



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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# Emerging challenges to multilateralism: A parliamentary response

*Annual Parliamentary Hearing*

*United Nations Headquarters  
Trusteeship Council Chamber, Secretariat Building  
21-22 February 2019*



## Programme

*Moderated by Mr. Richard Wolffe*

| Thursday, 21 February |   |
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| 9.45 – 10.15 a.m.     | <b>Opening session</b>  |
|                       | <p><b>Ms María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés</b>, President of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the General Assembly</p> <p><b>Ms Gabriela Cuevas Barron</b>, President of the IPU</p>   |
| 10.15 – 11.30 a.m.    | <b>Multilateralism at a crossroads: Overall assessment and emerging challenges</b>  |
| 1                     | <p>"The diversity of global, interconnected challenges is, perhaps, the most complex challenge that multilateralism must face, since it demands strengthening its methods to become more efficient and to have immediate response capabilities and a permanent preventive radar."<br/>(María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the General Assembly, 31 Oct. 2018)</p> <p>The current multilateral system was born in response to the devastation of the Second World War to provide the foundations for peace and human development for all. It revolves around the United Nations, including a number of UN agencies and programmes, as well as the Bretton Woods Institutions, the WTO and a number of treaty bodies overseeing the implementation of international agreements. More recently, new bodies such as the G20 have come together to supplement this multilateral architecture.</p> <p>As globalization deepened in the last few decades, Member States have come to the conclusion that governments alone cannot provide the answer to all of today's global problems. The United Nations itself needs to be reformed to be more inclusive of the views and contribution of other organizations and non-governmental stakeholders. This includes a close partnership with parliaments and the IPU as called for by the landmark UN Millennium Declaration of 2000 and by successive resolutions of the UN General Assembly.</p> <p>This introductory session will provide a broad assessment of how multilateralism has succeeded and at times failed in maintaining the peace and in building global prosperity since the post-war period. Key issues to be discussed include the state of democracy today, economic challenges and other pressing contemporary demands.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How can global problems be addressed through the rules-based multilateral system? Does diminishing faith in multilateralism in some quarters stem from a failure of globalization and attendant inequalities?</li><li>- In matters of global economic governance, how are responsibilities divided between the various institutions, including the United Nations, the G20 and the Bretton Woods Institutions?</li><li>- How do parliamentarians across the world see the current situation and prospects for the future of the world order?</li><li>- What role do civil society and private sector constituencies play in UN processes today, and how does this compare to the role of parliaments?</li></ul> |

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|                           | <p>Panellists:</p> <p><b>Ms Ravza Kavakci Kan</b>, MP, Grand National Assembly of Turkey</p> <p><b>Mr. Peter Beyer</b>, MP, German Bundestag</p> <p><b>Ambassador Luis Gallegos</b>, Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations</p> <p><b>Ambassador Elizabeth Cousens</b>, Deputy CEO, UN Foundation</p>   |
| <p>11.30 a.m.– 1 p.m.</p> | <p><b>The national dimension of multilateralism: Institutional reforms for better politics</b></p>   |
| <p>2</p>                  | <p>Growing mistrust in multilateral processes may stem in part from an institutional crisis within national jurisdictions. In many countries today, politics has grown extremely divisive. Institutions of government find themselves at an impasse, unable to reconcile different positions and find effective solutions to key questions of social justice, environmental sustainability, and economic policy. This in turn breeds a "do it yourself" attitude in international relations. At the same time, multilateral institutions need to be more accountable and closer to the citizens, especially when their decisions affect directly the lives of ordinary people.</p> <p>Decisions and commitments made by states at the multilateral level are in most cases inextricably linked to their domestic constituencies. Parliaments play a strategic and indispensable role in ensuring that international obligations are duly reflected in national legislation, for instance, through the ratification of international treaties and agreements including on climate change, arms trade and many more. They can therefore help bridge the gap between the global and the local, by translating international commitments into national realities.</p> <p>As many countries are now facing growing tension between their international commitments and political discourses that place national sovereignty on a collision course with multilateral institutions, it is increasingly necessary to understand the underlying factors behind this process to consider proper and timely responses.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is at the root of the political polarization that is becoming common in many countries around the world?</li> <li>- To what extent is this polarization responsible for mistrust in multilateralism and how far would governments be willing to pursue narrow agendas at the expense of cooperation with other countries in matters of mutual concern?</li> <li>- In what ways can national parliaments and the IPU support the multilateral system of the United Nations?</li> <li>- What are the most urgent reforms needed to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at the global, regional and national levels?</li> </ul> <p>Panellists:</p> <p><b>Ms Hege Liadal</b>, MP, Parliament of Norway</p> <p><b>Ambassador Milica Pejanovic-Durisic</b>, Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the United Nations</p> <p><b>Mr. Charles Chauvel</b>, Team Leader, Inclusive Political Processes, Governance and Peacebuilding, UNDP</p> <p><b>Mr. Richard Gowan</b>, Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research, United Nations University</p> |
| <p>1 – 2.30 p.m.</p>      | <p><b>Lunch break</b></p>  |

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| 2:30 – 3 pm      | <b>UN Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres</b>  |
| 3 – 4.15 p.m.    | <b>Gender equality at the United Nations and beyond</b>  |
| 3                | <p>Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a key objective of the multilateral system as illustrated most vividly by Goal 5 of the SDGs. Indeed, gender equality is key to ensuring sustainable development that leaves no one behind. There has been unprecedented public discussion and engagement on this topic not only in the UN System as a whole, but also at the IPU and at the local and national levels, including in parliaments. The opportunity is indeed there to advance gender equality and make the contribution of women a cornerstone of change in politics, in particular in terms of political leadership, economic empowerment and the positive transformation of social norms. For this to happen, tackling gender inequalities, stereotypes and violence against women and girls are key.</p> <p>This session will highlight ongoing efforts to achieve gender parity in the United Nations and, more broadly, take stock of the progress toward more gender equal representation, participation and influence in both political processes and core decision-making institutions and organizations.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to improve the level of representation of women in parliaments and other key positions in politics?</li> <li>- How can the experience of successful female politicians benefit other women who are trying to overcome obstacles to greater political participation, including in the United Nations?</li> <li>- How to ensure that public policies promote gender equality and women and girls empowerment?</li> </ul> <p>Panellists:</p> <p><b>Senator Susan Kihika</b>, Senate of Kenya, Chair of the IPU Women’s Forum</p> <p><b>Ms Asa Regner</b>, Deputy Executive Director – UN Women</p> <p><b>Ms Ana Maria Menendez</b>, Senior Advisor of the Secretary-General on Policy</p> <p><b>Mr. Brian Heilman</b>, Senior Research Officer, Promundo</p> |
| 4.15 – 5.45 p.m. | <b>Investing in multilateralism: The UN funding gap</b>  |
| 4                | <p>Compared to the ambition and the stated commitments of the international community, the United Nations operates with a limited budget in all three pillars of its mission: peace and security, development and human rights. Resources are either insufficient or allocated in a very unbalanced way, with too much of the funding remaining unpredictable and earmarked for specific projects instead of contributing to the core budget of the organization.</p> <p>The international community, for instance, spent USD 233 billion over the past 10 years on humanitarian responses, peacekeeping and in-donor refugee costs which could have been invested in development instead.</p> <p>A joint UN-World Bank report shows that effective prevention would save anywhere from USD 5 billion to USD 70 billion per year for the affected country and the international community combined. Despite this, UN conflict prevention efforts remain underfunded, in stark contrast with over USD 1.6 trillion in yearly military spending worldwide.</p> <p>It is also important to note that, in general, as national governments are frequently ruled by a political majority, parliaments represent better the plurality in each society by allowing minorities and the full political spectrum to have a say and participate in the political debate through proper institutional channels. This diversity found in parliaments may help to create</p>   |

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|               | <p>opportunities to prevent and resolve conflicts, bearing in mind in particular that when a serious conflict breaks out, parliaments are in many cases the first institution to be negatively affected.</p> <p>Parliamentarians, by virtue of the political and plural nature of parliaments, have a key role and a responsibility to play in prevention and conflict resolution. These responsibilities are growing and should lead to more results whenever possible, so that their views can be properly translated into concrete changes in international institutions.</p> <p>Given that parliaments approve national budgets that include all allocations to the UN System, parliaments have a key role to play in making sure that the United Nations is appropriately funded. Yet, as a recent debate of the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs highlighted, most parliaments are unaware of the many funding issues that affect the UN's capacity to deliver on its mandate.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why are UN conflict prevention operations underfunded and how much would be needed to make funding more adequate?</li> <li>- Given the role of parliaments in adopting the national budget, how can they help buttress multilateral efforts in all three pillars of the United Nations?</li> <li>- How to reconcile national economic constraints and growing demands at the international level for additional financing of essential activities?</li> <li>- How can parliaments actually take part in prevention and conflict resolution?</li> <li>- In what ways can the democratic representation of citizenship in parliaments help generate national dialogues to promote peace?</li> </ul> <p>Panellists:</p> <p><b>Ms Cecilia Widegren, MP</b>, Riksdagen of Sweden</p> <p><b>Ambassador Gillian Bird</b>, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, Chair of the 5<sup>th</sup> Committee of the General Assembly (Budget)</p> <p><b>Mr. Miroslav Jenca</b>, Assistant Secretary General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations</p> <p><b>Mr. Peter Yeo</b>, President, Better World Campaign</p> |
| 6 – 7.30 p.m. | <b>Reception: Visitors Center, North Entrance</b>   |

| <b>Friday, 22 February</b> |  |
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| 10 – 11.30 a.m.            | <b>Towards more responsive global governance: The revitalization of the General Assembly</b>   |
| <b>5</b>                   | <p>The General Assembly is often referred to as "the parliament of the world" in which all UN Member States are represented equally according to the rule of "one country, one vote". Reinvigorating multilateralism, however, will require making the United Nations a more effective body of global governance.</p> <p>Despite being the most representative principal organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly's role in global governance is hampered by a number of factors. Its resolutions lack legal force, many of them aim at the common lowest denominator, and almost none of them come with an automatic implementation and review mechanism at either global or national levels. Few legally binding treaties come before the General Assembly for approval. What is more, the President of the General Assembly, whose term lasts just one year, has limited authority and resources to help build consensus around effective resolutions.</p> <p>Over the years, a number of steps have been taken to enhance the role of the General Assembly through a process of "revitalization", including by strengthening the office of the President, making the election of the UN Secretary-General more democratic, and by</p> |

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|                            | <p>streamlining its programme of work. Parliamentarians, however, are seldom included in national delegations or in negotiation processes at the multilateral level.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are reforms of the General Assembly sufficiently ambitious in scope and depth?</li> <li>- How can General Assembly resolutions and other outcomes be made more effective and with more traction on the ground, including in national parliaments?</li> <li>- What parliamentary practices from around the world may help improve the working methods of the General Assembly?</li> <li>- Most importantly, how to make the contributions of parliamentarians more visible at the United Nations as a whole, thus improving their overall participation in UN meetings, negotiations and other multilateral activities?</li> </ul> <p>Panellists:</p> <p><b>Senator Farooq Hamid Naek</b> Senate of Pakistan</p> <p><b>Ambassador Sima Sami Bahous</b>, Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations, Co-chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on GA revitalization</p> <p><b>Ambassador Michal Mlynar</b>, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, co-chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly</p> <p><b>Ms Luise Rurup</b>, Director Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung ( FES)</p>   |
| <p>11.30 a.m. – 1 p.m.</p> | <p><b>Making conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping more effective</b></p>  |
| <p>6</p>                   | <p>Back in 1945, the United Nations was created "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Conflict prevention lies at the heart of the United Nations and of the multilateral system. Operationally, conflict prevention involves mediation efforts, assistance to countries to help them resolve internal tensions or international disputes, and the deployment of peacekeeping forces to post-conflict zones.</p> <p>Commonly associated with Security Council mandates, peacekeeping remains one of the main UN tools to protect civilian populations, help prevent new conflicts, reduce violence and strengthen security on the ground, in addition to being highly important for the public image of the United Nations. Peacekeeping also has a track in the General Assembly where a Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) carries out a comprehensive review of the entire question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects, including sexual violence against women and the role of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Gender considerations are critical in this regard and are a matter of concern for the Organization, Member States and the public at large, including in parliaments.</p> <p>As for the work of the Security Council, whose decisions are legally binding on the entire international community, it has not always lived up to expectations either because it failed to take action when needed or because it took decisions that proved ineffectual. Attempts to make the Security Council more representative of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's geopolitical landscape and with more transparent and democratic working methods have yet to come to fruition.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What can be done in concrete terms to improve the ability of the United Nations to deliver more effectively on its peace and security mandate, advance political solutions to conflict and enhance the political impact of peacekeeping?</li> <li>- How to support performance and accountability by all peacekeeping components?</li> <li>- What are the reasons for the stalemate on Security Council reform and how can parliaments help in this regard?</li> <li>- How can we strengthen the role of parliamentarians in current debates on UN reforms, including on peace and security?</li> </ul> |

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|                       | <p>Panellists:</p> <p><b>Mr. Jose Ignacio Echaniz, MP</b>, Chamber of Deputies of Spain</p> <p><b>Mr. Marc Andre Franche</b>, Chief, Financing for Peace Building, <b>United Nations</b></p> <p><b>Ms Karin Landgren</b>, Executive Director, Security Council Report</p> <p><b>Dr. Paige Arthur</b>, Deputy Director, Center on International Cooperation, New York University</p>  |
|                       | <b>Lunch break</b>   |
| <b>3 – 4.30 p.m.</b>  | <b>The multilateral system in the public eye: The impact of mass communications</b>  |
| <b>7</b>              | <p>When the United Nations was created 73 years ago, the world was a very different place. The "peoples" that are invoked in the first few words of the United Nations Charter were mostly removed from the international arena and relied almost entirely on their governments to speak on their behalf. Multilateralism was characterized by slow-moving inter-governmental dialogue away from the public eye.</p> <p>Over the course of decades, with the advent of globalization and modern communication tools such as the Internet, 24/7 news channels, and social media, as well as with the emergence of long-distance travel, people are able to talk to each other and organize action across borders at unprecedented frequency and speed. As a result, multilateral institutions and their representatives are under more intense public scrutiny for their actions or inactions, but also under more pressure to deliver. There is a growing disconnect between the ways and means of the multilateral system and those of the outside world whose implications have yet to be fully understood.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the public's perception of the United Nations and of the multilateral system today?</li> <li>- How are multilateral institutions adjusting to the new era of mass communications?</li> <li>- How can parliamentarians help make the United Nations more relevant to people around the world?</li> <li>- What innovative ways can be found to make the multilateral system more inclusive of the views of all people, including the most vulnerable and marginalized?</li> </ul> <p>Panellists:</p> <p><b>Senator Scott Ryan</b>, Speaker, Senate of Australia</p> <p><b>Ms Safa Al-Hashim, MP</b>, National Assembly of Kuwait (tbc)</p> <p><b>Mr. Stephane Dujarric</b>, UNSG Spokesperson</p> <p><b>Ms Elmira Bayrasli</b>, Editor Foreign Policy Interrupted, Bard College</p> <p><b>Mr. David Bollier</b>, Director, Reinventing the Commons Program, Schumacher Center for a New Economics</p> |
| <b>4:30 – 4:45 pm</b> | <b>Meeting evaluation</b>  |
| <b>4.45 – 5 p.m.</b>  | <b>Closing session</b>   |
|                       | <p><b>Ms María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés</b>, President of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the General Assembly</p> <p><b>Ms Gabriela Cuevas Barron</b>, President of the IPU</p>  |