

## Regional Seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals and Gender Equality for the Parliaments of the Middle East and North Africa

**Alexandria, Egypt, 18-20 September 2018**

Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the House of Representatives of Egypt  
and the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union

### Provisional programme

#### 17 September 2018

Arrival of delegates

#### DAY 1: 18 September 2018, Ancient Library, Alexandria

08.00 – 09.00	Registration
09.00 – 09.30	Welcoming address
09.30 – 10.00	Keynote address
10.00 – 10.15	Group photo
10.15 – 10.45	Coffee break
10.45 – 12.15	<p><b>Session I: Sustainable Development Goals and the role of parliaments in their achievement</b></p> <p>The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets will be introduced along with a regional baseline to measure future progress. Delegates will examine the practical steps that parliaments can take to support SDG implementation in their countries and the region.</p> <p><a href="#">Presentations will be followed by a debate with delegates</a></p>
12.15 – 14.00	Lunch

## DAY 2: 19 September 2018, Ancient Library, Alexandria

09.45 – 11.00

### **Session II: Becoming fit for purpose: Arab Parliaments engage with the SDGs**

This session will focus on how national parliaments can effectively engage with the SDGs and establish mechanisms to oversee their implementation. Delegates will be given an introduction to the IPU self-assessment toolkit which has been designed to help parliaments evaluate their readiness to implement the SDGs in their respective countries.

[Presentations will be followed by a debate with delegates](#)

11.00 – 11.30

Coffee break

11.30 – 13.00

### **Session III: Effective governance as a critical element of sustainable development**

This session will introduce Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, all of which are key to the sustainable development of the Middle East and North Africa. Potential areas for future action will be discussed, with a view to developing more effective, accountable and transparent institutions and inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making processes. Ways to enhance citizen engagement with the SDGs will also be considered.

[Presentations will be followed by a debate with delegates](#)

13.00 – 14.30

Lunch

14.30 – 16.00

### **Session IV: Gender equality as a critical element of sustainable development**

Gender equality and women and girls' empowerment are prerequisites for achieving the SDGs. This session will explore Goal 5 and the ways in which gender equality can support the achievement of the SDGs. Participants will be invited to reflect on how to integrate Goal 5 into their national legislation, with a focus on eliminating discriminatory legislation. Special attention will be paid to finding effective approaches that promote the economic empowerment of all women, including rural women and women in countries and regions in crisis situations.

[Presentations will be followed by a debate with delegates](#)

16.30 – 18.00

Special tour of the Ancient Library of Alexandria organized for the participants

09.00 – 10.15

**Session V: Ensuring women's full and effective participation and guaranteeing equal opportunities for leadership at all decision-making levels in political and public life**

Goals 5 and 16 call for the equal participation of men and women in decision-making processes. In recent years, greater attention has been paid to promoting women's leadership. However, obstacles still prevent women from fully contributing to political decision-making fora. This session will explore effective ways to increase the participation and leadership of women in politics.

[Presentations will be followed by a debate with delegates](#)

10.15 – 10.30

Coffee break

10.30 – 12.00

**Session VI: Parliamentary strategies to promote legal reforms for achieving gender equality and a life free from violence for women and girls**

Gender-based violence and a lack of gender of equality not only deprive women and girls of their dignity and integrity, but also prevent them from realizing their full potential in society. Taking inspiration from good practices from the region, this session will look at how legislation, law enforcement, budgeting and overseeing law implementation are crucial to achieving gender equality and ensuring that women and girls can live free from violence and harmful practices.

[Presentations will be followed by a debate with delegates](#)

12.00 – 13.30

**Group work**

This session will offer delegates the opportunity to share their experiences and opinions on sustainable development. It will focus on establishing specific strategies and follow-up actions in order to better integrate the SDGs and gender equality into national legislation. Delegates will be divided into groups and will reflect on the following questions:

- Are there any parliamentary mechanisms in place to enable parliamentarians to discuss SDG issues (including across party lines and by the parliamentary leadership) and/or with non-parliamentary stakeholders?
- Has your parliament organized any debates (either in plenary or in relevant sectoral committees) on SDG implementation within the country in order to discuss national priorities?
- How effectively are parliamentary committees being used to gain information from the Government about SDG implementation?
- How effectively does parliament as an institution engage with citizens or civil society organizations/academia in order to discuss the SDGs/development issues? Does this happen in the area of gender equality?
- What mechanisms, tools or structures are used to mainstream gender equality in the work of parliaments? How do committees integrate a gender perspective into their work so as to measure the differing impacts of SDG legislation, policies, etc. on men and women and boys and girls?

- How can both men and women parliamentarians contribute to addressing cultural and religious barriers to achieving gender equality?
- How do male MPs advocate for gender equality outcomes in the work of parliaments?
- To what extent does your parliament consider the SDGs and gender equality when discussing and adopting the national budget?
- What steps has your parliament taken to ensure that “no one is left behind” in the implementation of the SDGs?

13.30 – 15.00

Lunch

15.00 – 15.30

**Reports from the group work**

15.30 – 16.30

**Adoption of an outcome document and closing**

This session will involve a general discussion of the lessons learned from the seminar, possible next steps and the appropriate follow-up actions. It will also identify specific strategies to mobilize a larger group of parliamentarians so as to promote and implement the SDGs more effectively. Participants will discuss a parliamentary action plan on the SDGs for Arab Parliaments.

16.30 – 17.00

**Closing ceremony**

17.30

**Departure from Alexandria to Cairo**

Transportation is organized by the House of Representatives of Egypt.

**21 September 2018**

Departure of delegates