)
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	Mr. B.-Z. Zhambalimbuev (Russian Federation)	Mr. R. Iskuzhin (Russian Federation)
<i>Latin American Group</i>	<i>Current First Vice-President</i>	Mr. Luis Fernando Duque Garcia (Colombia)
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	Lord Morris of Aberavon (United Kingdom)	Mr. R. Podgorean (Romania)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, FINANCE AND TRADE

President:	Mr. A. Fomenko (Russian Federation)	<i>Eurasia Group</i>
First Vice-President:	<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>
Vice-Presidents:	TITULAR	SUBSTITUTE
<i>African Group</i>	Ms. Nora Schimming-Chase (Namibia)	Mr. Tierno Aliou Baniré Diallo
<i>Arab Group</i>	<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>Vacancy</i>
<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	Mr. Eduardo K. Veloso (Philippines)	Mr. Grant Chapman (Australia)
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	<i>Current President</i>	Mr. Vadim Popov (Belarus)
<i>Latin American Group</i>	Mr. Luis Alberto Heber (Uruguay)	Mr. Dario Vivas (Venezuela)
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	<i>Vacancy</i>	Ms. Ingrida Udre (Latvia)

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

President:	Mr. Jay-Kun Yoo (Republic of Korea)	<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>
First Vice-President:	Ms. Rebecca A. Kadaga (Uganda)	<i>African Group</i>
Vice-Presidents:	TITULAR	SUBSTITUTE
<i>African Group</i>	<i>Current First Vice-President</i>	Mr. Alban Baghin (Ghana)
<i>Arab Group</i>	Mr. Z. Azmy (Egypt)	Mr. Ahmed El-Kadiri (Morocco)
<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	<i>Current President</i>	Mr. Prem Chand Gupta (India)
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	Mr. Sergey Zhalybin (Kazakhstan)	Mr. Tolib Nabiev (Tajikistan)
<i>Latin American Group</i>	Mr. José Machuca (El Salvador)	Mr. L. Nicolini (Uruguay)
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	Ms. Brigitta Gadiet (Switzerland)	Mr. Henrik S. Järrel (Sweden)

2005 – List of specialized meetings

Hong Kong session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO

> Hong Kong (China), 12 and 15 December 2005

African Parliamentary Conference on "Violence against women, abandoning female genital mutilation: The role of parliaments"

> Dakar (Senegal), 4 and 5 December 2005

Global capacity-building initiative for parliaments on sustainable development. Regional seminar for the parliaments of the Arab States

> Beirut (Lebanon), 29-30 November 2005

Parliamentary panel on the occasion of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society

> Tunis (Tunisia), 17 November 2005

Regional seminar on the role of parliaments in the national reconciliation process in Africa

> Bujumbura (Burundi), 7 - 8 November 2005

Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations

> New York (UN Headquarters), 31 October - 1 November 2005

Information seminar "Implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: The role of parliaments and their members"

> Geneva (IPU Headquarters), 20 October 2005

Seminar for Latin American Parliaments on Parliament and the budgetary process, including from a gender perspective

> San Salvador (El Salvador), 19-21 September 2005

Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

> New York (UN Headquarters), 7-9 September 2005

Preparatory Meeting of the Inaugural Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean

> Naples (Italy), 26 June 2005

Seminar on the impact of parliamentary action on indigenous peoples' rights, organised in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

> Geneva (IPU Headquarters), 25-26 July 2005

Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the World Conference of Women Parliamentarians for the protection of children and young persons

> Geneva (IPU Headquarters), 11 July 2005

Regional seminar on parliamentary oversight of the security sector in Latin America

> Montevideo (Uruguay), 1-2 July 2005

Panel discussion "Promoting innovative sources of FFD: What role for parliaments?"

> New York (UN Headquarters), 10 June 2005

Seminar for chairpersons and members of parliamentary human rights bodies on freedom of expression, parliament and the promotion of tolerant societies

> Geneva (IPU Headquarters), 25-27 May 2005

Parliamentary Panel within the framework of the annual WTO Public Symposium

> Geneva (WTO Headquarters), 22 April 2005

Seminar on parliaments, environmental management and sustainable development.

> Paris (France), 22-23 April 2005

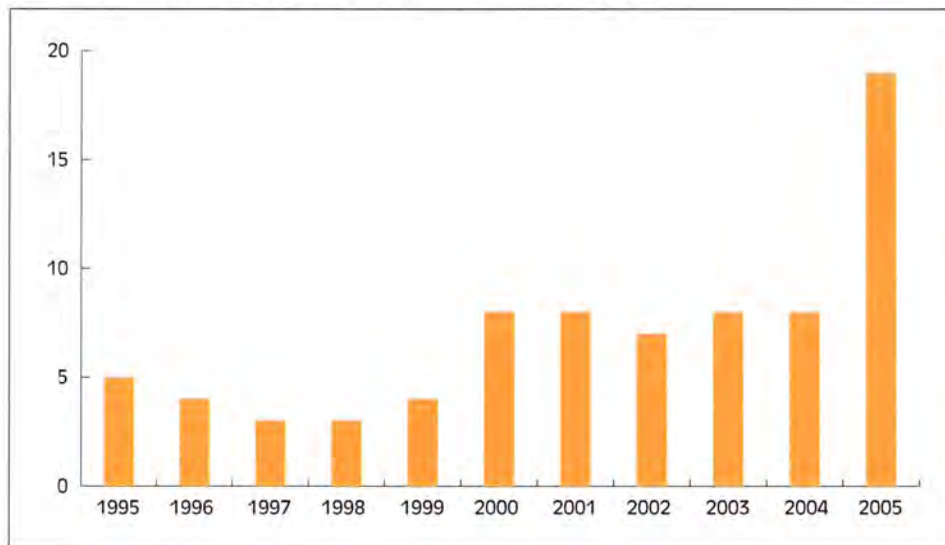
Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women: Beijing + 10

> New York (UN Headquarters), 3 March 2005

Fourth Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean

> Nafplion (Greece), 6-7 February 2005

Number of specialized meetings in the last 10 years:



Membership

In 2005, the Governing Council approved requests for reaffiliation from the Parliaments of Georgia, Dominican Republic and Madagascar, and the Parliament of the Maldives became a member for the first time. IPU membership currently stands at 143.

The IPU Membership as at 1 January 2006

Members (143)

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Associate Members (7)

Andean Parliament, Central American Parliament, East African Legislative Assembly, European Parliament, Latin American Parliament, Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States, and the 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 the purposes of each group. 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 themes selected by the IPU; past examples have included parliamentary mechanisms to support human rights and gender partnership in the parliamentary service and relations between parliaments and civil society. In 2005, the ASGP provided a significant contribution to the ongoing IPU study on the contribution of parliaments to democracy.

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 2005 were implemented with substantial support from the ASGP through its members, who provided the necessary expertise. The ASGP contributed significantly to efforts aimed at updating the IPU roster of parliamentary experts. It assisted the IPU in responding to the numerous queries received from parliaments and from the general public for information on the role and working methods of parliaments. The ASGP, through its president, continued to second senior staff of the Australian Parliament to strengthen the IPU Secretariat's research capacity and ensure better coordination between the IPU and the ASGP.

The Association has an Executive Committee, whose members must belong to different parliaments. The President is Mr. Anders Forsberg, Secretary General of the Riksdagen of Sweden.

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