**Media Release**

**#IPU141 Assembly adopts first parliamentary resolution to achieve health coverage for all by 2030**

*Thursday, 17 October 2019. For immediate release.*

A landmark resolution calling for parliaments to take all legal and policy measures to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030 has been adopted by the world’s parliaments gathered in Serbia for the 141st IPU Assembly. The resolution urges parliaments to put in place effective UHC legislation to ensure that the right to public health and medical care is guaranteed for all in law and in practice, without discrimination.

Over 1,800 parliamentarians and UN and civil society partners from around the world met in Belgrade from 13 to 17 October, culminating in the adoption of the resolution at the closing plenary Assembly session. The resolution is designed to address the lack of access to health services for over half the world’s population. It follows the Political Declaration adopted at the seventy-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on universal health coverage in September.

Gabriela Cuevas Barron, IPU President, said: “This landmark IPU parliamentary resolution has the potential to have a real impact on people’s lives – if we want it to. It’s a question of political will. As parliamentarians, we have a duty to the people we represent to make their lives better by making universal health coverage a reality, especially for women, children and adolescents. This is one of the main priorities of the IPU- to translate international agreements into national realities for our countries and people.”

Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General said: “The world has 11 years left to make good on its commitment to the 2030 global development agenda. This timely IPU resolution is a roadmap for parliamentarians to help them put in place the necessary legislation and resources for universal health coverage and to make sure their governments are fulfilling their promises.”

The resolution calls on parliaments to use all their power to hold their respective national governments accountable for the effective implementation of UHC commitments, to monitor the impact of UHC policies and programmes, and to establish parliamentary mechanisms to measure progress on achieving access to health care for all by 2030.

The IPU Forum of Women Parliamentarians meeting at the Assembly also looked at ways to ensure universal health coverage addresses the needs of women and girls and to remove the barriers that prevent them from accessing health-care services as well as helping to reinforce the gender component of the resolution.

*International law*

Parliamentarians at the Assembly also adopted the Belgrade Declaration, *Strengthening international law: Parliamentary roles and mechanisms, and the contribution of regional cooperation*. In the Declaration, IPU Member Parliaments underlined the importance of a peaceful world order based on the rule of law.

They expressed their support for strong and effective multilateral institutions, with the United Nations at their core, designed to find solutions to common challenges and settle disputes between States.

They also pledged their commitment to regional cooperation as a means to enhance the international legal order and work towards the full implementation of shared international commitments.

*Children and youth*

One of those commitments – the Convention on the Rights of the Child – was the focus of a special 30th anniversary event organized in partnership with UNICEF in the presence of its regional ambassador, Goran Bregović.

In their declaration to mark the Convention’s anniversary, IPU Member Parliaments recognized that, in the 30 years since its adoption, the lives of millions of children had been improved through its implementation. However, with new challenges facing children in the twenty-first century, parliamentarians reaffirmed their commitment to upholding and protecting the rights and guiding principles enshrined in the Convention.

Youth empowerment was the theme of a special celebration of the 2019 Future Policy Award, the so-called “Oscars” for the best policies that advance youth access to decent jobs, including green jobs, and enhance civic and political participation for sustainable development and peace.

Selected from among 67 nominated policies from 36 countries, this year’s winners included eight inspiring and effective laws and policies that empower young people from Rwanda, Estonia, Scotland (United Kingdom), Nepal, South Africa, the Council of Europe, Los Angeles (USA) and Senegal.

*Inter-parliamentary solidarity and cooperation*

The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians met during the Assembly to consider the cases of over 300 MPs who are in danger.

At the Assembly, the IPU signed agreements with the National Council of Austria, which will host the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Vienna in August 2020, and with the Chamber of Deputies of [Rwanda](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Rwanda?src=hashtag_click), the future hosts of the IPU's 143rd Assembly in October 2020.

The IPU also signed an agreement with the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie, whose status was upgraded to Associate Member of the IPU.

*Background*

*The IPU is the global organization of parliaments. It was founded 130 years ago as the first multilateral political organization in the world, encouraging cooperation and dialogue between all nations. Today, the IPU comprises 179 national Member Parliaments and 12 regional parliamentary bodies. It promotes democracy and helps parliaments become stronger, younger, gender-balanced and more diverse. It also defends the human rights of parliamentarians through a dedicated committee made up of MPs from around the world. Twice a year, the IPU convenes over 1,500 parliamentary delegates and partners in a world assembly, bringing a parliamentary dimension to global governance, including the work of the United Nations and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

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