

ENHANCING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



A REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY ACTION
TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMITMENTS MADE AT THE
WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

*Publication prepared by
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Inter-Parliamentary Union
in association with
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GENEVA 1999

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Foreword

Nearly five years have elapsed since the landmark World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen adopted grand commitments to promote social progress by eradicating poverty and achieving full employment and social integration.

The implementation of major State political and economic commitments necessarily involves national institutions of legislative power. Parliaments, made up of representatives who have been elected by the people, have a special role to play and a special responsibility to face, particularly when the issue concerned is of such fundamental importance as that of ensuring sustainable social development in an era of globalisation.

Indeed, it is members of Parliament who give political legitimacy to governmental action, ensure that such action receives popular support and see to it that State commitments - such as those made in Copenhagen - are respected.

From the very outset of the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, the Inter-Parliamentary Union - the world organisation of national parliaments - provided endorsement and energetic support for the event.

The Union's governing bodies devoted much time and resources to bringing about a meaningful parliamentary contribution to the WSSD and regularly reviewed relevant matters in the process leading up to the Summit.

IPU facilitated a strong parliamentary presence at the Copenhagen Summit and organised a meeting for members of parliament on that occasion to discuss last-minute developments in connection with the preparation of the Summit's Declaration and Plan of Action and to formulate parliamentary strategies for effective follow-up.

These discussions were pursued at subsequent IPU conferences and in particular at two tripartite meetings of representatives of parliaments, governments and relevant intergovernmental organisations which the IPU has organised.

The first such meeting took place in New York in September 1996 and was organised with the support of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Na-

tions Development Programme. It drew up a catalogue of concrete actions to be taken directly and indirectly by national parliaments and their members in support of the Summit's results.

The second tripartite meeting was held in March 1999. It provided an opportunity to review progress achieved in implementing WSSD results at the parliamentary level and to take stock of action by national parliaments and their members in this regard. Additionally, the meeting discussed problems that had arisen in the implementation process and identified possible solutions.

To prepare for the meeting, IPU sent out a questionnaire to all national parliaments inviting them to submit information on action taken to implement the results of WSSD. They were also asked to identify obstacles to follow-up and suggest recommendations for further action.

The answers to the questionnaire were analysed by the IPU Secretariat with the assistance of the United Nations Research Institute on Social Development (UNRISD). The results of the analysis were reviewed by the IPU Committee for Sustainable Development, discussed at the second tripartite meeting and subsequently submitted to the May 1999 meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the "Copenhagen +5" Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The brochure you have in your hands contains an unabridged version of the analysis of replies to the IPU questionnaire, a synopsis of respondents' data presented in the form of a table, as well as the full text of the conclusions and recommendations drawn up by the participants in the second tripartite meeting.

I am confident that this brochure will represent an important contribution by the IPU and the world's parliamentary community to the "Copenhagen +5" Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly.



Anders B. Johnsson
IPU Secretary General

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I Survey of Parliamentary Union

INTRODUCTION

The World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), held in Copenhagen in March 1995, ended with a pledge to implement an ambitious Programme of Action. In addition to three core areas, i.e. eradication of poverty, promotion of full employment and enhancement of social integration, the Summit articulated the need to achieve equity between women and men; attain universal and equitable access to education and primary health-care; increase resources allocated to social development; ensure that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals; and accelerate the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries (see box 1 for a full summary of WSSD commitments). The organisation of a first-ever global summit on social development and the resulting Programme of Action were an explicit recognition of the seriousness of the world's social crisis.

Nearly five years have now passed since the WSSD. To what extent has the WSSD Declaration and Programme of Action proved a meaningful mechanism to create an enabling environment for social development, since promoting sustained and equitable socio-economic development has become a formidable challenge worldwide? During the past five years, most industrialised countries have confronted persistent economic stagnation and low economic performance, while in the previously centralised economies of Eastern Europe political and economic liberalisation has all but meant a generalised withdrawal of the State in social provisioning and has caused extreme hardship to many population groups. In developing countries, on the other hand, the problems of debt, dwindling aid budgets, stringent structural adjustment programmes and low commodity prices have greatly affected governments' ability to assist in providing employment, income, access to productive resources, education, healthcare and nutrition for many millions of people. Inequalities between the rich and the poor, as well as between industrialised and developing countries, have increased. Crime, unsustainable patterns of consumption, racial and

ethnic conflicts, the problems of migration and refugee movements and the violation of basic human rights have become major obstacles to social integration in many parts of the world.

What are the major institutional and political measures taken at the country level to cope with the negative impact of globalisation and situation of mass unemployment and poverty? And how is social cohesion strengthened among various population groups in the country? In particular, what are the specific steps that are taken to implement the different commitments mentioned in the WSSD declaration? Unlike many past international agreements, the WSSD agenda of action was viewed as consisting of "commitments" rather than merely "recommendations" or "goals". Is this distinction also reflected in reality? What are the principal achievements and deficiencies?

The United Nations system, bilateral agencies, governments, parliaments, NGOs and civil society at large were expected to participate in the implementation process. In particular, the Summit identified national governments — together with their parliaments — as crucial actors in the implementation of the agreed social agenda. National poverty eradication plans were to be elaborated based on more precise definitions and assessments of absolute poverty. A specific national time frame was to be decided and the necessary resources were to be mobilised at various levels. Governments were expected to work with a wide range of national actors, such as NGOs, the private sector and local communities. This document reviews the measures taken by national parliaments to implement the commitments made at the Summit¹.

¹ Research assistance from Mariana Mozdzer is greatly acknowledged during the preparation of this document, especially in the processing and annotating of the principal results of the questionnaire survey attached in Annex 2. Yusuf Bangura, Jenifer Freedman and Peter Utting provided valuable comments on the earlier draft.

National parliaments and their members may contribute to the implementation of the commitments made at the Summit in a number of ways. First, they may consider a more socially-oriented national development strategy, discuss budgetary requirements and ratify relevant laws. They may have the potential to ensure the monitoring of implementation of programmes and projects. Through direct and continuous dialogue with people in their constituencies, Members of Parliament (MPs) are well placed to create public awareness of social development issues and public discussion. They may also mobilise the public to pressure the government when its orientation and concrete policy measures on major social questions remain seemingly undecided or deficient. Thus, there is perhaps no better body than national parliaments to examine how the Summit's Programme of Action has been put into practice by key institutions in specific national contexts.

In September 1998, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conducted a questionnaire survey, targeting some 136 national parliaments. The survey sought to collect information on parliamentary action related to the implementation of the Summit's agenda at the national level, as well as major constraints and obstacles encountered in the country. Furthermore, it solicited views and proposals of different parliaments for further initiatives required to promote social development at national and international levels (a copy of the questionnaire appears in Annex 1).

By the beginning of 1999, some 45 responses had been received. Even though the level of response was generally low, there was a relatively wide regional representation. Among the industrialised countries, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Sweden and Switzerland responded. Belarus, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Poland, the Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia responded from Eastern Europe. The remaining answers came from Asia (Republic of Cyprus, India, Israel, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey and Viet Nam), Africa (Burkina Faso, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Mali, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia) and Latin America (Costa Rica).²

The nature and quality of responses vary enormously. Some provide little significant information on initiatives by national parliaments. Others answer only specific questions, depending frequently upon the expertise or interest area of the

responding MP or the parliamentary specialist. Nevertheless, the responses are informative. The replies bring out many critical specific country-level trends and issues of social development. They also express several common points of concern and obstacles to the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments. The principal results emanating from the questionnaire are presented below. The final section contains a few concluding ideas and recommendations. More detailed annotated results of the questionnaire appear in Annex 2.

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION TO IMPLEMENT THE WSSD AGENDA

According to survey results, the WSSD Declaration and Programme of Action were formally "presented and endorsed" by a small number of parliaments, and a few sought to incorporate them in their ongoing or upcoming development plans and strategies. For the most part, the Copenhagen commitments were "introduced" in parliament, and some discussion took place. In the preparation of laws, adaptation of annual budgets, plenary debates and parliamentary hearings, questioning and mo-

² The low response from Latin America may be attributed to the fact that the IPU questionnaire was made available only in English and French, excluding Spanish which is the principal working language in the continent. Information available from other sources does indicate that several national and regional initiatives were taken in an effort to implement the WSSD agenda. For example, in May 1995 a major meeting was held in Buenos Aires bringing together 13 Latin American countries which drafted a concrete programme of activities, particularly in the area of poverty eradication and social discrimination. Similarly, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) organized another important conference in São Paulo in April 1997 during which the countries in the region renewed their commitment to the WSSD agenda, including the need to ensure appropriate allocation of resources in order to incorporate social equity into growth. At the national level, many countries have developed poverty eradication strategies, and civil society organizations have also sought to organize meetings and promote social awareness programmes. For further information, see United Nations, "Implementation of the Outcome of The World Summit for Social Development" (<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssdimp2.htm>) and "Initiatives of National Governments on the Follow-up to The World Summit for Social Development" (<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssdimp5.htm>). However, information is scarce on how these initiatives have been actually implemented in concrete circumstances or have cumulatively produced positive results in poverty reduction, employment creation and social cohesion.

Box 1**COPENHAGEN DECLARATION: SUMMARY OF COMMITMENTS*****Commitment No. 1***

Create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development;

Commitment No. 2

Eradicate absolute poverty by a target date to be set by each country;

Commitment No. 3

Support full employment as a basic policy goal;

Commitment No. 4

Promote social integration based on the enhancement and protection of all human rights;

Commitment No. 5

Achieve equality and equity between women and men;

Commitment No. 6

Attain universal and equitable access to education and primary health care;

Commitment No. 7

Accelerate the development of Africa and the least developed countries;

Commitment No. 8

Ensure that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals;

Commitment No. 9

Increase resources allocated to social development;

Commitment No. 10

Strengthen cooperation for social development through the UN.

tions, the WSSD commitments were frequently considered. Major parliamentary action reflecting the Social Summit's commitments is described and discussed below and summarised in Table 1.

Parliamentary adoption of relevant laws and policies

National parliaments reported the enactment of laws and the formulation of policies on social development issues as their primary means of implementing the WSSD commitments. In industrialised countries, where many laws on social questions already existed, attention was directed toward defining more accurately both the concept and context of poverty, unemployment and exclusion. Denmark, France, Sweden, Canada and Japan also promulgated laws elaborating the rights of women, children, disabled persons and immigrant populations. France, for instance, enacted laws to address urban exclusion and insecurity, illegal immigrants and the legal recognition of homosexuality; and it has sought to reduce weekly working hours to encourage the sharing of available employment among as many members of working population as possible.

In Eastern Europe, Belarus, Bulgaria, Poland and Slovenia have passed laws seeking to provide as-

sistance to the jobless, and to integrate young people and disabled persons into the labour market. They have also taken legal steps to create new "safety nets" for people affected by the abandonment of the previous systems of social provisioning. Healthcare and pension schemes, in particular, have been a high priority.

Unemployment has remained a serious concern in developing countries. South Africa, for example, passed an Employment Equity Bill in 1995 aimed at changing the previously dominant discriminatory labour relations in recruitment, promotion and salaries. Costa Rica adopted laws on public employment, social security and health in the construction sector, the promotion of employment and protection against unemployment. In Gabon, detailed policy measures on investment have been developed to promote employment. India introduced the worker compensation and bonus amendment acts. In Niger, a law has been passed on new economic and investment priorities. Zambia enacted laws encouraging more flexible labour relations and small enterprises with a view to generating employment.

Education has also received attention. In Costa Rica, laws on the use of radio and television as a means for educational development have been

Table 1

A summary of parliamentary action on the implementation of the WSSD commitments

Country	Enaction of laws						Programmes						Budget	New institutions	Special events	Wider consultation	Data col. studies
	Em	P ¹	E	H	SI ²	SI ²	Em	P	E	H	SI						
Belarus																	
Belgium																	
Bulgaria																	
Burkina Faso																	
Canada																	
Congo																	
Costa Rica																	
Cyprus																	
Czech Republic																	
Denmark																	
Égypt																	
Éthiopia																	
Finland																	
France																	
Gabon																	
Germany																	
Hungary																	
India																	
Israel																	
Japan																	
Jordan																	
Mali																	
Mauritius																	
Namibia																	
Niger																	
Philippines																	
Poland																	
Républic of Korea																	
Russian Federation																	
Rwanda																	
Senegal																	
Singapore																	
Slovak République																	
Slovenia																	
South Africa																	
Sri Lanka																	
Sweden																	
Switzerland																	
Thailand																	
TFYR of Macedonia																	
Togo																	
Tunisia																	
Turkey																	
Viet Nam																	
Zambia																	

Note : Em = Employment; P = Poverty; E = Education; H = Health; SI = Social Integration.

¹ Developed countries' action for the eradication of poverty relate mostly to their assistance to developing countries.

² "Social Integration" has mainly encompassed gender equality, disabled person's rights, children's rights and rights of the elderly.

³ It refers to developed countries' studies at the national level and studies in developing countries as part of cooperation programmes.

Source : IPU Questionnaire Survey, 1998-99.

adopted. Niger passed a law on the future orientation of the educational system, especially emphasising technical education and vocational training. Turkey promulgated a law on compulsory education for eight years and on the improvement of vocational education.

Likewise, developing countries answering the questionnaire cite the special attention given to the rights of women and children. For example, Costa Rica adopted laws on women's social equality, assistance to women living in poverty and domestic violence. South Africa introduced a Gender Management System to ensure improved gender equality in socio-economic spheres. India has directed its Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) toward the empowerment of women and children and passed legislation on maternity benefits in the formal sector. Viet Nam adopted a law stipulating women's equal rights to employment, professional training and equal salaries. The Philippines adopted the child and youth welfare code, a street children programme, and a programme for women in especially difficult circumstances. In Namibia, a national gender policy was adopted in 1997. The Republic of Korea also adopted an act favouring women's development and child welfare. In 1998, the Sri Lankan Parliament enacted the National Child Protection Authority Act on child abuse and made several amendments to the Penal Code to protect women and children from sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

Many countries have also introduced reforms and new laws on the provision of improved health-care. Niger, Senegal, South Africa and Gabon have elaborated detailed health policies and action programmes with the goal of ensuring access to basic health services for all citizens. Different laws were also passed for the well-being of disabled persons and the elderly in a number of countries (including Zambia and India).

Budgetary provisions

Most parliaments have acknowledged the need to direct resources toward social development goals, especially in areas such as education and health-care. Costa Rica has revised its Constitution to guarantee not less than 6 per cent of its GDP for education. South Africa allocated 6.5 and 3.3 per cent of its GDP to the education and health sectors, respectively, in 1997/98. Egypt, Sri Lanka and Turkey have also increased the budget for education. In the period 1995-1999, Sri Lanka nearly tripled its budget for the Ministry of Social Services (a focal point for coordinating social development activities) from 811 million to 2,371 million rupees.

A number of countries have sought to create social safety nets against unemployment and other precarious situations. Poland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Slovenia have increased social expenditure to alleviate the negative impacts of economic restructuring. The Republic of Korea has created special funds for people suffering from recent economic difficulties. Viet Nam has created an employment fund. Gabon has created social solidarity funds to fight against poverty and to help integrate unemployed people into the waged labour market. Egypt has established a social fund to protect workers against the negative impact of privatisation. Senegal has been studying the establishment of a national fund for employment beginning in 1999. Jordan has set the target of securing a minimum income of 140 JD for families with seven members. India has seen an increase in social services and rural development from 1.47 per cent of GDP in 1990/91 to 1.75 per cent in 1997/98.

In the industrialised countries, Canada has increased the budget for child benefits and student scholarships. It has also reallocated 25 per cent of its official development assistance (ODA) to meeting basic human needs in poorer countries. Denmark has allocated 1 per cent of its GDP to ODA, especially to the least developed countries. Japan has expanded its foreign aid for social development, including the environment, population, gender and AIDS, surpassing the ODA's 20 per cent commitment for the social sector since 1993.

Establishment of special institutions

Several countries have created commissions or committees within their parliaments to focus on social development issues, including those referred to in the WSSD commitments. Japan has established a Liaison Meeting consisting of 23 relevant ministries and agencies aimed at studying and implementing the commitments made at the WSSD. Niger has set up a commission on social and cultural affairs and plans to establish an independent ministry on national solidarity. According to Mali's questionnaire response, the second term of the present president was exclusively aimed at fighting poverty. Various parliamentary committees have been set up in Zambia to consider the Summit's commitments and the necessary policy measures. In Jordan, a high level ministerial committee has been established to address social issues and, in particular, the Government's goal of eradicating abject poverty by the year 2000. Sri Lanka has set up a National Committee made up of representatives of the Government, UN agencies and NGOs to monitor the progress in social development. A committee was

established in the Republic of Cyprus' Council of Ministries which produced a report on national poverty in 1997. India appointed a ministerial committee on empowerment of women, and Sri Lanka created the Ministry for Women Affairs in 1997. In Thailand, the National Economic and Social Development Board has been appointed as a national focal point on WSSD commitments.

Special events

A few countries have organised special events on social development. Sri Lanka held a national conference on social development in September 1997 as a first step towards the implementation of a more systematic approach to social development in the country. In 1996 and 1997, Denmark organised two major seminars to encourage international dialogue, especially focusing on the role of the market in social development. Between 1997 and 1998, the Belarus Parliament held three public hearings on social issues, including public education and human rights. South Africa conducted a major national workshop in May 1998 to review progress towards the implementation of the WSSD commitments, espe-

cially by identifying chief constraints and possible solutions for promoting sustained and equitable social development in the country (see Box 2). In Mali, October is "solidarity month" during which different activities are organised (especially by NGOs) to offer help to the most marginalised population groups. In France, 20 November is legally recognised as national "children's day".

Data collection and studies

Several parliaments have sought to gather information on specific problems faced by the population or to help them to propose concrete policy measures. Gabon and Togo (with the World Bank and UNDP respectively) have carried out studies to evaluate absolute poverty in their countries. Niger has sought to elaborate a detailed policy for social development and has also been collaborating with UNICEF in a study on possibilities for mobilising internal resources to meet the goal of 20 per cent investment in the social sector. The Belgian Commission on Social Affairs produced a report on unemployment and social exclusion in 1997. The German parliament has commissioned

Box 2

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKSHOP ON WSSD FOLLOW-UP

Following the WSSD, several countries organised workshops and consultative gatherings regarding the implementation of the Summit's commitments. These meetings were an important vehicle for disseminating information on the critical social development issues in the country, as well as raising public awareness. They have, in particular, made it possible to evaluate how legislative measures and other government-sponsored social development policies were being executed in practice, and were able to help to improve the working and living conditions of the target population.

The national workshop organised in South Africa in May 1998 was somewhat unique because it not only considered the major constraints and obstacles faced in implementing WSSD commitments but also postulated various solutions. For example, on the question of poverty reduction, it saw the need to link social security to social development, to develop rural infrastructure, to establish a major social development fund, and to promote skills training sought in the labour market, and greater public education and awareness. Concerning the issue of social integration, it considered the need to establish inter-sectoral, inter-departmental processes, conduct human rights public campaigns and establish proper information and communication systems. Similarly, on access to education and healthcare, it was thought important to develop programmes that would address community attitudes and socialization processes. Similar action was considered to be necessary for achieving gender equality combined with the elimination of discriminatory legislation and awareness campaigns.

Of course, the key question is how these recommendations are eventually implemented, and especially whether the Government would be able provide adequate financial resources, given the many contending demands.

Source: IPU questionnaire survey on parliamentary action to implement the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development; reply from the National Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 1999.

a study to assess the social welfare effects of demographic changes for different age groups. Sweden has been helping 12 countries in Africa and six in Asia to produce gender disaggregated statistics and basic data on living conditions. Denmark is also providing technical assistance to Uganda to develop statistical capacity for a better assessment of the objectives and problems of social development. Similarly, Switzerland has expressed interest in conducting pilot studies on the implementation of 20:20 initiatives at the country level in Burkina Faso, Tanzania and Bolivia.

Wider consultation

A number of parliaments have engaged in wider interaction with the academic community, NGOs, welfare institutions, regional and national authorities, and the international community. Public hearings and the celebration of the types of special events referred to above are channels for wider discussion and exchange. In Canada, parliamentary action has frequently involved wide-ranging consultations with the provinces and civil society organisations. In Switzerland, the Parliament and the Government have made an effort to raise public awareness on such major social questions as debt, inequality and sustainable development, with active participation by the NGO sector. Egypt has sought to mobilise NGOs to provide assistance to the poorer groups in society. Niger has also encouraged NGOs and the voluntary sector to better serve the needs of women, children and other vulnerable groups. The Parliament of Mali has interacted with national NGOs, for example, in the context of celebration of solidarity month in October. South Africa has conducted extensive consultative processes involving the public, NGOs and expert advisers through public hearings, workshops and committee debates on the finalisation of various government policies on employment, poverty, education, health and housing. The Philippines has also reported that during the period 1995-98 there was a great deal of collaboration among the central Government, local government units, NGOs, people's organisations, the private sector and local communities in the planning, implementation and monitoring of various social development projects.

ELABORATION OF TIME-BOUND NATIONAL STRATEGIES

At the Summit, it was agreed that countries should set target dates for eliminating absolute poverty and for addressing other pressing social development questions. National policies and strategies

should address the root causes of poverty, including the elimination of hunger and malnutrition, the provision of food security, education, employment and livelihood, primary healthcare and adequate shelter. It also stated that national poverty policies should give priority to the needs and rights of women, children and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and individuals.

National parliaments have played an important role in focusing government efforts on achieving poverty alleviation by specified dates, for instance in their five-year or longer-term development plans and strategies. Sectoral initiatives (education, health, gender) have also included specific time frames. Many of the programmes and projects related to poverty or broader basic needs provisioning initiated after the organisation of WSSD have sought to incorporate the Summit's agenda items.

Ethiopia, for example, has included the principal recommendations of the Summit in its Five-Year Plan, with food self-sufficiency being the principal short-term aim. Namibia also developed a long-term food security and nutrition policy following the Social Summit. In 1997, Senegal elaborated a long-term employment policy. Rwanda has elaborated national development strategies targeting vulnerable groups, gender equality, health and youth, but war and genocide have made implementation extremely difficult.

Similarly, Costa Rica and Jordan have elaborated specific programmes to eradicate absolute poverty by 2000 and 2001 respectively. Sri Lanka elaborated the Samurdhi Programme (1996-2000) to eradicate poverty in the country, and a five-year strategy (1999-2004) to improve conditions for women and children, as well as coverage and quality in the health and housing sectors. India, too, has developed a national programme aimed at generating greater productive employment for 1997 and 2002. Thailand has included the Summit's commitments in its Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001). The Philippines has drawn up a "National Development Plan: 1999-2004" designed to raise the quality of life of its citizens. The Republic of Korea has prepared a national plan for the welfare of disabled people by the year 2000, and also intends to provide training and education for 30,000 unskilled foreign workers by 2010. Gabon has set 2005 as its target year to reduce poverty in a substantial manner. Egypt has developed long-term national development strategies to tackle poverty and unemployment issues, extending until 2016/17.

Equally, longer-term general poverty eradication

strategies have been developed by several Eastern European countries. Belarus elaborated a national strategy for sustainable development (1996-2000) and Poland designed a programme to tackle unemployment by 2000. Bulgaria implemented "Programme 2001", a medium-term economic strategy to overcome the crisis in the country with legislative initiatives to reform the public sector and provide social protection to ease the burden associated with the transitional period. Slovenia developed a strategy on the development of the job market during 1999-2006. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has developed national policy strategies to tackle poverty and unemployment issues by 2020.

None of the responses received from industrialised countries reported any formulation or strengthening of national poverty eradication strategies in their countries. But poverty and social deprivation are clearly serious problems in industrial countries as well. In OECD countries, there are approximately 100 million homeless and 37 million unemployed. Unemployment among youth is especially high. A considerable number of children live below the poverty line and nearly 200 million people are not expected to survive beyond the age of 60 years.³ Persistent unemployment and economic insecurity have also given rise to increased racial tensions, xenophobia and criminal activities.

TANGIBLE RESULTS

Have the actions taken by these countries led to any concrete results in terms of reducing poverty, increasing productive employment and strengthening social solidarity? Very few of the replies provide direct answers to this question. One specific problem is that although many countries have developed ambitious poverty eradication strategies, they have fewer resources to implement them effectively⁴, so that there are very few measurable results. The second is that most poverty strategies have tended to extend over a period of several years; thus, even those which had a promising future might not have been able to prove their potential when the questionnaire survey was conducted. Furthermore, there are conceptual and methodological difficulties in gauging specific successes or failures of poverty eradication strategies and programmes.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Russian Federation acknowledge their national poverty strategies are able to produce few tangible results, if any; Belarus mentions the de-

Box 3

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL FUNDS: THE CASE OF VIET NAM

The majority of "social funds" in recent years have aimed at mitigating structural-adjustment-related social costs through provisioning of basic economic and social benefits and services to the affected population groups. UNDP states that by 1998 there were some 40 major social funds in developing countries, supporting such diverse activities as employment creation, development of infrastructure, income-generating activities, education and so forth.⁵ The impact of social funds has tended to vary from country to country depending upon their scope, time-span and the resources available to them.⁶

Following the WSSD, Viet Nam activated a major employment fund which has apparently produced notable results. In 1998, the scheme counted 13,600 sub-projects, with a total investment of 480 million dong. The Government suggests that the fund created as many as 1.3 million jobs in 1998. UNDP considers that the success of Viet Nam is due to favourable initial conditions in terms of relatively advanced human development in the country and that productive wealth, including land, was fairly equally distributed. The Organisation also indicates that the fund focused on the creation of the kind of small-scale labour-intensive manufacturing that offers employment to the poor along with small privately-owned service activities and agriculture.⁷

Source: IPU questionnaire survey on parliamentary action to implement the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development; reply from the National Assembly, Viet Nam, 1999.

³ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1998*, published for UNDP by Oxford University Press, New York, 1988, p. 27.

⁴ Indeed, a UNDP report on human poverty showed that by 1998, out of 130 surveyed countries from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, 78 countries either had specific poverty plans or plans integrated into overall national development strategies; UNDP, *Overcoming Human Poverty*, UNDP, New York, 1998, p.16.

⁵ UNDP, *Overcoming Human Poverty*, *ibid.*

⁶ Vivian, Jessica, *Social Safety Nets and Adjustment in Developing Countries*, Occasional Paper No. 1, UNRISD, Geneva, July 1994.

⁷ UNDP, *Overcoming Human Poverty*, *ibid.*

Box 4

EFFORTS TO ERADICATE POVERTY: THE PHILIPPINES' EXPERIENCE

In 1996, in order to translate anti-poverty strategies into specific actions, the Government of the Philippines convened a major national Anti-Poverty Summit to arrive at a consensus on the substance and direction of the nationwide fight against poverty. This gathering agreed that the primary responsibility for poverty reduction should be “everybody’s business”, involving various actors and institutions at all levels. The Minimum Basic Needs Approach (MBN), aimed at enhancing the capacity of families to gain basic entitlements, became the core strategy for managing local anti-poverty efforts. Built on this momentum, the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act was enacted in December 1997. The law provided the overall policy framework to operationalise the national social development strategies.

The Government of the Philippines claims that its anti-poverty measures have already produced significant results, indicating that poverty incidence in the country decreased from 35.5 per cent in 1994 to 32.1 per cent in 1997. The subsistence incidence also went down from 18.1 per cent in 1994 to 16.5 per cent in 1997.

The Government’s optimism is supported by many donor agencies, especially the World Bank.¹⁰ But most influential civil society organisations in the country have remained more cautious in their assessment. They point out that anti-poverty programmes have generally neglected equity and adequate redistribution of wealth, and suffer from neglect of budgetary constraints and poor targeting of beneficiaries.¹¹

Source: IPU questionnaire survey on parliamentary action to implement the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development; reply from the Senate, The Philippines, 1999.

cline in the quality of healthcare; and the Slovak Republic cites rising unemployment. Israel reports that the incidence of poverty has risen in recent years. Developed countries, such as Canada, Ger-

many, Sweden, Denmark, France and Finland, also report few or no tangible results.

A number of developing countries cite their enactment of laws and budgetary provisions as “measurable results”. Among developing countries pointing out tangible results, Costa Rica, for instance, mentions the decline in unemployment in rural areas, as well as falling female unemployment in general. Viet Nam mentions that it created 1.3 million jobs in 1998 through the recently established employment fund and claims to have cut the number of extremely poor households by 15.7 per cent in 1998 (see box 3 for details). The Philippines states that poverty has decreased from 35.5 per cent of the population in 1994 to 32.1 per cent in 1997 (see Box 4). And Turkey mentions a reduction in the unemployment rate from 6.9 per cent in 1995 to 6.4 per cent in 1998, and an increase in the proportion of the population covered by social security from 78.6 per cent in 1995 to 85.3 per cent in 1998.

It may be noted that, according to a UNDP study, out of 130 countries from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, some 39 countries have managed to demonstrate tangible results in terms of the reduction of overall poverty that included the countries’ ability to satisfy essential non-food as well as food needs.⁸ The *Social Watch*, an independent NGO report on WSSD implementation, on the other hand, suggests that only 19 countries from the above regions may have achieved goals conducive to fulfilment of the WSSD commitments based mainly on improvements in life expectancy, access to education, healthcare, nutritional standards and sanitation facilities.⁹ These deductions are also made on the basis of available official statistics which are frequently unreliable or partial.

CONSTRAINTS AND OBSTACLES

Among industrialised countries replying to the questionnaire, Finland, France, Denmark, Germany and Belgium made no mention of any specific constraints or obstacles faced in their countries. Canada cites the complexity of its federal-provincial relations, explaining that many of the WSSD commitments fall between federal and

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ *Social Watch*, Number 2, 1998.

¹⁰ World Bank, *The World Bank and the Philippines*, 1999 [<http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/eap/ph2.htm>].

¹¹ Bordón, A., *Philippines — Unequal Access*, Instituto del Tercer Mundo/Social Watch, 1998.

provincial jurisdiction and independent action is complicated at both levels. Federal transfers of resources to the provinces for health, education and welfare programmes have been cut. Sweden, too, mentions that recent economic recession forced the country to reduce development aid from 1 per cent of GDP in 1992/93 to 0.7 per cent since 1996.

The Eastern European countries answering the questionnaire cite the shortage of financial resources as being the primary constraint in implementing WSSD commitments. Economic and financial crises, as well as frequent government changes affecting policy-making in the Russian Federation have limited the effectiveness of programmes aimed at providing pensions, wages and welfare payments. Belarus cites inflation, lingering health hazards and other social costs related to the Chernobyl accident. Poland identifies labour unrest, underdevelopment of rural areas and the widening gap between rich and poor as the main obstacles to social development in the country. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia states its specific problems of landlockedness, lack of international political recognition and organisation of its economy around the Yugoslav economy and market. Slovenia points to an increase in unemployment and budget cuts in health, pension and social insurance that have resulted from the shift to a market-based economy. Similar problems are raised by the Slovak Republic. Low-level economic development, the absence of a consolidated national poverty eradication strategy and neglect of human and minority rights are suggested as being the chief problem areas for Hungary.

Developing countries have identified a wide range of obstacles and constraints to the implementation of the Summit's commitments. India, the Philippines, Israel, Jordan, Mali, Niger and Togo mention insufficient financial resources and budgetary pressure as key obstacles. Some African countries, such as Zambia, Tunisia and Mali, consider foreign debt to be the major constraint. Niger points to a reticence on the part of donors to cancel debt or reconvert it to finance development plans; furthermore, it asserts that influential development partners lack interest in supporting the social sector. Viet Nam and the Philippines note that the region's recent financial crisis has led to cuts in external investment in the country. Tunisia cites a reduction in aid by major donor countries as a prominent handicap. Structural adjustment, economic recession and privatisation are seen as the chief obstacles by Gabon, Jordan and Niger.

Apart from financial resources, Ethiopia notes the scarcity of skilled manpower and capital as ob-

stacles, while Turkey points to the lack of statistical data and adequate indicators in the social sector. Zambia and Niger consider an unfavourable environment (e.g., drought, desertification) and famine as critical problems. These two countries, as well as India, regard high population growth rates and rural-to-urban migration as additional difficulties. Namibia views food insecurity as a major social development challenge in the country; highly unequal income distribution is also cited, as 10 per cent of the population apparently controls more than 80 per cent of the country's resources. Togo perceives the slow progress in decentralisation and the lack of active popular participation in social development projects as important pitfalls. Other constraints mentioned by different countries include gender, caste and tribal disparities, internal and regional political instability and overlapping of social development initiatives between government institutions.

PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER ACTION BY PARLIAMENTS

Many replies suggest that parliaments could adopt a more prominent role in assisting with the implementation of the commitments made at the Summit. Among industrialised countries, Canada perceives a need to create greater opportunities for the public to make inputs into policy-making processes, and the political parties in particular should contribute to increasing the representation of vulnerable groups (e.g., women, disabled persons, aboriginal peoples, etc.) in the House of Commons. Switzerland has also emphasized the need to increase public interest in the major social issues included in the WSSD commitments.

In responses from Eastern European countries, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia suggests that the Assembly could conduct a wider discussion of the Summit's commitments by organising public debates and studies on the relevant issues. The Russian Federation states that the Constitution should be amended to allow for a more efficient role of the Federal Assembly in social policy-making. Parliament would thus increase its influence over the executive body and have more effective control over the implementation of programmes and measures. The Slovak Republic suggests that issues relating to social development should be discussed in the national parliament and not only in the designated committee.

Jordan, Mali, Namibia and South Africa suggest the need to establish a research unit to improve the quality of the information available to the parlia-

ment. Niger and Togo suggest setting up parliamentary committees to monitor implementation of the Summit's commitments. Niger also proposes an interregional committee of parliaments to deal with the Summit's agenda. According to Ethiopia, parliaments from different countries should exchange experience and increase cooperation. India believes that various mechanisms of parliamentary scrutiny need to be strengthened to make parliament more administratively accountable. Furthermore, national parliaments should study the obstacles they identified in the questionnaire and allocate sufficient funds for population control programmes and other aspects of social development requiring urgent attention.

Namibia believes that members of parliament should increase their contact with technicians to improve the level of information and their understanding of different aspects of development planning. MPs' visits to project sites and affected population groups would also be useful. Rwanda also considers that parliamentarians should visit different regions in their countries to have a better notion of the critical social problems that Rwandan people are facing. Egypt points out that many MPs are often unable to identify the priority issues that need to be addressed because of their unawareness to critical social issues and lack of regular contacts with ordinary people.

Among other future actions, Congo suggests that, in conjunction with the reinforcement of constitutional practices, seminars and training sessions for parliamentarians should be organised. Mali and Zambia remark that proper functioning of their parliaments requires better equipment, not only in terms of technical means (e.g. computers) but in terms of skilled manpower as well.

Questionnaire responses from many countries point to the lack of coordination between social and economic goals and policies. They call for a reorganisation and restructuring of government agencies and parliamentary structures to fulfil their role as promoters of social development. For instance, Niger perceives it to be important to prioritise the reorganisation of administrative structures working on social development, and urges greater coordination between social development and national planning. Congo states that the country's socio-economic policies should be "rethought", given that poverty and unemployment have continued to increase despite prolonged government development intervention in the past. Turkey calls for a restructuring of the Government to better integrate social and economic issues in policy-making. The Republic of Korea points to

the need for long-term plans to consider both economic growth and social development. Thailand recommends closer cooperation between the national legislative and executive branches. The Philippines considers that, due to the different budgetary priorities between the executive and parliament, transparency in budget issues and preliminary budget consultations should be promoted. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia calls for reinforcement and integration of general development, and of sectoral strategies and plans.

PARLIAMENTARY PROPOSALS FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTION

Diverse proposals have been made in terms of additional international initiatives required, especially in the context of the planned Special Session of the UN General Assembly commonly known as "Copenhagen Plus Five". This Session will take place in Geneva in June 2000 (thus five years after the Copenhagen Summit) to assess progress in the implementation of the WSSD commitments. Canada is planning to conduct a five-year review of its achievements, and Denmark is organising a series of seminars to pursue the international dialogue on implementation of Summit commitments. The results and recommendations of the review process will be presented at the Copenhagen Plus Five meeting. Belarus is also planning to hold an international conference in 1999 to discuss, among other things, issues related to follow-up to the WSSD commitments.

According to Egypt, Jordan, Mali, Niger, Rwanda and Zambia, a critical issue that needs to be urgently dealt with at the international level is the cancellation of the foreign debt of developing countries. Zambia also cites the need to find ways to reduce the negative impact of structural adjustment programmes on the lives of people in poor countries. Niger recommends that discussion of the 20:20 initiative should continue, as should the organisation of round tables with donors to redirect funds towards the social sector. The Republic of Korea exhorts governments and parliaments to engage in a global partnership to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of globalisation, especially relating to increased economic integration and financial crises. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia calls for more substantial financial aid and technical support as well as regional cooperation; it also urges international financial organisations to incorporate social goals and instruments in their forms of support to developing countries. The Russian Federation also suggests that there should be an increase in international humanitarian aid.

The Philippines considers that it is necessary to establish a more refined monitoring system and to embark on further research on issues such as the external debt, regional peace and security, human rights, drug and human trafficking and the improvement of bilateral relations.

Most countries believe that it is important to increase international cooperation in one way or another. Costa Rica pleads for increased technical cooperation. Turkey calls for the inclusion of developing countries in the information superhighways, as well as examination of the positive and negative effects of the expansion in communication and information technologies. The Republic of Cyprus stated that richer countries should undertake a concerted effort through radical tackling of the debt problem, the transfer of resources and enhancement of trade opportunities. Niger states that improved coordination at the regional and sub-regional levels is indispensable to fight poverty. Egypt calls for the exchange of experience among parliaments. Thailand intends to propose a parliamentary meeting prior to Copenhagen Plus Five to discuss relevant issues and make specific suggestions to the international community.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Judging by questionnaire responses, national parliaments have shown considerable interest in the major social problems facing their countries, such as poverty and unemployment. They have enacted laws and helped to elaborate long-term development plans and strategies seeking to address critical social questions. They have frequently pledged increased social spending, created special commissions or committees to oversee the social sector, observed specific events and participated in inquiries. However, it would be wrong to give the impression that all these parliamentary activities were solely carried out as a follow-up to the Summit.

A few responses do acknowledge that the Summit's agenda had little or no role in social policy formulation and that pressing social issues, such as poverty, would have remained a major national pre-occupation anyway (e.g., Germany, Singapore). Indeed, most government development strategies (including soliciting votes for political office) are built around the promise to eradicate poverty. In France, for example, the legislation on reduced weekly working hours, regularisation of foreigners and greater social recognition of the phenomenon of homosexuality emerged from the access of the Socialist Party to power in 1997 and broader na-

tional economic necessities. None of these actions were actually undertaken in the framework of WSSD follow-up. Only limited WSSD influence can be observed in French policy measures related to children's rights. Several African countries have enacted laws mandating more equitable integration of women into society, equality in the workplace, maternity benefits, etc. Many developing countries have promulgated laws (in part to ratify international conventions) on the protection of children's rights, and on child labour and forced labour. Nearly all countries have enacted laws or elaborated policies related to the welfare and social integration of disabled and elderly persons. But in most cases these have not been direct results of the Summit.

Lack of progress in the implementation of the Summit's agenda is especially conspicuous in the failure of countries, including industrialised countries, to develop detailed, time-bound national strategies for addressing poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. In most cases, governments have sought to elaborate short-term and sectoral programmes rather than more comprehensive strategies extending over a long period of time. Targeting of social development in a more systematic manner, with a corresponding allocation of resources, has not occurred. Most parliamentary respondents are able to cite few, if any, tangible results. It is also true that a period of five years since the Social Summit is not especially long and that more time may be needed before the effectiveness of policy measures becomes evident.

Parliamentary action has, however, helped to bring about a dialogue on social development. Parliaments have popularised the various concepts and goals upon which the WSSD was based. A few of them have also sought to define and interpret more systematically the Declaration and Plan of Action in their national contexts. The Summit's agenda has served as a basis for reflection and analysis in some parliamentary committees. Most importantly, it has provided a basis on which to demand more resources for social development.

The questionnaire survey brought to light considerable heterogeneity among countries in terms of political persuasion, level of economic development and possibilities for prioritising social development. In industrialised countries, where basic laws, institutions, technical know-how and considerable financial resources exist for dealing with broad social or welfare issues, economic slowdown and budget deficits have led to cuts in social spending at the national level and, through their official development assistance, in developing countries.

In Eastern Europe, the transition from central

planning to a market economy has resulted in dwindling social security measures. Unemployment has grown and health care, pensions and social insurance are shrinking. Income inequalities have also increased, in some cases quite dramatically.

In developing countries, where poverty, unemployment and economic marginalisation are most acute, the State is virtually absent from basic social provisioning. At a time when economic liberalisation and rapid integration into the global economy have frequently implied impoverishment of a growing number of people and rising inequalities, these same processes have reduced both the autonomy and capacity of the government in planning social provisioning programmes. Social problems have multiplied and become too complex to be handled by single developing countries. This explains why most developing countries lag behind in implementing the WSSD agenda.

Several country responses call for more effective social safety nets to protect vulnerable groups from the negative effects of structural adjustment programmes and economic globalisation. There is also a strong call for the cancellation of debt and maintenance of official development assistance at 0.7 per cent of GDP. The industrialised countries are also urged to fulfil their part of the 20:20 commitment. This in theory should make more resources available for social spending in developing countries, although progress would eventually depend upon how they are spent and who defines the social development agenda.

There are many formidable difficulties at the national level. The lack of internal resources and the low level of economic development are frequently noted by many developing countries. But socio-economic inequalities between various population groups and regions are also rampant. Limited resources that could be made available for development activities are often used for non-social provisioning — such as military expenditure, prestigious infrastructural projects or export-oriented investment projects. Democratisation, power-sharing (between the top executive and legislative bodies) and decentralisation are still lacking in most contexts. Furthermore, political instability can only aggravate social destitution. Close collaboration between different government departments, accountability and transparency of public institutions (including parliaments in some cases) are especially important if any social development measures are to be more effective.

It is also clear that parliaments themselves need to be more effectively mobilised. Debating the

WSSD agenda in parliament is one thing; ensuring that the different aspects of the WSSD Programme of Action are integrated into the development plan (together with adequate resources and political weight) is another altogether. There is also the question of how parliaments might monitor outcomes. The lack of financial resources, access to data, contacts with technical experts, office equipment and technology mentioned in various replies are also preoccupations. The autonomy of parliaments, continuity of parliamentary action (irrespective of election results) as well as institutionalised interaction with the concerned population groups are equally important prerequisites for any dynamic, sustained parliamentary action.

Many of the problems that are referred to in the parliamentary replies are structural, but there are also some temporary ones. Implementation of the WSSD Declaration and Programme of Action depends upon how these problems are handled at different levels. But what social forces can be relied upon to discharge this task? This review has indicated that national parliaments are a potent force. But which groups and individuals within parliament have demonstrated keen interest in major social questions, including the consideration and implementation of the WSSD agenda? Which MPs participated in the different meetings leading to the WSSD? How were they mobilised? How are they doing now? How are the MPs organised compared to other social actors? How are their attitudes and activities affected when there are electoral or government changes? What are their constraints? How can they be made more capable? A more comprehensive investigation would be needed to obtain plausible answers to these questions, as well as to consider the requisite policy measures.

This review is based on the responses received from 45 parliaments. Parliaments that did not reply either had little to report or, in spite of notable experience, could not reply because of various constraints (e.g., time, staff). But to what extent does parliamentary action correspond to the overall implementation process in the country? In particular, are civil society institutions (e.g., NGOs, para-state voluntary institutions, grassroots organisations, professional associations, representative associations of concerned population groups) mobilised? How are MPs (representatives of the society as a whole) relating to these institutions and initiatives? Further investigation would be needed to have a more complete picture of these aspects. Additionally, it would be helpful to know how the different measures that are cited in the parliamentary replies are being translated into

practice, especially in terms of their effectiveness in serving the interests of the target population groups.

Finally, many replies noted the scant, frequently unreliable country-level information on social development. Parliaments, like many other institutions and actors with an interest in social development, lack the capacity to assess the current situation, trends and future prospects in social development due to this chronic lack of data. Despite repeated calls at major international gatherings, very few countries have developed appropriate statistical methods for interpreting major concepts and defining priority areas. At present there is little or no data on the different actors and institu-

tions involved in the implementation process. The mechanisms needed to evaluate and monitor progress in achieving WSSD goals has yet to be designed. How is financial and technical assistance being made available following the Summit in various countries? What are the best methods for improved dissemination of information on social development issues to a wider public? Who should be involved in data collection and interpretation and in monitoring progress? What resources are required and how might they be mobilised? What are the prospects for the national parliaments playing an active role in the collection, analysis and dissemination of relevant data and information? These are some of the critical questions that require further attention.

II Report of the second Tripartite Meeting on follow-up of the World Summit for Social Development

The present report contains a summary of the discussion that took place at the IInd Tripartite Meeting of Representatives of Parliaments, Governments and Inter-Governmental Organisations. The meeting took place at UN Headquarters on 30 and 31 March 1999 and was organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in cooperation with the UN Division for Social Policy and Development and the United Nations Development Programme.

To prepare for the meeting, the IPU conducted a survey of parliamentary action taken to implement the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), seeking to identify possible constraints and proposals for future action. The survey was compiled with the assistance of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and was discussed by IPU's Committee for Sustainable Development in early March 1999. The Committee's report, together with the survey, was submitted to the Tripartite Meeting and formed the basis for its discussions on parliamentary action to follow up the WSSD.

The meeting also discussed new initiatives in which it also drew inspiration from the draft text (document E/CN.5/1999/L.8) submitted to the Commission for Social Development by its Bureau at the end of its 37th session in February 1999.

Finally, the meeting also considered some further measures which Parliaments could take in support of the WSSD at the national and international level.

1. Parliamentary action taken since the World Summit on Social Development

The discussions clearly demonstrated that national Parliaments had a considerable role to play in the follow-up to the WSSD. Action by Parliament and its Members is crucial for the implementation of social development policies and programmes. Parliament provides the legislative framework for social development and allocates financial resources. It can also influence and prompt action towards achieving the goals set at the WSSD and monitor their implementation. Moreover, it is instrumental in relaying and explaining to the public the issues involved and in forging popular support for action to implement social policies. Public awareness of social development issues and public discussion and promotion of policies to address them are prerequisites for problem-solving. Through direct and continuous dialogue with their constituents, members of Parliament are well placed to create awareness and foster discussion.

In light of the report of the IPU Committee for Sustainable Development and the survey carried out by the IPU, the meeting was pleased to note that Parliaments have been playing an active role in seeking to implement the WSSD Declaration and Programme of Action. Parliamentary action has helped to bring about dialogue on social development in the national context, and has popularised the various concepts and goals on which the WSSD was based. Parliaments have enacted legislation on many critical social questions. They have frequently made pledges in the field of social spending, designated focal institutions to oversee the implementation process, observed specific events and engaged in wider interaction with NGOs, welfare institutions and a host of other institutions of civil society and a few have also sought to define and interpret the Declaration and Programme of Action in their national context.

Nevertheless, the meeting also noted that on the whole, there was a lack of progress in implement-

ing the Summit's commitments. This was especially noticeable in the failure of many countries, including the industrialised countries, to develop detailed, national strategies for addressing poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. There has also been a failure to meet international commitments agreed at the WSSD. National Parliaments have played an important role in focusing government efforts on elaborating long-term national development strategies. Targeting of the goals set at the WSSD in a more systematic manner, with corresponding allocation of resources, has occurred in only a minority of countries. Indeed, most countries report few or no tangible results in terms of reducing poverty, increasing productive employment and eliminating social exclusion.

The meeting acknowledged however that a period of four years since the Social Summit was insufficient to evaluate properly the effectiveness of policy measures. Furthermore, there have been formidable difficulties in implementing the Summit's Commitments at the national level. In developing countries, in particular, where poverty, unemployment and economic marginalisation are most acute, the State is often unable to provide comprehensive basic social services. At a time when economic liberalisation and rapid integration into the global economy have frequently implied impoverishment of a growing number of people and rising inequalities, these same processes have reduced both Government's autonomy and its capacity to plan social provisioning programmes. As a result, social problems have multiplied and in some cases have become too complex to be handled by individual countries on their own. In formerly socialist transitional countries, on the other hand, changes in the economy have resulted in weakened social security measures. Unemployment has grown, while health care, pensions and social insurance have shrunk. Income inequalities have also increased. The meeting thought that special attention needed to be paid to these regions' problems.

2. Prospects for further action

A number of suggestions were made regarding issues that had to be addressed as a matter of priority. Globalisation had both positive and negative effects on social development. It is important to address how the social agenda can be implemented in the context of market-driven economic policies. It was strongly suggested that Governments and Parliaments address the potential conflict between social development and the market and seek to reconcile social and economic policies at both national and international levels. The long term

progress of developing countries with a view to their greater integration into the process of globalisation to increase their ability to compete in the international economic environment needs to be addressed urgently. New partnerships involving governments, parliaments, business, civil society and international economic fora need to be explored.

The issue of protecting vulnerable groups from the negative effects of structural adjustment programmes was considered to be especially crucial. The point was made that although good macro-economic management matters, there is a need to balance economic policy with a longer-term social agenda. This needed to go together with the cancellation of debt, possibly in the form of debt-swapping for social development. The meeting also reiterated the need to reverse the declining trend in official development assistance (ODA) and to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for the industrialised countries. Foreign direct investment can also be of substantial value provided it occurs in a framework designed to ensure benefits for recipient countries and, in any case, should not be considered a substitute for ODA. The suggestion was further made to explore the potential of the 20:20 initiative for the social sector. In this context, the point was also made that there is a great deal of inequality between as well as within countries.

A number of other suggestions were made. Good governance, democracy and respect for human rights are crucial to establishing an enabling environment for social development and for poverty reduction. Similarly, it is important at national and international level to combat corruption, which negatively affects the availability of resources for social development. There is a need to strive for an ethical dimension to development and increase social awareness in order to achieve social development. Also underlined was the importance of achieving education for all through universal primary education as well as access to basic health care for all.

A further proposal was that the international community should develop social indicators for use in social programmes and the budget process at the national level. There was also a need for social impact analysis. Moreover, monitoring social progress necessitated specific tools.

There is an important gender perspective to social development and the point was made that gender issues should be mainstreamed. Particularly in areas of poverty and employment, women were at a disadvantage. The issue of their participation

in politics was raised and some suggested that affirmative action would be needed to make progress towards a real partnership between men and women in politics.

In addition to the above proposals, the meeting also discussed what other new initiatives could be proposed to the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the UNGA in June 2000. Having reviewed the draft text circulated to the Commission for Social Development by its Bureau at its 37th session in February 1999 and in light of the report of the IPU Committee for Sustainable Development, the following priority initiatives were highlighted in the discussion (they are listed under the ten commitments contained in the WSSD Programme of Action):

Commitment 1.

An enabling environment for social development

- A necessary condition for effective social development is sustained improvement in the international environment for social development
- The centrality of effective, participatory governance including through free and regular elections and democratic national and international economic and social institutions, emphasising the role of parliament at all levels and civil society at large
- Preparation of basic socio-economic principles for use in responding to domestic and international crises that affect social development
- Principles on the social responsibilities of business
- Refocusing policies so that social goals and priorities become central and are in a sophisticated balance with economic priorities

Commitment 2.

Eradication of poverty

- Strengthening national and international commitments to poverty reduction targets as the foundation for encouraging the adoption or review of national poverty reduction strategies
- A global poverty reduction target of halving absolute poverty, if possible by 2015
- Establishing, strengthening or improving social protection systems and their management

Commitment 3.

Employment

- Strengthening commitment to the universal goal of full, productive, and appropriately and adequately remunerated and freely chosen employ-

ment as an essential underpinning for social development and achievement of the right to work

- Adoption of national employment growth strategies, including setting time-bound targets for employment growth, supported by national strategies including measures aimed at stimulating small and medium businesses; facilitating use of new technologies; encouraging rural development; improving the employment prospects of youth through active labour market policies such as direct employment creation, retraining, and redeployment assistance; ensuring gender equality in employment opportunities
- Particular attention could be focused on measures to increase productivity in the informal sector
- Establishing mechanisms to address effectively the shadow economy
- Strengthening commitment to social dialogue, including through commitment to freedom of association and to effective labour relations institutions
- The importance of universal adoption and national implementation of the core labour standards agreed by the Social Summit and reaffirmed by the International Labour Conference

Commitment 4.

Social integration

- A necessary condition for social harmony is commitment to social justice which must include policies aimed at reducing extremes of wealth and poverty as well as at integrating groups with special needs
- Consideration of more effective ways of dealing with intra-national conflicts

Commitment 5.

Equality and equity between women and men

- Making recommendations for means of gender mainstreaming may well be the most effective contribution that the Special Session can make to this Commitment
- Affirmative action as an instrument of social integration

Commitment 6.

Universal and equitable access to quality education and health services

- Efforts to meet the target of achieving education for all through universal primary education in all countries before the year 2015 should be stepped up even further.

- Consideration should be given to a new strategy for achieving the goal of access to basic health care for all. Such a strategy could include attention to major debilitating diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria

Commitment 7.

Accelerate the development of Africa and the least developed countries

- A high priority for not only Africa but also the world is agreement on an international strategy for minimising the spread of HIV/AIDS, including benchmarks for stages of achievement
- Strengthening of South-South cooperation

Commitment 8.

Ensure that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals

- Structural adjustment programmes must be reviewed to ensure that social development goals and policies are included in all phases of macro-economic strategy
- Means of increasing the transparency and accountability of the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organisation should be studied; a more open dialogue is needed, including with national parliaments

Commitment 9.

Increase resources allocated to social development

- Protect the resources allocated for social development against the negative forces of globalisation
- Adequate, effective social policies require the availability of sufficient revenue within countries to pay for social services collected through a progressive tax structure and social insurance funds
- In a globalising world, tax interactions between countries must be reviewed to minimise tax competition between countries, to prevent tax evasion and to increase international cooperation on tax policy.
- The need to reverse the current decline in the proportion of ODA to GNP in each of the next five years with a view to reaching the agreed target of 0.7 percent of GNP
- Debt reduction is essential to creating conditions for implementation of the other commitments. One approach worth exploring would be the introduction of debt reduction for social development swaps

Commitment 10.

Implementation and institutional reform

- Social impact assessments are a useful technique for evaluating national policy and programme initiatives and major projects
- Measures should be prepared to ensure that the objectives and policy approaches of the Social Summit are reflected effectively in the mandates, programmes and coordination arrangements of the United Nations, its funds and programmes, the Specialised Agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions
- The important role of Parliaments and legislative assemblies in furthering the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments should be emphasised
- National commissions for social development should be established to oversee implementation, complemented by parliamentary committees for social development.
- Consider development of minimum standards for social policy
- Standardisation of social development indicators taking into account different levels of development

3. Parliamentary follow-up to the meeting

At the end of their deliberations, the participants considered possible further follow-up action that could be taken by Parliaments nationally and at the international level.

At the national level, the meeting recognised that Parliaments themselves must be more effectively mobilised. For example, the core labour standards agreed by the Social Summit and reaffirmed by the International Labour Conference need to be translated into legislation. They must also ensure that the WSSD Programme of Action is integrated in the longer-term development plan together with adequate resources and political support. In this regard, it is important that Parliaments have the necessary financial resources, access to data and experts, ability to carry out independent research, office equipment and technology, and trained staff.

Moreover, it was suggested that each Parliament that does not already have a special mechanism – for example a parliamentary committee on social development – to constantly review and promote parliamentary action in support of the WSSD Programme of Action consider establishing one. It was also proposed that Parliament work towards the establishment of a national commission on so-

cial development and that this commission should be invited to submit an annual report on its activities to be debated in Parliament. Yet another proposal was for Parliaments to hold a special debate on social development to assess progress in implementing the WSSD Programme of Action as part of the preparations for the UNGA Special Session in June 2000.

At the international level, the IPU was encouraged to follow up the proposals put forward in the discussions. Particularly, it was suggested that the

IPU arrange a special parliamentary meeting with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Both the report of the IPU Committee for Sustainable Development and the report of the present meeting should be circulated at the May 1999 session of the Preparatory Committee. The IPU could also encourage a parliamentary presence in the national delegations to the Preparatory Committee and, of course, also at the UNGA Special Session. Moreover, it was suggested that the IPU consider organising a parliamentary meeting in conjunction with the UNGA Special Session.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
GDP	gross domestic product
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MBN	Minimum Basic Needs Approach
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	non-governmental organisation
ODA	official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

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Annex

QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of country and parliament

Name and title of the person responsible for filling in the questionnaire

ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE SUMMIT

1. In what ways was your parliament involved in the process of consideration and implementation of the commitments made by States at the Summit?

Please include in your reply an indication of the subject matters that were addressed and references to specific forms of parliamentary action such as legislation, budgets, plenary and committee debates, studies, enquiries, public hearings, ratification of international instruments, etc.

2. The Summit's Programme of Action calls for formulating or strengthening of time-bound national strategies for the eradication of absolute poverty and sets *inter alia* the goals of reducing overall poverty, attaining full and productive employment and enhancing social integration. Were such specific time-framed strategies elaborated by your country and did it develop specific policies aimed at achieving the Summit's goals?

If the answer is "yes", please describe the role which your parliament played in their elaboration.

3. Has action taken by your country to implement the Summit's commitments been able to produce tangible results in particular with regard to poverty eradication, increase of productive employment and strengthening of social solidarity?

Please indicate specific areas where progress has been achieved as well as its linkage with corresponding parliamentary action.

PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER ACTION

4. What have been the major constraints and obstacles encountered by your country in the implementation of the Summit's commitments and what measures of national and international scope can you suggest for overcoming these difficulties?

Please include a description of the encountered constraints as viewed from the parliamentary perspective and, whenever possible, supply recommendations on ways to remedy the situation.

5. Are there any specific ways in which the role of your parliament could be strengthened or expanded in assisting with the implementation of the commitments made at the Summit?

You may base your answer on the experience of your national parliament but may also wish to present a more global view.

6. What proposals for further initiatives would your parliament wish to transmit to the Special Session with regard to either action by national parliaments and governments or to cooperative international action?

In addressing this question, please distinguish between proposals relating to national action and those requiring international cooperation with regard to such issues as employment, poverty, social integration, implications of globalisation on social policy, flow of international resources and their targeting on social development, transparent and accountable governance, assistance to the least developed countries, etc.

**PARLIAMENTARY INITIATIVES ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:
PRINCIPAL RESULTS OF THE IPU QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY**

Country/ Respondent	Question No.1	Question No.2	Question No.3	Question No.4	Question No.6	Question No.7
Belarus (Secretary General, National Assembly Council and Head of Department, Standing Committee for National Relations)	<p>Legislation adopted during 1995-98:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment on the Protection of the Environment on the Protection of Fauna, on the Protection of Persons affected by the Chernobyl Power Station Accident, etc. - Social sector: health care; on public assistance to families bringing up children; on children's rights, on the survival minimum, etc. - Human rights: on external workforce migration, on humanitarian assistance, etc. - Employment: system to monitor social and labour issues (1997); system to regulate wages during the transition to a market economy (1995); priority assistance at the national and local levels to people with incomes below the minimum wage; cashless subsidies for the underprivileged; annual programmes to assist the jobsless. - Education: programmes such as 'The Teacher', 'The Rural School', 'Information Technologies in the Educational System'. - In 1997-98, three public hearings on social issues were held. - During 1994-98, 90 bilateral agreements with over 35 States covering economic and social fields, as well as 20 multilateral conventions, were ratified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Strategy for Sustainable Development (1996-2000) - Programme on Industrial Development (1998-2015) - In terms of food security, the following target programmes to increase output were set: beet (1998-2000); pork (1996-2000); poultry (1998-2000); a programme to provide the population with fish and sea products (1998-2000), and a horticulture programme (1997-2000). - Health for the People Programme (1998-2005) aimed at keeping health conditions of as many people as possible at a high level during the entire life cycle (still under consideration). - Demographic Strategy (1998). - National Plan of Action to improve the status of women (1996-2000) - National Programme for the rational use of natural resources and environment protection (1996-2000). - State Programme on Eliminating the Chernobyl Effects (1995-2000). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since 1995, GNP rose by 8 points, the total industrial output index by 14 points, consumer goods production by 20 points, and goods retail turnover by 23 points. - The decline in the living standard observed in 1995 has been stopped and the real incomes of the people have increased. - Working capacity of out-patient establishments over the past years has increased from 210 to 217 visits per shift. The total infectious and parasite-borne diseases rate over the 1995-1997 period has fallen slightly (e.g., diphtheria decreased 4.5-fold due to a vaccination campaign). - Education: the number of children attending pre-school establishments has risen from 62.2% in 1996 to 65.3% in 1998. The number of students in the professional and technical training system has increased from 123,900 to 125,600. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of financial resources. - Chernobyl. 	Not answered.	<p>In May 1999 the Belarus Parliament plans to hold an international conference ('Europe - Our Home') to discuss, among other things, issues related to Copenhagen.</p>
Belgium (not specified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Commission on Social Affairs elaborated a report on unemployment and social exclusion in Belgium (1997). - The Commission on Social Affairs is examining a cooperation agreement among the State, the Communities and the Regions related to the fight against poverty. - The Senate has reviewed a law on social security for disadvantaged youth to encourage them to participate in training courses. - During 1997 and 1998 the Government has been questioned 21 times on unemployment issues and 14 times on issues related to poverty and social integration. 	Not answered.	Not answered.	Not answered.	Not answered.	Not answered.
Bulgaria (Administrative Secretary of the Bulgarian IPU Group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disabled Persons Protection, Rehabilitation and Social Integration Act (1995). - Social Security Fund Act (1995); Unemployment Protection and Employment Encouragement Act (1997); Healthy and Secure Work Conditions Act (1997); Act on the Ratification of Convention No. 144 on Tripartite Consultations on Encouraging the Application of International Labour Norms (1998); Social Support Act (1998). - Health Insurance Act (1998). - Declaration of National Consensus (1997) adopted by the Parliament to 'work for the good of the country, their determination to overcome the political, economic and moral crisis in the country.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme 2001: a medium-term economic strategy to overcome the crisis in the country with legislative initiatives to reform the public sector and provide social protection to ease the burdens of the transitional period. 	Not answered.	Not answered.	Not answered.	Not answered.

<p>Burkina Faso (not specified)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of the National Assembly on taking into consideration international conventions (1998): Against forced labour, on sale and healthy work in mines, etc. Ratification of the Convention for the Protection of Children, the Monaco Agreement, the agreement between the Arab Bank and Burkina Faso for African development, the Lomé Agreement, Convention for the Abolition of Forced Labour, etc. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>
<p>Canada (Political and Social Affairs Division)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 1998 Budget of the Federal Government announced the 'Canadian Opportunities Strategy' to enhance affordable access to knowledge and skills. National Child Benefit (NCB), a federal, provincial and territorial initiative to help low-income working families with children. Canada is reallocating 25% of ODA to meeting basic human needs, prioritising countries with a substantial proportion of the population living in poverty. 	<p>Canada did not formulate time-bound strategies for the eradication of poverty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the 1997 Budget, the Federal Government announced an initial contribution of \$850 million for building the NCB. It will allocate \$425 million in 1999, and \$425 million in 2000. In 1996-97, some 380,000 students received financial assistance totalling \$530 million. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many of the commitments identified in the Summit walk the line between the current divide of federal/provincial powers and this fact can complicate independent action at either level of government. Provinces have suffered a lengthy succession of reductions of federal transfers in the areas of health, education and welfare, thus reducing federal influence in these areas. Fiscal pressure to reduce the country's deficit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater opportunities for public input into the Government's policy-making decisions. Greater efforts directed by political parties to increase the representation of groups most affected by issues related to the Summit. 	<p>Canada will review its official response to the Summit in the year 2000.</p>
<p>Congo (President of the Permanent Commission for Socio-Cultural Affairs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debates with the Government about poverty. Enaction of a number of laws related to the state budget. Control of Government action. Population awareness. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative results: both poverty and unemployment have increased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government's incompetence in policy-making. The Government's lack of patriotism. Adjustment programme. Non-adaptation of democracy to national reality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforcement of constitutional practices. Organisation of seminars and training sessions for parliamentarians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouragement of governments to follow responsible and transparent practices. Re-think development policies and design more realistic budgets. The international community should support and finance NGO development projects.
<p>Costa Rica (MP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education: in 1994-98, the Government guaranteed 6% of the GDP for education, creation of the National Fund for Scholarships, etc. It approved the Code on Children and the Young, the law on domestic violence, the law on food pensions, the law on pensions for the disabled, law on assistance to women living in poor conditions, etc. It ratified the Regional Agreement on Climate Change, the Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation with Colombia, the Treaty on the General Economic Integration of Central America. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan Against Poverty (1994-1999). For the period 1998-2002, policies for the eradication of poverty will be related to the strategies proposed by the Executive in conjunction with local governments and the community. The aims so far have been economic growth, control of inflation, and the promotion of policies for socio-economic transformation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 1995 and 1996, poor homes increased from 20.4% to 21.6%, but they decreased to 20.7% in 1997 and 19.7% in 1998. Homes in extreme poverty reached a minimum of 5.7%. Employment grew in rural areas, although they continue to have the highest unemployment rate. Female unemployment has also decreased. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical cooperation in key areas. MPs should analyse the different proposals to be discussed at the Special Session.
<p>Cyprus (Director of International Relations Service)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law to increase maternity leave for up to 16 weeks (1997). Law to abolish discrimination against Cypriot women married to non-Cypriot men (1997). Amendment law on the regulation and inspection of old people's homes. Law on the protection, care and activities of school children up to 18 years old during off-school hours (1996). Law on safety and health in the workplace. Comparative study on the WSSD Declaration (1997), carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. Proposed measures included: equal pay for men and women in the workplace; part-time work and flexible working hours to attract women, pensioners, students and handicapped persons into the labour market. (The Parliament was not involved) The Council of Ministers set up a Committee to study poverty and the result was a report called 'Poverty in Cyprus' (1996). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Development Plan (1994-1998). This plan already covered many of the WSSD commitments and Action Plan. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No major constraints have been encountered due to the country's high level of development and the low poverty level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Executive should inform Parliament about its proposed actions. Participation of parliamentarians in relevant UN sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The international community and richer countries, in particular, should undertake a sustained and concerted effort through the UN and its agencies to reverse the negative factors affecting lower income countries. Take measures to ensure that resources reach their intended targets. Attainment of the goal for official development assistance, radical tackling of the debt problem, improve trade opportunities.

<p>Czech Republic (Secretary to the Committee for Social Policy and Health Care, Chamber of Deputies, and Secretary to the Czech National Groups in the (PU))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amendment to the Law on Pensions and Social Care, and adoption of other laws such as the state social support system, Pension Insurance Scheme, on Social Need. In 1996, 6 laws on social issues were adopted, and 10 laws were adopted in 1997. In 1999, a bill on social help and a bill on employment will be submitted, and the ratification of the European Social Charter is also expected. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>
<p>Denmark (not specified)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of the gap between available data and the information required to quantify the WSSD commitments. - Provision of technical assistance to Uganda to develop its statistical capability. - The Parliament continued to give its full support to a policy of cooperation with developing countries. - The Parliament's Finance Committee made an appropriation for the financing of the Copenhagen Seminars for Social Progress to be organised from 1996 to 1999. - The Parliament endorsed the WSSD commitments and emphasised the importance of equality between men and women, a sufficient and equitable distribution of income, and opportunities and services to people throughout the world. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Denmark will produce a national report on the implementation of the Summit in 1999.
<p>Egypt (Secretary General of the People's Assembly)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four laws were adopted in 1994-97 to increase the salaries of government officials and retirement pensions and on social security. - Employment: proposals for a law to protect workers' rights. - Human rights: proposal for a law related to the protection of children's rights. - Debates on the spatial dimension of development: youth, education and literacy teaching, administrative reform, technology, health, etc. The Assembly also questioned the Government in a session in 1997-98 on health issues, potable water, sewage, etc. - Budget: during the debate MPs demanded an increase in funds for youth, health and education. - Approval of the second project to develop the Social Fund with the International Organisation for Development (1996). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Strategy for Social and Economic Development (1997-2017). - Project for the 4th five-year plan (1997-2002). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in the budget for education from 1.6 million pounds to 13.7 million. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A major obstacle is to identify the priority issues to be addressed in order to allocate the maximum amount of resources to those areas. Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasise the importance of directing policies towards the creation of job opportunities (especially for the weaker social groups), programmes capable of generating revenues, programmes for food security, education and health. - Select policies to fight poverty that will not jeopardise the development process and, at the same time, will integrate the poor into the decision-making process. - Encourage NGOs and private companies to compete with the State in achievements in aid and development programmes. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>International level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cancellation of foreign debt. - Commitment from donor countries to contribute 0.7% of their GDP for development and humanitarian aid. - Exchange of experiences among parliaments. - For others, see questionnaire <p>National Level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuation of programmes related to technical cooperation, health, food security, etc. - Rural development and greater participation of disadvantaged social groups. - Development of most backward regions. - Use of ecologically sound technologies.
<p>Ethiopia (Secretary of the National Group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Five-Year Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Five-Year Plan. It includes all the Summit's recommendations. The short-time aim is to be food-sufficient. 	<p>No.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skilled manpower, capital and experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The exchange of experience among different parliaments. 	<p>Not answered.</p>
<p>Finland (Head of Information Service)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Parliament will use the Summit's Declaration as background material which may influence legislation and budgeting. The Government and ministries are responsible for drafting legislation, not the Parliament. - The Government will issue a report on the implementation of the Summit Declaration and Action Programme in 1999. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>

<p>France (Commission on Cultural, Family and Social Affairs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law on social urban development (1996); law for helping autistic children (1996); law on the improvement of foreign residents' social rights (1998); law to favour the incorporation of people with integration problems in the labour market (1995); law to celebrate the national day of children's rights (1996); law related to juvenile delinquency (1996); law on the protection of children against sexual abuse (1998); etc. - 'Nouveau contrat pour l'Ecole' (1995). - Law on the reduction of conventional working hours to favour employment (1996); law on job creation for persons under 26 years old; etc. - Health ordinance to reform public and private hospitals (1996). - Laws related to the autonomy of French Polynesia (1996), the development of Corsica (1996), and the autonomy of New Caledonia (1998). 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>
<p>Gabon (not specified)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Action Programme for Health to reduce infant morbidity and mortality. - Law proposal on the protection of women, children and mothers. - Adoption of a Charter of Investment to promote employment. - Adoption of a privatisation programme of large public and para-public companies. - Budget: The Parliament has authorised the creation of a Fund for Future Generations, a Fund for Regional Development, a Fund for Social Solidarity, and a Fund for the Integration and Reintegration of Citizens. - Gabon 2025, a study targeting long-term plans to promote democracy and sustainable human development. The Government and the World Bank have also commissioned a study to evaluate absolute and relative poverty. 	<p>- Strategy to Reduce General Poverty by the year 2005.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structural Adjustment Programme (IMF). - International financial fluctuations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater cooperation between government and parliament. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International cooperation.
<p>Germany (German Parliament Research Service)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 1995, the Commission of Enquiry on 'Demographic Change' was re-established to process data on basic indicators related to demographic change in German society. Aim: To project trends beyond the year 2010, to assess issues related to work and product market, social security systems, etc. - Changes in labour laws since 1995: Law on Required Working Conditions in Connection with Cross-Border Services, Law Promoting Gradual Transition to Retirement, Growth and Employment Promotion Act, etc. 	<p>- There are no specific time-bound strategies.</p>	<p>- Policies have hardly been influenced by the results of the Summit.</p> <p>- Poverty eradication, increase in productive unemployment and strengthening of social solidarity have always been among the policy objectives pursued by Germany.</p>	<p>Given the political contents of questions #4, 5, and 6, they should be answered by the various party groups.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>
<p>Hungary (3 MPs answered separately)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Act on the Protection of Children, 1997. - Act on the Rights and Equality of the Disabled, 1998. - Due to budgetary constraints, the chances of implementing the Summit's commitments are limited. 	<p>No.</p>	<p>- Decreasing unemployment.</p>	<p>- Financial constraints.</p>	<p>- More partnership, equal cooperation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guarantees on human and minority rights and social integration. - Refusal of globalisation. - Elimination of international monetarism.
<p>India (MP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitution of the Standing Committee on Empowerment of Women in 1996. - Bill seeking reservation for women in legislative bodies. - The 8th Five Year Plan directed to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 9th Five Year Plan (1997-2002) aims at generating greater productive employment focusing on labour-intensive sectors. It seeks to implement the National Employment Assurance Scheme. It will also look at the re- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anti-poverty programmes. - Programmes for the welfare of backward classes and weaker social sectors. - 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act emphasised rural development and poverty al- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgetary constraints. - Population growth rate. - Urban/rural disparities in health infrastructure, overcrowding of tertiary healthcare facilities in urban areas, gaps between need 	<p>Various mechanisms of parliamentary scrutiny need to be strengthened to fulfil the concept of the Parliament's administrative accountability.</p>	<p>National parliaments and governments should look at the obstacles enumerated in question 4 and allocate sufficient funds for population control and the social sector.</p>

<p>empowerment of women and children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislation enacted in 1995-98: Women and Children: The Maternity Benefit, Others: The National Environmental Tribunal Act, The National Commission for Minorities Amendment Act, Persons with Disabilities Act. Employment: The Payment of Bonus Amendment Act, The Workmen's Compensation Amendment Act, The Building & Other Construction Workers Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service Act, etc. - Programmes implemented: Integrated Rural Development Programme, Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme, etc. 	<p>duction of the population growth rate through the promotion of contraception and the reduction of infant and maternal morbidity and mortality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment Insurance Scheme expanded to all rural areas and more funds have been made available for the period 1997-98. - Agenda for India adopted by the Parliament in August 1997 aiming at sustainable development, infrastructure, employment, education, the satisfaction of the population's minimum needs in terms of food, sanitation and shelter. 	<p>levation with budgetary support ensured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Social Assistance Programme. It encompasses the National Old Age Pension Scheme, National Family Benefit Scheme and the National Maternity Benefit Scheme. - The Central Plan and Non-Plan expenditure on social services and rural development increased from 1.47% in 1990-1991 to 1.75 % in 1997-98 (% of GDP). - Expenditure on Social Services increased from 1.07% in 1990-91 to 1.16% in 1997-98. - Provisions for Central Assistance were made in the 1994-97 Budget for safe drinking water, primary education, primary health, housing, midday meals for primary school children, rural roads and strengthening the public distribution system. 	<p>and availability of medical staff are constraints for the implementation of health-related programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender-related issues, caste and tribal differences, disparities in urban/rural infrastructure have all been constraints for the implementation of educational programmes.
<p>Israel (Assistant to the Secretary of Israeli Inter-Parliamentary Group)</p>	<p>- During 1995 and 1998, the Parliament has approved amendments to the Law for Reducing Poverty, to the Minimum Wage Law, and to maternity issues on the Women's Labour Law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other regulations: Unemployment allowance to demobilised soldiers; increment for children in special education; special old-age pension for over 60-year-old female immigrants; uniform children's allowance paid to all families. - Debates in the Labour and Social Welfare Committee on issues such as foreign workers under bad living conditions, child abuse, inflation and unemployment, poverty dimension, increasing drug abuse and homeless within the juvenile population. 	<p>- The number of families living in poverty declined from 16.8% in 1995 to 16.2% in 1997, although the percentage of families with a market income below the poverty line increased from 33.8% in 1995 to 34.3% in 1996.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>
<p>Japan (Joint Secretaries of the Japanese PPU group)</p>	<p>- National Strategy for Social Development to the Year 2000 (1998) aimed at strengthening measures for the improvement of social integration, stabilization of employment, and international cooperation.</p>	<p>- Comprehensive Plan to Create Employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan for Gender Equality 2000 in cooperation with local public entities and NGOs. - Angel Plan (1994), a 10-year plan to take essential measures to support child rearing over the next 10 years. - Bilateral ODA aid has been exceeded 20% since 1993. 	<p>- Japan will have a larger proportion of elderly people. This problem extends to labour, welfare, health care, medical service, social insurance, education, housing and taxation.</p>

	<p>their own talents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A public insurance system for the elderly was inaugurated. Revision of medical care plan and improvement of service facilities. - Basic Law on Measures for the Ageing Society (1995). - The government set up a Liaison Meeting of the relevant Ministries and agencies to implement the International Year of Older Persons (1999). - Ratification of the Convention on Desertification. - Expansion of ODA grant for social development and environment, global issues such as population and AIDS, eradication of polio, WID, and assistance to Africa. - Budget: Expenditures related to social security increased by 6.6% from 1995 to 1998. 	<p>Within the national strategy for eradication of absolute poverty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of a high-level ministerial committee to monitor programmes and projects. - Social Productivity Programme (SPP) to alleviate poverty and reduce unemployment. - Projects and programmes with specific action plans (not specified). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National aid to poor families increased from 60 jds to 82 jds. - Family Income Supplement Programme: its aim is to bridge income gaps of low-income families to bring them above the poverty line. - Small and Micro Enterprise Programme (SME). - Training and Employment Programme (TESP). Each programme benefits about 500 people. The figure is expected to grow in the near future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of financial resources. - Economic adjustment. - Privatisation process, an obstacle mostly for MPs. 	<p>- Establishment of a research department to upgrade the quality and quantity of the information available to the Parliament on socio-economic issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issues relating to LDCs' international debt should be urgently addressed and an international campaign to relieve these countries should be organised. Possible discussion forums could be North-South Dialogue and the World Bank.
<p>Jordan (MP and Executive Committee of IUP)</p>	<p>The Parliament has been involved in the formulation and ratification of policies, laws and regulations related to the Summit (not specified).</p>	<p>The second 5-year mandate of the president is focused on the fight against poverty. The Strategy has been presented by the Prime Minister to the National Assembly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A portion of the national budget has been allocated to reduce the social gap between the most disadvantaged social groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget constraints. - Public debt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A technical unit capable of advising MPs on social development issues. - The relevant technological means to carry out the Parliament's tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cancel the most impoverished countries' foreign debts. - Declare October of each year 'Month of Solidarity and against Exclusion in the World'.
<p>Mali (1st vice-president of the National Assembly)</p>	<p>The Parliament has contributed to the accomplishment of some of the Summit's goals by passing laws related to the liberalisation of the economic sector, administrative decentralisation, and the liberation of the population's creative initiatives through self-development.</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>In 1996, legislation for the training and employment of the disabled was introduced in order to socially integrate them.</p>	<p>No comments.</p>	<p>No comments.</p>	<p>No comments.</p>
<p>Mauritius (Clerk of the National Assembly)</p>	<p>The Parliament does not have the power to introduce legislation on its own motion. (Reason why they cannot comment on questions 4, 5 & 6).</p>	<p>The Food Security and Nutrition Decade declared by the Prime Minister in 1992 is the time frame for the activities specified in Q.#1.</p>	<p>The Support to Food Security and Nutrition Development in Namibia Project (1997) is being implemented in 4 pilot regions.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of proper information in the Parliament about food security and nutrition. - Budget constraints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permanent Committee or Sub-Committee on food Security and Nutrition at parliament level. - More contacts between the Parliament and technocrats to improve MPs' level of information. - MPs' visits to project sites.
<p>Mauritius (Food Security and Nutrition Secretariat)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Agricultural Policy (1996). - Food Security and Nutrition Policy (1997). - Food Security and Nutrition Report (1997). - National Gender Policy (1997). - National Drought Policy and Strategy (1997). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Politique Sectorielle de Santé (1995) and the Plan du Développement Sanitaire 1995-2000. - National Policy for the Promotion of Women (1996) with a 5-year Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration of the Pre-Projet for the National Policy for Social Development to be validated in the near future. - Initiative 20/20 to carry out a study in which the priorities are to mobilise funds for basic social services (1997). - Many micro development projects related to the reduction of poverty. - Creation of a Ministry for National Solidarity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjustment Programmes. - Lack of interest of development partners in financing social projects. - Lack of regional and subregional coordination to carry out the recommendations of the Summit. - Reluctance of donors to cancel the debts of poor countries or to reconvert the debt to finance development action. - Donors' demand for democracy and good governance in poor countries. - At the national level: economic recession; socio-political crisis; generalised poverty (83% of the population); lack of resources; unfavourable climatic conditions; inadequate resources and high population growth rate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commission for Social and Cultural Affairs. Once operating, it will channel efforts towards the mobilisation of funds for the implementation of strategies related to the reduction of poverty and a budget containing social development. - Establishment of a Committee in every Parliament to monitor the commitments agreed at the Summit. - Establishment of an interregional committee of parliaments to monitor the commitments agreed at the Summit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the tasks assigned to developing countries in terms of the fight against poverty. - Cancellation of debt or reconversion into aid for development. - Greater coordination at the regional and subregional level in terms of poverty reduction. - At the national level: continue with the 20/20 Initiative; adoption of a national policy for social development; organisation of round tables with donors in favour of social sectors; reorganisation of structures in charge of social development, and the socio-economic integration of more disadvantaged groups; greater coordination among the different actors for social development and within the national plan.
<p>Niger (Secretariat General)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme de Relance Economique - PRE (1997) to reduce poverty, boost the rural sector, promote the private sector and promote good governance. - As part of the PRE, the Programme National de lutte contre la Pauvreté was set up in 1998. - Programme d'Action et d'Investissements Prioritaires as part of the National Policy on Population (1995-2000). - Law on the Orientation of the Educational System (1998). - Ratification of the African Charter of Children's Rights (1996). - Creation of a Commission of Social and Cultural Affairs in the Parliament. - Creation of a Parliamentary Network on Population. - Celebration of different International Days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of supportive structures for children with family problems. - Reinforcement of laws and institutions related to handicapped people. - Creation of magistrates for minors. - Intensification of workshops and seminars related to gender and development. - Action to improve potable water, grain mills, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donors' demand for democracy and good governance in poor countries. - At the national level: economic recession; socio-political crisis; generalised poverty (83% of the population); lack of resources; unfavourable climatic conditions; inadequate resources and high population growth rate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foreign debt. - Reluctance of donors to cancel the debts of poor countries or to reconvert the debt to finance development action. - Donors' demand for democracy and good governance in poor countries. - At the national level: economic recession; socio-political crisis; generalised poverty (83% of the population); lack of resources; unfavourable climatic conditions; inadequate resources and high population growth rate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjustment Programmes. - Lack of interest of development partners in financing social projects. - Lack of regional and subregional coordination to carry out the recommendations of the Summit. - Reluctance of donors to cancel the debts of poor countries or to reconvert the debt to finance development action. - Donors' demand for democracy and good governance in poor countries. - At the national level: economic recession; socio-political crisis; generalised poverty (83% of the population); lack of resources; unfavourable climatic conditions; inadequate resources and high population growth rate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the tasks assigned to developing countries in terms of the fight against poverty. - Cancellation of debt or reconversion into aid for development. - Greater coordination at the regional and subregional level in terms of poverty reduction. - At the national level: continue with the 20/20 Initiative; adoption of a national policy for social development; organisation of round tables with donors in favour of social sectors; reorganisation of structures in charge of social development, and the socio-economic integration of more disadvantaged groups; greater coordination among the different actors for social development and within the national plan.

<p>(e.g., Elimination of Poverty, Family, Women, Environment, etc.) - See also Q. #3.</p>	<p>- Social Reform Agenda (SRA, 1994) to alleviate poverty. - National Health Insurance Act, Developed Basic and Advanced Training Programme for Health Workers (1996). - Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act (1995); Grant of Paternity Leave; ILO Convention on Safety and Health in Mines. - Accessibility Act for the disabled, Child and Youth Welfare Code; Comprehensive Street Children Programme (1996); Senior Citizen Welfare Law (1998). - Organization of the National Anti-Poverty Summit (1996) which laid down the groundwork for the implementation of the SRA. The core strategy was the Minimum Basic Needs Approach (MBN). - Community-based Information System installed in municipalities to assess poverty levels.</p>	<p>- Creation of groups, NGOs, and associations in defence of women, children and other disadvantaged groups. - Employment has increased from 2.7% from 1995 to 1998. 270,000 jobs were generated over the last two years. - 'Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances'. In 1996, 2,518 disadvantaged children were provided with education, livelihood and medical assistance. - 'Women in Especially Difficult Circumstances'. The number of women assisted from 1994 to 1998 increased from 10,586 to 14,600. - 11,735 out-of-school youths were provided with training, educational support, livelihood projects.</p>	<p>- Abnormal weather conditions. - Asian economic crisis. - The total budget for social development is still far from meeting the 20-20 Initiative (16.4% in 1997). - Decrease in ODA. - The Executive and the Parliament have different budgetary priorities. - Lack of funds to finance enacted laws. - Parliamentary budget initiatives tend to favour economic activities rather than the social sector.</p>	<p>- Poverty alleviation: a more responsive budgetary allocation process by setting realistic budget targets. - Health: to set up a medical research fund to exchange latest findings among countries. - Education: Constant and responsive teacher training or retooling. - Promote transparency in budget issues and conduct preliminary budget consultations. - The Department of Budget and Management should be consulted regarding the availability of funds to adequately operationalise a law.</p>	<p>- Additional sources of social development financing. - More efficient and effective local government structure. - Enhanced targeting schemes. - Greater international cooperation. - More refined monitoring system. - Further research on macro policies (national concerns such as the external debt, regional peace and security, human rights, drug and human trafficking, bilateral relations).</p>	<p>Philippines (Secretary to the Senate)</p>
<p>Poland (Senior Specialist)</p>	<p>- Constitution of the Republic of Poland, approved on April 1997. It includes a long list of human, civic, social, economic and cultural rights. - Unemployment Programme on the Promotion of Vocational Activity Among Youth (1995); Resolution on counteracting youth unemployment (1995). - Law on universal health insurance (1997). - Law on vocational training, rehabilitation and employment of the disabled (1997). - Charter of Rights for the Disabled (1997). - Increase in the allocation for educational expenditures in the 1999 budget.</p>	<p>Similar to Q.1.</p>	<p>- Industrial and political unrest product of the restructuring of the whole country's economy. - Crisis produced by far-reaching changes in many laws. - Widening gap between rich and poor. - Underdevelopment of rural areas. - Shortage of financial resources.</p>	<p>The new Constitution has had a tremendous impact on the performance of the Polish Parliament.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Republic of Korea (Assistant Director of the Inter-Parliamentary Organisation)</p>
<p>Republic of Korea (Assistant Director of the Inter-Parliamentary Organisation)</p>	<p>- Five-Year Development Plan for the Welfare of the Disabled (1998-2000). - Training and education programmes for 30,000 foreign nationals until the year 2010. - The National Welfare Planning Group (1996) presented the Vision for National Welfare in the 21st Century and the Basic Framework for National Welfare. In 1996, the Committee for the Promotion of National Welfare was created to implement the Basic Framework. - The Framework Action on Women's Development was established.</p>	<p>- Economic difficulties.</p>	<p>- Each country's legislation should meet specific standards to protect the weak, eradicate poverty and enhance the cohesion of a society.</p>	<p>- Long-term plans for both economic growth and social development should be drawn - Parliaments and governments should work to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of globalisation through a global partnership.</p>	<p>Measures to provide Russia with various international assistance to solve the most serious social problems provoked by the transition to a market economy. For instance, increase inter-</p>	<p>Russian Federation (Chairman of the State Duma's Committee on Labour and Social Policy)</p>
<p>Russian Federation (Chairman of the State Duma's Committee on Labour and Social Policy)</p>	<p>- Programme for Social Reform (1996-2000) and other specific programmes aimed at solving social problems related to youth, children, and the elderly.</p>	<p>- The social sector in Russia is in deep crisis. The Duma has passed over 50 bills to alleviate the negative social consequences of structural economic adjustments, raising min-</p>	<p>- Severely unfavourable economic crisis. - Serious difficulties in the financial and budgetary field. - Extremely low effectiveness of programmes</p>	<p>For the Federal Assembly to play a more efficient role in social policy-making, the Constitution should be amended. By doing this, the Assembly's influence over the Executive</p>	<p>For the Federal Assembly to play a more efficient role in social policy-making, the Constitution should be amended. By doing this, the Assembly's influence over the Executive</p>	<p>For the Federal Assembly to play a more efficient role in social policy-making, the Constitution should be amended. By doing this, the Assembly's influence over the Executive</p>

<p>Rwanda (Director of Inter-Parliamentary Relations)</p>	<p>studied the issues in plenary sessions and committee meetings. (No specific laws mentioned.) - 12 parliamentary hearings and 26 Committee meetings were organised to assist all programmes to reform the social sector.</p>	<p>- Federal Programme to reform the social sector in 1996-1999 (to achieve the Summit's goals). It encompassed measures aimed at lowering poverty and unemployment, enhancing work conditions and social security. Due to the economic crisis and cabinet changes, the level of implementation of these measures was poor.</p>	<p>minimum levels of pensions and wages, adjusting all payments to the population to make up for inflation, and raising amounts of welfare payments to all socially vulnerable groups of the population.</p>	<p>aimed at providing social support to the population. - Widening gap between social and labour legislation from the centrally planned economy period and new market-economy reality.</p>	<p>would increase and it would be able to have more effective control over the process of implementing programmes and measures.</p>	<p>national humanitarian aid to weaker social sectors; use non-governmental national and international funds for solving problems of eradication of poverty; international financial support to reform Russia's pension system and labour relations, and to create an effective labour market; increase international aid aimed at securing social development in Russia. Recommendations: Elaborate more effective social policy by applying newly elaborated tools that would provide for more rational use of financial and material resources by expanding sources of financing social development measures.</p>
<p>Rwanda (Director of Inter-Parliamentary Relations)</p>	<p>- Laws related to the 1994 genocide. - Amendment to the Labour code. - Law proposal for a new constitution. - Law proposal for the creation of a national fund for the construction of houses. - Law proposal for the creation of a National Commission on Human Rights. - Parliamentary debates on housing problems, population security, and refugee issues.</p>	<p>- Time-framed strategies exist for poverty reduction, full employment and social integration (not specified). The strategies focus on the following areas and aim at: - Identification of and assistance to vulnerable groups: Financial and food assistance to orphan victims of the genocide. - Popular education: Organisation of seminars on civil education; awareness campaigns on poverty, AIDS, peace, tolerance, etc.; adult literacy teaching. - Gender equality: Promotion of gender equality; assistance to women in difficult situations, etc. - Health: Promote primary health care; decentralise health services and develop the pharmaceutical sector; develop a sanitary information system. - Youth: Promote national reconciliation with programmes of national and professional re-integration. - Agriculture.</p>	<p>- Tangible results concerning social solidarity.</p>	<p>- Lack of financial and human resources. - Foreign debt. - Protection of criminals who took part in the genocide by certain religious orders. Recommendations: - Cancellation of foreign debt. - Establish a Marshall-type plan for Rwanda.</p>	<p>- Parliamentarians should visit the country's different regions in order to learn about the population's problems.</p>	<p>- International cooperation to fight poverty. The Special Session should focus on the persistence of the genocide 'ideology' in the Great Lakes region. - Foreign debt. - Reform of the UN and the Security Council in particular. - Modify the Universal Declaration of Human Rights so that all countries will respect it. - South-South cooperation.</p>
<p>Senegal (Joint-Secretary General to the National Assembly)</p>	<p>- Programme to fight Poverty (1997). - Adoption of the National Policy on Employment (1997) within the framework of the 9th Plan for Social and Economic Development. - Programme on the reintegration of senior military officials and young recruits into civilian life. - Creation of the National Productivity and Production Centre to improve the performance of the national economy and the standard of living. - Programmes to develop rural employment. - Project for a National Action Fund for Employment. - Project for a Development Plan for Education and Training.</p>	<p>- Programme for Health Development (1998-2002). - According to the Ministry for Work, Family and Social Affairs, absolute poverty does not exist in the country. The 1992 Law on Social Security provides financial support to all citizens whose income is not sufficient for subsistence, and permanent financial support to individuals over 60 years old or incapable of working.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>- Provide the Parliament with the necessary expertise to face key issues in the social and economic sectors. - Lack of financial resources.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>
<p>Slovenia (Research Department of the Parliament)</p>	<p>- The WSD commitments have been a subject of discussion at 17 plenary sessions and over a hundred meetings of parliamentary committees and commissions. - Ratification of 87 international agreements concerning the Summit's Declaration. - All budget categories related to social, health and humanitarian issues have been continuously increased since 1995.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Transitional problems, increase in unemployment rate, and cuts in health, pensions and social insurance rights. - Long-lasting legal procedures.</p>	<p>The answer does not respond to the question.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>

<p>Singapore MP, Chairman for the Government Parliamentary Committee on Community Development</p>	<p>- The Health for Everyone until 2000 Programme aims at securing basic health for everyone. - The Ministry has also started the National Programme Against Poverty and Social Exclusion.</p> <p>- Women's Charter, Children and Young Person's Act, Adoption of Children's Act, Child Care Centre Act. - Employment Act, Workers' Compensation Act, Skills Redevelopment Programme, Back to Work Scheme. (It is not specified when these laws were promulgated.)</p>	<p>- Strategy on the Development of the Job Market in the Republic of Slovenia 1999-2006 is being prepared.</p> <p>There is no need for a time frame to eradicate poverty in Singapore, as the country provides financial assistance to those who need it through the Public Assistance Scheme and the programme 'Many Helping Hands' - a comprehensive network of social services provided by the Government, the voluntary sector, self-help groups and co-operatives.</p>	<p>- They have not encountered any major obstacles in implementing the Summit's commitments. - At the national level, their approach is: find new markets; cut cost (flexi-wage) to stay competitive and retain jobs; upgrade quality of workforce through training. - At the international level, they emphasise international cooperation.</p>	<p>- The existing process has worked fine for the country.</p>	<p>- International cooperation to help Asian countries recover from the economic crisis.</p>
<p>Slovak Republic (Head of the Department of Social and Economic Analysis and Statistics of the Chancellery)</p>	<p>- Main initiative after the Summit: conceptual intentions in the field of social development, reduction of unemployment, support for full and productive employment, protection against social exclusion and growing poverty. - Employment Act (1996): It extended the financing of unemployed people, the financing period and the level of allowances.</p>	<p>These strategies are in the process of continuous implementation. - State Family Policy, 1996. - National Action Plan for Women, 1997. - Proclamation of Government Policies, 1998. The only strategy in respect of which the Parliament has participated in the direct formulation process is the 'Conception of the Transition of the Social Sector'.</p>	<p>- Financial constraints. At present, unemployment allowances, pensions, etc. are financed by employers' and employees' contributions and depend on achieved economic results.</p>	<p>- Every strategy proposed by the Government should be debated in the Parliament and not only in parliamentary committees.</p>	<p>- Cooperation among national Parliaments and the organization of meetings to exchange experience on successful programmes and implemented strategies.</p>
<p>South Africa MP - Chairperson for the portfolio Committee on Welfare and Population Development</p>	<p>- White Paper for Population Development (1998). - Domestic Violence Bill, Criminal Procedures Amendment Bill and Maintenance Bill (1998). - Free Health Care for Pregnant Women and Children Under Six policy; Clinic Upgrading and Building Programme (CUBP). - Housing Act (1997) to facilitate a sustainable housing development process, and Housing Finance Bill to finance low-income housing. White Paper on South African Land Policy (1997); The Working for Water Project (1995). - Employment Equity Bill (1998) to reverse the discriminatory allocation of labour; The Skills Development Bill (1998); New Labour Relations Act (1996); creation of the Council for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration; Presidential Jobs Summit (1998). - Gender Management System (1997) to ensure gender equality in all spheres. - South African Schools Act (1996); creation of the National Committee for Further Education and Training (1996). - Creation of the South African National Committee on Population and Development (1998). - The Poverty and Inequality Report (PIR) was commissioned by the Government (1996). The strategy components are: linking growth and human development; asset redistribution; labour and financial market reform; spatial development; institutional reforms, and monitoring and evaluation. Rural Anti-Poverty Programme launched in 1998. - Budget in 1998/99 Poverty Relief Funds increased from R300 to R500. The budget</p>	<p>- Social insurance. - State Social Security Benefits increased by 8.5% between 1997 and 1998. - Social assistance: While in 1994, 7.04% of the population received social allowances, in 1998 this figure increased to 7.75%.</p> <p>- The Primary School Nutrition Programme reaches 14,000 needy children. - Over 5 million people are benefiting from the CUBP.</p>	<p>- Lack of ability to transform legislation into practice. - Lack of partnership between the government, civil society and the private sector. - A lack of parliamentary capacity for effective oversight of the executive. - Lack of an integrated approach to poverty eradication and other social issues. - Limited involvement of the private sector in social development issues. - High level of illiteracy. - Lack of social stability preventing foreign investment and subsequent job creation. - Lack of awareness and information available on social issues.</p>	<p>- Availability of information technology resources to conduct public hearings, evidence-taking sessions and consultations with electronic linkages to remote areas of the country. - An effective research capacity within the Parliament. - Public participation.</p>	<p>- Inter-departmental or inter-ministerial approaches to addressing social and economic development imperatives. - International think tanks on the implications of globalisation for social policy. - Resources made available for parliamentarians to conduct international study tours to investigate and learn from specific programmes. - Establish mechanisms and resources to increase public participation in addressing social and economic development issues.</p>

<p>Sri Lanka (Ministry of Social Services)</p>	<p>For education in 1997/98 reached 6.5% of GDP. In 1998/99, the education, health and welfare budget votes account for 84.1% of the total provincial budget allocations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1995). <p>Laws:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislation was enacted in 1996 to create the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka; - Amendment of the Penal Code in 1995 to protect women and children from sexual violence and other forms of abuse; Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (1996); National Child Protection Authority Act (1998); Marriage Registration Act (1995) on the minimum age for marriage; Housing Development Finance Corporation of Sri Lanka Act (1997); Apartment Ownership Act (1998). <p>New institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a Task Force composed of five Ministers and three MPs; in 1998 to inquire on human rights abuses. - National Committee (1995) to monitor the National Conference on Social Development and composed of representatives of the Government, UN agencies and NGOs. - National Council for Persons with Disabilities (1996) and a committee to formulate legislation on accessibility for the disabled due to be finalised in 2000. - National Steering Committee (1997) on eliminating child labour. - Creation of the Ministry for Women Affairs (1997) and a Presidential Task Force on issues related to women and children. - The National Authority of Teacher Education (1998). <p>Programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public-sector awareness in conflict resolution; promotion of peace and harmony among communities; peace education programmes in schools; cultural programmes on sustainable ethnic harmony; civil rights (1998). - National Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (1997). <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Conference on Social Development (1995); 3 workshops on 'Employment for the Disabled' (1996); National Mental Health Week observed in 1997. <p>Studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several studies were conducted to collect information on gender-related issues (1997 onwards). - Survey to identify non-school-going children and reasons for their non-attendance (1999). 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Between 1996 and 1999 an estimated total of Rs. 22 billion has been directed to finance the Samurdhi programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment: 17 Craft Councils, 16 design centres, 2 handicraft boards have been established and 9 industrial estates have been completed since 1995. Fifteen training centres for migrant workers have been set up in 1996 and a social network for migrant families was developed in 1997. - Budgetary allocations for the Ministry of Social Services tripled from 1995 (Rs. 811 million) to 1999 (Rs. 2,371 million). - In 1998, 20 programmes on entrepreneurial training for women were conducted. - Expenditure on education increased from Rs. 20,926,000 in 1995 to Rs. 25,694,000 in 1997. The estimated budget for 2000 is Rs. 37,655,000. - In 1997, more than 3,500 cadres were recruited and 5104 were recruited in 1998. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>
<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Samurdhi Programme. A five-year programme (1996-2000) to eradicate national poverty targeting 12,000 villages and 1.2 million families living below the poverty line and 100,000 families living under the absolute poverty line. It also aims at creating 190,000 jobs a year, organising disadvantaged groups, training, establishing and maintaining productive rural assets, implementing nutrition, family health and sanitation schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender (1999-2004). Strategy aimed at the socio-economic and political empowerment of women; social mobilisation of women; violence against women; early childhood care and development. Budgetary provisions for the programme are estimated at Rs. 115.4 million for 1999 increasing to Rs. 144.1 million for 2000. - Health (1999-2004). Strategy aimed at improving hospitals and reducing inequalities in the distribution of services; strengthening preventive health services; developing health education; improving technology; reform the organisational structure. - Shelter (1999-2004). Housing, water supply and sewerage, construction industry, urban and regional development. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Adult Education Initiative. A five-year programme started in 1997 aimed at unemployed adults who have not finished secondary school.</p>
<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>
<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>
<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>	<p>Not answered.</p>

<p>The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Assembly representative)</p>	<p>cooperation in social issues by initiating the study on human resources development in the framework of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation.</p> <p>Legislative activity was directed towards carrying out economic reform and introducing measures in accordance with the socio-economic objectives of the Strategy for Development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laws adopted: Law on Social Protection; Law on Employment and on Insurance in case of Unemployment; Law on the Family; Law on Inheritance; Law on Student and Pupil Welfare; Law on Bankruptcy; Law on Increasing Employment (tax exemptions and reductions for employees); Laws on ratification of international loan agreements aimed at supporting economic and social development (structural adjustment, small and medium enterprises, health sector reform, social development). - Increase in budget expenditure for social purposes (up to 1/3) to alleviate the negative impact of the economic transition. - Declarations adopted on the Protection of the Child from Political Manipulation and Abuses; on Advancement of Relations between Sexes in the Decision-making Process; on the Improvement of Inter-Ethnic Relations in the Spirit of Tolerance, Dialogue, Mutual Respect and Trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy for Development of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Its basic goal is to define the priorities of the country's social and economic development until the year 2020. It offers projections for decreasing poverty and increasing productive unemployment encompassing issues such as social insurance in case of unemployment; health care; health, pension and disabled insurance; protection of children; defining poverty and resources for social care. 	<p>with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, it is preparing a report to be considered at the Special Session in June 2000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tangible results are limited due to the rapid increase in social problems during the transition and difficult economic conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low level of economic development. - Geographic location (land-locked country in an unstable region). - Transitional goals are not always compatible with social development goals. - The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's economy was constructed around the Yugoslav economy and market. - Problems related to international recognition of the country; economic and political blockades; region's instability. 	<p>The assembly could conduct a wider debate of the WSD's commitments organising public debates and studies.</p>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the national level, more cooperation between legislative and executive branches. - International action: an integrated approach by international organisations (especially the UN) towards developing countries. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continuous reinforcement and integration of general development and sectoral strategies and plans; more substantial foreign financial and technical support; improvement of regional economic cooperation; increase cooperation with the European Union; enable unobstructed modern technology transfer.
<p>Togo (not specified)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law proposal on the creation of a National Fund for Apprenticeships; law proposal on the traffic of children (under study); adoption of a law related to young female circumcision. - Other measures: improvement of the education and protection of young girls; improvement of the activities carried out by the Agency for National Solidarity; creation of a Committee related to the Beijing Conference; creation of a Committee for the implementation of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child; creation of the Department for the Elderly. - In January 1998, the National Committee on the Social Summit for Social Development was created and is part of the National Assembly. - Quantitative survey carried out by the Government and UNDP on the extent of poverty in 1995. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The National Assembly participated in a workshop on the adoption of a National Strategy to Fight Poverty in December 1995. The Strategy aims at promoting economic growth focused on the most disadvantaged social groups; integrating the demographic variable in the data analysis and the elaboration of sectoral policies on development; valorisation of human resources; decentralisation and popular participation; relocation of resources in the social sector; development of local credits; etc. - Two programmes have emerged from this strategy: the National Programme against Poverty (PNLP) and the National Programme to reinforce development management (PNKCGD). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concentration of resources from the UN system agencies for the improvement of socio-economic infrastructure. - Creation of a Fund for Social Development financed by the World Bank. - Initiation of work towards the rehabilitation of urban and communal infrastructure in the maritime region. - Support of decentralised credit. - Development of small cattle to raise the nutritional level of disadvantaged sectors. - Functional literacy projects. - Access to potable water. - Amelioration of development management and good governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of resources. - Ineffective decentralisation. - Effective participation of target groups in the development process. - Internal and external debt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A parliamentary unit should be created to collaborate with the National Committee on the Summit to coordinate the Government's initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In terms of employment and poverty, parliaments should carry out programmes on good governance and local governance. - In terms of social integration, parliaments should promote initiatives to favour the integration or reintegration of disadvantaged groups, as well as the defence of grassroots professional organisations. - In the context of legalisation, parliaments should work to facilitate the free movement of goods and people. - Parliaments should monitor resource allocation to that funds are not directed to projects other than those focusing on social development. - Parliaments should respect the commitments entered into the 20/20 Initiative.
<p>Tunisia (2nd Vice-President to the General Assembly)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 48 laws were adopted such as the Labour Code, reform of the social security and health insurance system; accidents at work; code for the protection of children; protection of disadvantaged groups; joint ownership by the couple; reform and financing of education. - Ratification of the ILO convention on child labour; the Arab convention against drugs and narcotics; adoption of a code on the protection of children inspired by the international convention. - Creation of a Solidarity Bank. - Budget: 60.5% of the working budget, over 	<p>Tunisia elaborates its development policy in 10-year strategies that are implemented in 5-year plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The schooling of children aged 6 and 12-15 reached 100% and 93% respectively. - Poverty was reduced by 6%. - The country reduced unemployment to 15% thanks to regional, rural and urban development programmes, a plan to reform the system of vocational training for youth (60,000 people per year); participation of MPs in the elaboration of 5 year plans and questioning of the Government on the proposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developed countries' failure to respect the WSD commitments to develop bi and multilateral international aid. - The effects of globalisation and the market economy. - Foreign debt and the reduction of aid by rich countries. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Containment of the effects of liberalization of the world economy. - Free movement of people and goods from poor countries to rich countries. - Provide the UN with more resources to support social development in poor countries. - Alleviate the burden of foreign debt and the inhumane conditions imposed by IMF and the BRD.

<p>Turkey (not specified)</p>	<p>25% of the development budget and 19% of GDP are allocated to the social sector and the development of human resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education: law on compulsory education to 8 years and improvement of vocational education (1997). - Other: tax reform law (1998) which alleviated the tax burden on lower income groups. - Ratification of ILO conventions on minimum age for employment and forced labour. 	<p>- Seventh Five-Year Development Plan (1998-2000). The plan includes 'basic structural reform projects': education reform, population and family planning, health reform, social security reform, increasing employment and the efficiency of the labour market, protection of the consumer, structural reforms concerning taxation, acquiring and utilising information, structural reform project for agricultural policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The unemployment rate has been reduced from 6.9% in 1995 to 6.4% in 1998. - The proportion of the population covered by social security grew from 78.6% in 1995 to 85.3% in 1996. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of statistical data and adequate indicators. - Insufficient degree of interaction between economic and social matters and policies. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater efforts and funds to increase co-operation. - Conceptual readjustment of economic and social policies at both the national and international levels. - Strengthening of work on social indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mid-term examinations or debates on broad economic and social issues that are usually discussed during the budget should be conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restructure the Government to integrate social and economic issues in policy-making. - Examination of the positive and negative effects of the expansion of communications and information technologies. - At the international level: - Inclusion of LDC and developing countries in the information super-highway. - Ensuring humanitarian aid in emergencies. 	
<p>Viet Nam (Secretary to the Viet Nam Group in IPI)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of the Labour Law which contains articles on gender equality in terms of vocational training, social insurance, social interests, etc. - The Parliament has urged the Government to invest in the social sector, prioritising care for mother and children. - The Assembly adopted an Ordinance on the Handicapped. 	<p>- The Assembly elaborated a strategy to eradicate poverty and create employment until the year 2000. It provides for 13,600 projects and has a budget of 480 million dong.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 1998, 1.3 million jobs were created and 260,000 homes extricated from poverty. - Financial and monetary crisis. - Too frequent natural disasters. - Formalities and administrative procedures are too complicated for foreign investors. - Poor infrastructure in remote and mountain areas. - Conservatism, corruption, stagnation and bureaucracy. 	<p>- Democratisation of all aspects of social life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater cooperation among IPI members. 		
<p>Zambia (Clerk of the National Assembly)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Zambia Law Development Commission Act (1996). Created to research social and political values and eliminate anomalies and archaic laws from the statute book. - The Small Enterprises Development Act (1996) to establish the Small Enterprise Development Board and the Micro and Small Enterprise Development fund. - The Persons with Disabilities Act (1996) to establish the Zambian Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Management Boards and National Trust Funds. - The Employment Amendment Act (1997). - Education: The Science and Technology Act (1997); National Institute of Public Administration Act, The Technical Education and Entrepreneurship Training Act (1998), etc. - The Commitments were discussed in many committees such as the Committee for Women, Youth and Child Development; the Committee on Education Science and Technology; the Committee on Social Services. - Budget in the 1996 budget, issues considered top priority were the rehabilitation of economic and social infrastructure, the alleviation of poverty; prevention of interruptions in the supply of food grains; protection of basic human rights; protection of the environment. 	<p>Not answered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme Against Malnutrition. Distribution of food in rural areas stricken by drought. The programme has also helped to build sanitation facilities, bridges, roads, etc. - Urban Self-Help Programme. Women in urban area are asked to help in the reconstruction of roads, collection of rubbish heaps, etc. in exchange for food. - Distribution of Hammer Milk. This allows the villagers to avoid paying the exploitative prices charged by private millers and to earn funds for community development. - Bole Holes. The Government has drilled over 2000 bole holes. - Health reforms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The foreign debt. - Political instability and lack of security in many of Zambia's neighbouring countries. - Drought and desertification which caused famines and rural-urban migration. - Zambia's population growth exceeds its GDP growth. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Summit's Action Programme should be incorporated into the development programme and rehabilitation of the country's social sector. - Sufficient funds should be mobilised every year from donor countries and national col-lectors to adequately implement the Programme. - National and international workshops should be organised to enhance follow-up. - Greater commitment from governments to allow parliaments a greater role in fostering social development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Parliament could be assisted by the provision of computers and human resource development that will facilitate dissemination of laws to the public. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Summit's Action Programme should be incorporated into the development programme and rehabilitation of the country's social sector. - Sufficient funds should be mobilised every year from donor countries and national col-lectors to adequately implement the Programme. - National and international workshops should be organised to enhance follow-up. - Greater commitment from governments to allow parliaments a greater role in fostering social development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International community support for cancellation of the foreign debt of Third World countries by the year 2000. - Conditions imposed by donor agencies and other multilateral organizations when implementing structural adjustment programmes should not negatively affect the lives of nationals. - Developed countries should find modalities to abide by the 20/20 Initiative. 	

WHAT IS THE IPU ?

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the world organisation of Parliaments of sovereign States.

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To that end it:

Fosters contacts, co-ordination and the exchange of experience among Parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;

Considers questions of common interest and expresses its views on such issues in order to bring about action by Parliaments and parliamentarians;

Contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights - an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development;

Contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening of their means of action.

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