

III

SECTION

Development of National Legislation: Lawmaking for the Benefit of Sovereign Nations, Exchange of Best Practices and International Harmonization

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1. Expanding the range of freedom. Strengthening the institutes of parliamentary democracy

Today's information society demands new approaches to securing the interests of the public. Thanks to the development of new technology and the improvement of communication means between politicians and the electorate, people are no longer satisfied being the "silent majority" relegated to a non-political position between elections. The traditional parliamentary democracy needs to be strengthened and revised.

In his Address to the Federal Assembly in 2018, President Vladimir Putin pointed out that "we must expand the range of freedom in all spheres, and strengthen the institutes of democracy, local government, and structures of civil society and courts. We must be a country open to the world, new ideas and initiatives."

Russia is a multinational country with a large territory. That is why it is particularly important for the federal government to hear the voice of the regions, including at the parliamentary level.

Cooperation between the federal and regional bodies of legislative power: the Russian experience

The Constitution of the Russian Federation grants the right of legislative initiative to the legislative (representative) bodies of the federal subjects of the Russian Federation (Article 104, Clause 1). This makes it possible to organize close cooperation between the Federal Assembly (parliament) of the Russian Federation and regional legislative assemblies.

Russian regions generally tend to submit legislative initiatives to the Council of Legislators.

The Council of Legislators is an advisory and consultative body in the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. It was established in May 2012 to:

- implement state policy for the delineation of powers for matters within the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and matters within the concurrent jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and its federal subjects;
- improve the mechanisms of implementing the supervisory powers of the Federation Council, State Duma and state legislative (representative) bodies of the federal subjects of the Russian Federation;
- organize their cooperation in the legislative process and exchange experience in parliamentary activities.

The Council of Legislators of the Russian Federation includes:

- Chairperson of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation;

- Chairperson of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation;
- First Deputy or Deputy Chairperson of the Federation Council;
- First Deputy or Deputy Chairperson of the State Duma;
- chairpersons of state legislative (representative) bodies of the federal subjects of the Russian Federation;
- chairpersons of the committees of the Federation Council and chairpersons of the committees of the State Duma.

The Council of Legislators of the Russian Federation is headed by two co-chairpersons: the chairperson of the Federation Council and the chairperson of the State Duma.

At the meeting with Council members on April 27, 2018, on the Day of Russian Parliamentarism, President Vladimir Putin set the goal to:

"Create a uniform, sophisticated legal system, where regional and local regulatory acts are seamlessly woven into the overall concept, and do not dilute, but reasonably supplement and develop federal regulations.

In the long run, by pursuing this goal we will significantly increase the overall competitiveness of national jurisdiction, which is crucial, and open new opportunities for both domestic business and foreign investors."

The Constitution of the Russian Federation does not provide for a vertical hierarchy of legislative power or the subordination of regional legislative assemblies to the Federal Assembly. Indeed, Russia has a positive experience of collaboration on federal legislation by the federal parliament and the regions' legislatures.

The Council of Legislators acts as the hub of a unified network of legislative bodies including not only the Federation Council and the State Duma of the Federal Assembly, but also regional legislative assemblies. The Council of Legislators helps facilitate the coordination of their legislative efforts, and acts concurrently and effectively in protecting the interests of their electorate.

In pursuance of the goals set by the President, the Council of Legislators reviews the legislative initiatives put forth by the legislative assemblies of its federal subjects. During the review process, the initiatives are assessed both by the chairpersons of regional legislative assemblies together in special commissions, and by competent lawyers. The purpose of this process is to improve the quality of the initiatives, giving hope that they will be successfully adopted by the Federal Assembly.

Russia has developed a sophisticated system of promoting the legislative initiatives of regions on the federal level. This system is based both on the Constitution and on the country's political tradition. Following review by the Council of Legislators, draft laws are submitted to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly.

Thus, apart from the State Duma deputies (450 persons) and members of the Federation Council (170 persons), 3,994 deputies of regional legislative assemblies are also involved in the process of making legislative decisions at the federal parliamentary level.

Regional deputies are entitled to initiate draft laws that, if approved by the regional legislative assembly, will be sent for consideration by the Federal Assembly.

Russia has managed to establish a closer coordination between their federal legislative and regional legislative bodies than in other countries.

Cooperation between central and regional legislative bodies: global experience

Similar processes to enhance the coordination of legislative efforts between the central government and regions are taking place in other countries.

In the **USA**, the unified National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) was established in 1975. It is a member of the "Big Seven" American organizations combining regional executive and legislative authorities, along with the Council of State Governments, National Governors Association, National League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of Counties and International City/County Management Association.

The key objectives of this non-governmental organization are to improve the operations of legislative assemblies, organize the exchange of best practices between them and promote their collective interests on the national level in cooperation with federal governmental authorities.

There are eight standing committees including the representatives of legislative assemblies and employees appointed by their chairs. The committees hold meetings twice annually within the scope of Conference forums and summits. Among them are the Committees for Budget and Revenue, Communications, Financial Services and Interstate Commerce, Education, Redistricting and Elections, Health and Human Services, Labor and Economic Development, Law, Criminal Justice and Public Safety, Legislative Effectiveness, and Natural Resources and Infrastructure. In addition to standing committees, temporary task forces are also established.

Moreover, the NCSL holds regular meetings for members, web seminars and other events intended to promote horizontal contact between the legislators of states. The organization is chaired by representatives of the republic and democratic parties on a turn-based system.

In **Germany**, the standing Conference of Presidents of Legislative Assemblies (Landtags), Federal Diet (Bundestag) and Federal Council (Bundesrat) (Landtagspräsidentenkonferenz — LPK) has been operating since 1947. At its meetings held once annually, a wide range of matters are discussed concerning the work of regional parliaments, and final documents are adopted in the form of resolutions, recommendations and explanations. Meetings are held on a rotational basis in various federal states. The presidents of their Landtags chair the meetings as the receiving party.

In **France**, there are several associations of the heads of regional legislative bodies used extensively to exchange experience and the best practices in rule-making, and to collectively represent them on a national level and cooperate with the national parliament. In 1946, the Assembly of French Departments (Assemblée des départements de France) was established, and now unites the heads of legislative departments. There are 12 standing core commissions.

In 1998, the heads of regional councils established an asso-

ciation called the Regions of France (Régions de France). This organization is intended to act as the voice of French regions nationwide, to serve as the platform for sharing experiences and best practices, and to provide comprehensive assistance to regional legislative assemblies. The association has 16 standing core commissions. Both organizations also closely cooperate with the French associations of municipal authorities.

In **Spain**, these mechanisms started to develop in 1983. As a result, the Conference of Presidents of the Autonomous Parliaments of Spain (COPREPA) was established. The Conference has a standing commission.

In **Italy**, there is the Conference of Presidents of Legislative Assemblies of Regions and of Autonomous Provinces, which has been operating since 1994. The Conference includes a coordination committee, general secretariat and six standing core commissions.

The practice of such mechanisms is also not limited to Europe and the USA. In **Japan**, three standing associations of regional and municipal legislative bodies were likewise instituted in post-war years. They are the National Association of Chairpersons of Prefectural Assemblies, the National Association of Chairpersons of City Councils and the National Association of Chairpersons of Councils of Japan's Towns and Villages. These organizations perform similar functions related to the exchange of experience and best legislative practices, and interaction with the national parliament.

Strengthening parliamentary democracy by expanding the number of parties involved in legislative processes

If we take an example from antiquity, in Greek city states political decisions were made by people's assemblies, which included all citizens. Of course, today's countries are far from such level of democracy, which is only achievable in small city states with a population of several thousand people. But at the same time, the modern world demonstrates a tendency towards an increase in the number of participants in the democratic process.

This is not only because of the involvement of regional legislative bodies in decision making as described above. The State Duma of Russia is also currently testing a new form of public participation in the democratic process: large parliamentary hearings.

For such hearings, ordinary citizens (often rather critically-minded with respect to government initiatives) are invited to the Duma assembly hall. Under the direction of the Duma Chairperson or Deputy Chairpersons, an open dialogue is held concerning people's interests. The right to form delegations of citizens is vested in State Duma deputies.

Following large parliamentary hearings, a resolution is generally made reflecting the opinion of the hearing participants regarding the issue in question. This format of discussing draft laws arouses lively interest on the part of media and society, and serves as a special form of representation of people's interests in parliament. Citizens act as so-called delegates focused on solving one specific issue. This is reminiscent of the jury courts typical in the west.

The State Duma generally makes amendments to legislation based on the results of large parliamentary hearings. Thus, the range of freedom expands and the institute of parliamentary democracy grows stronger thanks to reduced social barriers between the electorate and deputies. Citizens understand that their voice is extremely important, and will be heard by the government and legislative bodies.

Today's world is defined by the rapid development of digital technologies, accelerated communications between citizens and their government, the transition from traditional to electronic document flow, and many other forms of simplification and "cheapening" of contact between people.

That is why a traditional form of legislative power such as parliament must inevitably change to meet new challenges associated with the introduction of new technologies. The main goal is to ensure flexible responses to people's needs, and the highest possible satisfaction of society's demand for the adoption of new laws and the improvement of old legislation required for its development.

That is why the expansion of the range of freedom inevitably leads to democratization, increased transparency of the institute of legislative power, transformation and the introduction of new forms of interaction between parliament and society.

2. Preserving the nation and increasing human capital

In his Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in 2018, President Vladimir Putin noted: "In today's world, the role and position of a country are determined not only by its natural resources or production capacities, but first of all by its people, the conditions for development, self-realization and creativity of each individual. The most important goal is therefore the preservation of the Russian nation and welfare of our people. This is where we must make a radical break-through."

Indeed, today the quality of one's life takes on a greater importance.

Preserving the nation, increasing human capital, and sustainable development are not long-term objectives, but fundamental tasks requiring immediate attention.

Sustainable development: a global approach

In this respect, the Hanoi Declaration of Inter-Parliamentary Union (2015) is of special importance, as it sets the main goals of sustainable development as the focal point for world parliaments.

This Declaration:

- Confirms parliamentaries' common view of the need to ensure sustainable development based on the exercise of human rights, elimination of poverty and fixing of inequality.
- The elimination of poverty and sustainable development are a common goal. Everyone involved must strive for a balanced and fair distribution of resources. All countries, whether developed or developing, must closely cooperate based on the principle of common, but differentiated, responsibility.
- The planet and all its ecosystems are viewed as our common global heritage. People's well-being must be the goal of any policy regarding sustainable development and progress, which are to be measured by more than just gross domestic product indicators. People matter as more than mere taxpayers or consumers; they are citizens and have rights and obligations with respect to one another. Governments must invest in human capital — health, nutrition, education and skills — as their most important resource.
- All state institutes must be representative and accessible to all. All people, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion and health, must work together for the benefit of peace and public welfare.

Human development index: new methods to assess the quality of life

In the context of the emphasized priority of human well-being over other items on the global agenda, new indicators emerge alongside the assessment of a country's development based on GDP per capita alone. One of them is the Human Development Index (HDI) developed by the United Nations. In 2016, this Index included 188 countries and territories.

The Human Development Index is a composite index measuring the average achievements in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge, and decent standard of living. In its Human Development Report 2016, the UNDP states that: "life expectancy at birth reflects a person's ability to lead a long and happy life. The average period and expected duration of schooling reflect the ability to master knowledge, and the gross national per capita income reflects the ability to achieve a decent standard of living."

HDI also includes "another four constituent indices." The HDI adjusted for inequality changes the HDI based on the level of inequality. The Gender Development Index compares the HDI values for men and women. The Gender Inequality Index shows how expansive women's rights and opportunities are, while the Multidimensional Poverty Index reflects poverty measurements not related to income.¹¹

The traditional leaders for these indices are the countries of Scandinavia, Western and Central Europe, North America, Japan and South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

Non-realized development potential is rather high. According to the Global Economic Forum's 2017 report, only 62% of human capital is utilized globally. Only 25 countries have reached the point of 70%. Another 41 countries are somewhere between 50% and 60%.

One of the paramount problems impeding coverage and the increase of human capital is poverty and income inequality, as well as inadequate financing of the associated key expenditure items of education and healthcare. Only 27% of the global population benefit from a system of social aid, while it is still unavailable to over 5 billion people.

Poverty forms a vicious circle of problems, depriving society of crucial resources for its development. In this respect, the first-priority areas of investment in the preservation of society and accumulation of human capital are targeted social support programs, along with education and healthcare development programs.

Russia and its efforts to increase its human capital and improve its quality of life.

In his Address to the Federal Assembly of Russia, President Vladimir Putin emphasized the country's progress in the fight against poverty and necessity to continue its efforts in this area. "In 2000, 42 million people were living below the poverty line. That's equal to almost 30% of the country's population. In 2012, we managed to bring that level down to 10%.

Then the number of our citizens living in poverty increased again because of the economic crisis. Now today, 20 million people are considered to be in poverty. Of course, that's not 42 million like it was in 2000, but it's still too much."

The State Duma is currently taking steps to fight poverty and fulfill the programs put forth by Russia's leader. The chairperson of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin stated: "We recently adopted a law to raise the minimum wage. This was a landmark

Human Development Index (UN Report 2016)

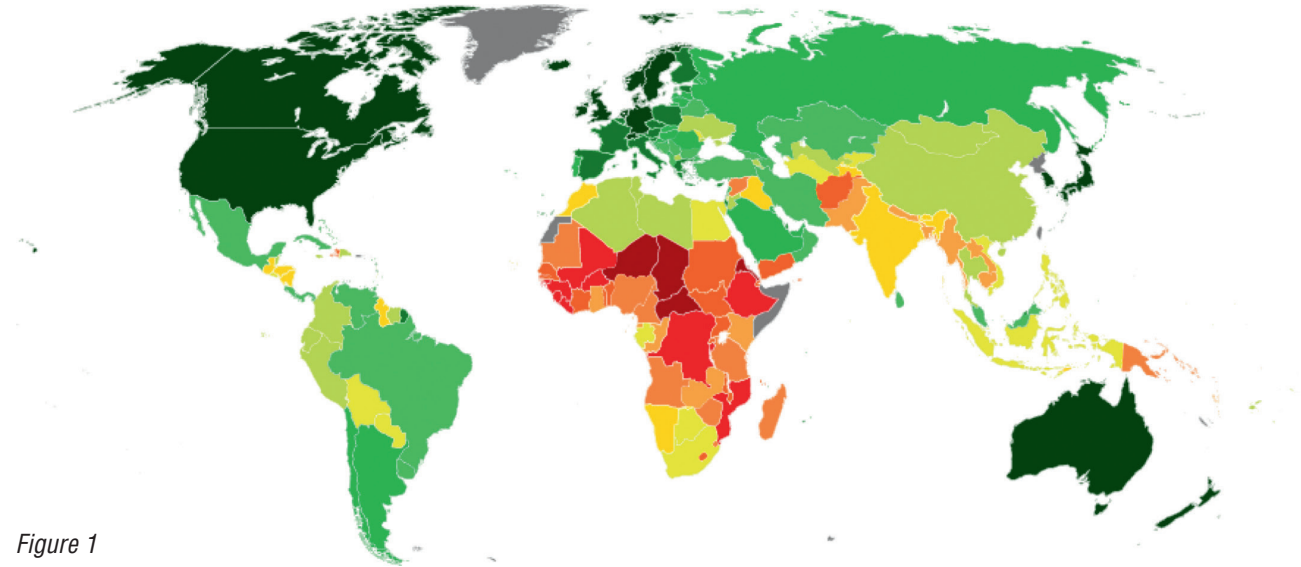


Figure 1

decision. We'd been moving towards it for a long time. This decision will affect about four million citizens. The salaries of various personnel categories, especially public sector employees, largely depend on the minimum wage rates.

Many developed countries work to develop the optimal legal and financial schemes to boost the birth rate. In particular, this issue is among the top-priority items on the agenda of the Austrian parliament. The development of digital technologies provide new opportunities to parents of small children for remote work, and the possibility to look after and care for their children. A combination of optimal technological and legal decisions may to a large extent resolve key demographic issues.

Vladimir Putin stressed that "our demographic policy has proven its efficiency. And we continued to expand it. We extended the maternity capital program and now provide targeted payments for the birth of a family's first, second and third child."

It should be noted that Russia has to a large extent managed to mitigate the consequences of the demographic crisis of the 1990s, and the birth rate has since grown. At the same time, the average life span is also growing.

No less important is the organization of more efficient care for the elderly. The Russian president noted that "our moral duty is to do our utmost to support the older generation. We must increase pensions and make sure they are indexed on a regular basis and at a higher rate than inflation."

The protection of women's rights and growing influence of women in Russian politics

A high quality of life in modern society is unthinkable without guarantees of women's rights. Indeed, much still needs to be done in securing the right of women to take part in the political life of today's countries. In a number of western countries, the number of women in parliament has been increased by introducing formal and non-formal quotas. This policy has proven successful. For example, in 2017 in Great Britain 208 women were elected to the House of Commons, which is a new record.

Russia believes that the quota system is an overreaction to previous violations of women's rights. The number of women in Russian government is gradually increasing even without quotas.

At the meeting with the chairperson of the National Council of Switzerland, Jürg Stahl, the chairperson of Russia's State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin noted: "or issues concerning women's rights, political rights and electoral rights, Russia can share

¹ Human Development Report 2016. Human Development for Everyone / Translated from English; the United Nations Development Program. — M.: Ves Mir Publishers, 2017. — 284 pages — P. 25.

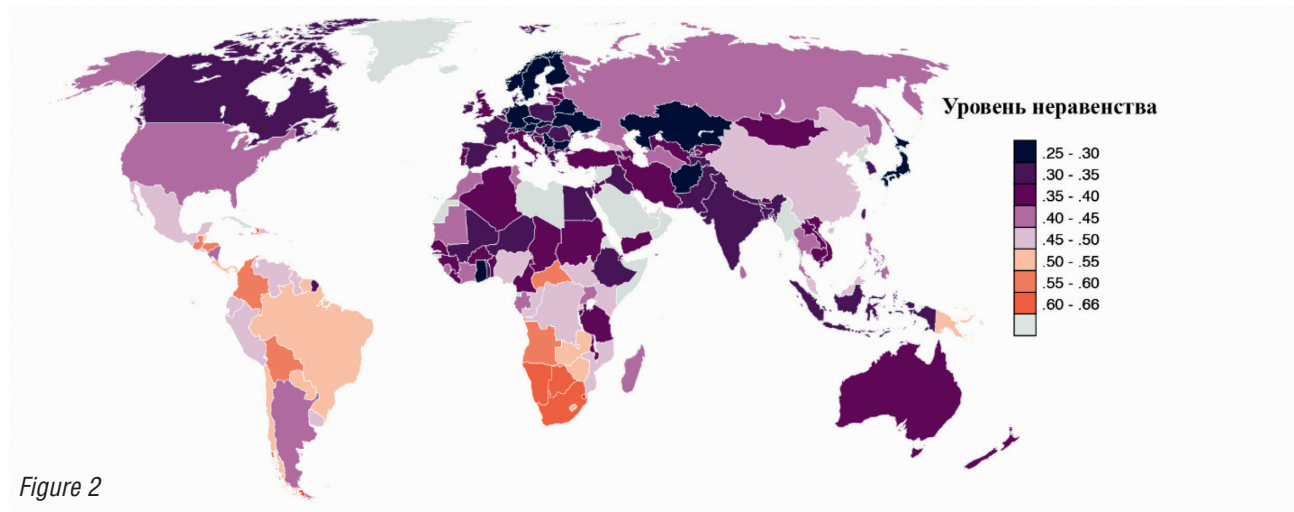


Figure 2

its experience. Our women have had political rights starting from at least 1917. Valentina Matvienko chairs the parliament of our country, and the head of the Bank of Russia Elvira Nabiullina performs her duties brilliantly," says Vyacheslav Volodin.

The chairperson of the Lower House of the Russian Parliament emphasized that women in Russia chair the election commission, the institute of the Ombudsman and the institute of child rights, and are also vice-speakers of Russian parliament chambers.

As we can see, Russia's parliament is at the forefront of promoting sustainable development and improving quality of life, investing in human capital, eliminating poverty, enhancing the quality of healthcare, increasing the role of women in politics, and addressing many other issues. The resolution of these issues is a result of sustained demand on the part of the electorate.

Modern Russia pursues an agenda of break-through development with a focus on investments in human capital. Russia's parliament continues to work on the legal framework of support for this task.

However, preserving the nation and increasing human capital is impossible without parliamentary diplomacy and cooperation between world parliaments. In the end, we all share the same planet. That is why exchanging experiences between the parliaments of world countries, studying and using the achievements of other countries in this area is of such paramount importance. Only through joint efforts can we hope to improve quality of life and ensure the sustainable development of our countries and nations.

3. Interaction between parliaments. Exchange of experience. CIS model legislation

In his speech at the opening ceremony of the 137th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in St. Petersburg in October 2017, President Vladimir Putin noted:

"Throughout the whole world parliaments act as the voice of the people, and play a crucial and even sometimes leading role in working out national development models, and of course, the search for adequate answers to the current challenges and threats common to us all.

These include the degradation of international law and the very culture of interstate dialogue...

That is why the current environment calls for parliamentary diplomacy, which is capable of strengthening trust between countries and helping find compromises to pressing international and regional problems."

The history of inter-parliamentary diplomacy

The phenomenon of inter-parliamentary diplomacy came about over a century ago. The Inter-Parliamentary Union was first established in 1889 by William Randal Cremer and Frédéric Passy. Initially, the union played a significant role in the global peace-making process. In particular, an arbitration court was created in Hague with the participation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to address international disputes via arbitration.

It is rather symbolic that the Hague Conference where the decision was made to establish the court was convened at the suggestion of Russian Emperor Nikolai II. Russia from the very beginning has understood the importance of diplomacy, including inter-parliamentary diplomacy, in achieving international peace.

The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in organizing the dialogue between world parliaments

Successful diplomacy involves building both vertical and horizontal relations between countries. The modern world is structured by a hierarchy where at the top are great nuclear powers included in the United Nations Security Council as permanent members, and at the bottom are numerous "dependent territories" without full-fledged sovereignty.

In order for the "rule of force" to not take over, inter-parliamentary dialogue is necessary so people's deputies from all around the world can sit down at the same table. Here they can be on equal terms, discuss the acute issues in today's world and influence the governments of their countries to address them.

Only parliaments are capable of building horizontal relations between nations and governments. The role of lawmakers can hardly be overestimated.

Currently, the role of inter-parliamentary dialogue continues to grow. The central topics discussed at the forum of the Inter-Parliamentary Union included the protection of human rights and freedoms, and the expanded role of women and young people in politics and the economy.

The IPU does more than just share its experience in the best law-making practice: it implements programs to help assist parliaments. Assistance in strengthening the institutes of parliamentarism has been provided since the 1970s. Indeed, IPU experts have already provided significant help to the national legislative assemblies of South Korea, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tunisia, Egypt, Djibouti and a number of other countries.

Inter-parliamentary interactions: the regional aspect

Inter-parliamentary interaction is one of the main areas of modern diplomacy, and is based on the operation of inter-parliamentary friendship groups. The Russian State Duma includes 74 friendship groups, the German Bundestag has 54, the National Assembly of France has over 150, and the General Cortes of Spain features 8 groups at the level of the Congress of Deputies (Lower House) and another 5 at the level of Cortes. The Italian Parliament has signed cooperation agreements with the parliaments of 25 countries, and also organized friendship groups with them. The Parliament of Canada has 12 dual and multilateral inter-parliamentary associations that hold annual forums, along with 4 bilateral inter-parliamentary groups managed by a special parliamentary body, the United Inter-Parliamentary Council, as well as more than 60 other friendship groups.

Inter-parliamentary dialogue is also growing stronger in concentrated world regions as well. In Europe, the main forums for parliamentary interaction are the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, the Nordic Council, and the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region.

Also growing is the value of the Parliamentary Union of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Arab Inter-parliamentary Union, the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. The development of inter-parliamentary forums, such as BRICS and SCO, likewise has highly prospective political potential.

In the post-soviet context, the dialogue is strongest between the parliamentary assemblies of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, and the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS.

Model legislation: improving the efficiency of interactions between neighboring countries

Drafting model legislation is the most crucial and promising form of inter-parliamentary interactions. The program of the CSTO Parliamentary Assembly for 2016–2020 provides for the adoption of 12 model laws, including:

- national security laws;
- information security laws;
- energy security laws;
- laws on the security of critical facilities;
- laws on criminal judicial cooperation and the information war against terrorism and extremism.

Active efforts for the creation of model legislation are also made as part of the forum of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly. They are focused on developing clear instruments used to create similar model legislative acts to make these efforts more effective.

The *Model Legislative Act of the Commonwealth of Independent States* is a non-regulatory legislative act duly adopted by the Interparliamentary Assembly so its member states can form and carry out coordinated legislative activities on issues of common interest, and so CIS member states can bring their legislation into compliance with international treaties made within the CIS, as well as with other international treaties, which is highly desirable in order for CIS member states to achieve their common goals.

The prospective plan of model lawmaking in the CIS for 2016–2020 includes over 100 model laws and codes, recommendations and amendments to previous laws made within the scope of programs for fighting terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking; economic development strategies and the strategy of building an information society, as well as model laws in

- economy and finance;
- social policy;
- the arts and humanities;
- agricultural policy and the management of the environment and natural resources;
- military cooperation and security;
- the legal sphere;
- science and education;
- state construction and local governance, and international relations.

Pursuant to the Regulations on the Development of Model Legislative Acts and Recommendations of the Interparliamentary Assembly of CIS Member States, the model legislative acts of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly include:

The *Model Code* of the Commonwealth of Independent States — a systematized advisory legislative act adopted by the Interparliamentary Assembly with the purpose of aligning legal regulations in similar spheres of public relations in CIS countries.

The *Model Law* of the Commonwealth of Independent States — a non-regulatory legislative act adopted by the Interparliamentary Assembly to help align the legal regulations of specific types (groups) of public relations in CIS countries."

In addition, the *Recommendations of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States* — proposals duly adopted by the Interparliamentary Assembly to help align

the legislation of CIS member states on issues of common interest, bring their legislation in compliance with the provisions of international treaties made within the CIS, and facilitate the synchronization of their ratification procedures."

The recommendations adopted by the Interparliamentary Assembly include:

- recommendations on aligning the legislation of CIS member states with one another;
- recommendations on synchronizing the procedures for the ratification by the parliaments of CIS member states of treaties (agreements) made within the CIS and other international treaties highly desirable for CIS member states to help achieve the common goals set forth in the Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States;
- recommendations on how to bring the legislation of Interparliamentary Assembly member states into compliance with international treaties made within CIS;
- recommendations on cooperation between Interparliamentary Assembly member states in various areas;
- recommendations concerning issues delegated to the International Assembly by the CIS Council of Heads of States and Council of Heads of Governments.

Efforts to draft model legislation make it possible to standardize the legislation of sovereign states and improve the efficiency of international cooperation. These efforts are also the first step to closer integration. In this context, that means the history of interparliamentary diplomacy, which started over 100 years ago, continues strong. The interest in parliamentary diplomacy in many regions shows that this format of interstate cooperation has significant potential for the development and establishment of horizontal ties between lawmakers and nations.

Fighting corruption

The issue of corruption is one of the most critical affecting every world country, with no exceptions. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a country that has never dealt with this evil. That is why the battle against corruption is fought very literally across the whole world.

The UN against corruption

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan wrote that "corruption is an insidious plague that has a wide range of corrosive effects on societies. It undermines democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life and allows organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish."

Article 5 of the UN Convention against Corruption states:

Each State Party shall, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system, develop and implement or maintain effective, coordinated anti-corruption policies that promote the participation of society and reflect the principles of the rule of law, proper management of public affairs and public property, integrity, transparency and accountability.

Each State Party shall endeavour to establish and promote effective practices aimed at the prevention of corruption.

Each State Party shall endeavour to periodically evaluate relevant legal instruments and administrative measures with a view to determining their adequacy to prevent and fight corruption.

States Parties shall, as appropriate and in accordance with the fundamental principles of their legal system, collaborate

with each other and with relevant international and regional organizations in promoting and developing the measures referred to in this article. That collaboration may include participation in international programs and projects aimed at the prevention of corruption.

Solving legal issues plays a crucial role in the fight against corruption. The structure and effectiveness of a country's legal system are established by none other than lawmakers. That is why the parliaments of all the world's countries have a special responsibility to fight corruption. A successful fight against this evil depends directly on the laws and other documents adopted by parliaments.

World parliaments against corruption

In its resolution adopted at the 115th IPU Assembly (Geneva, 2006), the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in particular:

Calls on parliaments to follow the IPU's recommendations to fight corruption, in particular, to adopt ethics codes designed to prevent conflicts of interest by regulating the financing of political parties and ensuring transparent election campaigns;

Recommends adopting efficient anti-corruption laws as a restraining factor, in particular, for the clear and transparent regulation of public procurement transactions;

Calls on parliaments to take efficient anti-corruption measures and ensure the protection of witnesses in the event of corruption;

Recommends adopting and ratifying international conventions against corruption, in particular, OECD and UN conventions;

Proposes to enact legislation to implement these international conventions on the national and, wherever applicable, the regional level;

Welcomes the promotion of parliamentary cooperation in the fight against corruption;

Proposes that members of parliament demonstrate personal accountability by adopting codes of conduct and strengthening the rules against conflicts of interest and the disclosure of financial information.

Russian anti-corruption experience

In 2006, Russia ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Federal Anti-Corruption Law No. 273-FZ was also adopted December 25, 2008.

An important contribution to anti-corruption efforts is Federal Law No. 172-FZ "On the Anti-Corruption Expert Review of Regulatory Acts and Draft Regulatory Acts of July 17, 2009" adopted by the Federal Assembly and signed by the Russian President.

The law obligates the Ministry of Justice of Russia to conduct anti-corruption expert reviews of draft federal laws, draft decrees of the Russian President and draft regulations of the Russian Government developed by federal executive authorities. Thus, Russian legislation is evaluated for corruption risks upon its very adoption, which drastically reduces any corrupt practices both in executive and legislative acts.

The State Duma has established the Commission for Controlling the Validity of Information about Income, Property and Property-Related Obligations disclosed by State Duma deputies, which is currently operating successfully. The Commission is established to inspect:

a) the validity and completeness of information about the income, property and property-related obligations disclosed by State Duma deputies;

b) compliance by State Duma deputies with restrictions and bans imposed by Russian laws.

Thus, State Duma deputies operate transparently for society and disclose information about their income. This makes it possible to fight corruptive practices. The deputies who choose not to observe the above requirements are generally forced out of parliament. A similar Commission also operates in the Federation Council and Upper House of the Russian Parliament.

The Federal Assembly controls anti-corruption efforts through specialized structures created to maintain legal and financial supervision over the functioning of the state apparatus.

In his Decree, Russian President Vladimir Putin recommends the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation to include issues concerning anti-corruption measures taken within the scope of its competence in the information about monitoring results and analytical measures, and annual performance reports submitted to the houses of the Federal Assemblies of the Russian Federation. A similar recommendation is also given to the General Prosecutor of the Russian Federation.

International experience in fighting corruption

The monitoring and auditing mechanisms of accounts chambers in many countries have earned a reputation as one of the most efficient instruments in the fight against corruption. For many countries, the dissemination and use of these structures within the scope of interparliamentary diplomacy can be a serious step towards the reduction of corruption in public bodies and in the private sector.

The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) operating for the benefit of Congress may serve as a positive example. It has more than once exposed major abuses and violations, including loans issued by the Federal Reserve System (FRS) in 2007-2009 for a total amount of USD 16 trillion, mass losses by the US Ministry of Defense in Iraq, as well as other notable scandals, in the end demonstrating its high professionalism and independence.

There are also stand-alone specialized international anti-corruption organizations of parliamentarians, such as the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), with its secretariat in Ottawa. This organization was established in 2002 and includes 52 national divisions, mainly in developing countries comprised of former and acting parliament members. It combines several regional structures: African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption, Arab Parliamentarians Against Corruption, South East Asian Parliamentarians Against Corruption, and the GOPAC of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The organization also includes five task forces: Anti-Money Laundering, Parliamentary Ethics and Conduct, Parliamentary Oversight, Participation of Society, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. Twice a year, the organization holds International Anti-Corruption Conferences. Its scope of responsibilities includes both exchanging the best practices in law-making and developing special recommendations, programs and guidelines on applying the mechanisms of parliamentary control for the efficient counteraction of all forms of corruption and the legalization of income from crime.

Fighting corruption: new challenges

Although corruption is fought globally, this negative phenomenon still has no single definition recognized in international law.

This indicated the need for a global unification of legal definitions pertaining to corruptive offenses and money launder-

ing schemes, and the joint global control of the flow of capital and transactions with the involvement of agents in offshore jurisdictions, such as in traditional non-traceable channels like Hawala (a system of money laundering in Islamic countries) and Fei-Chen (a money laundering system in China). These tasks require close interparliamentary cooperation.

No less important is also the ratification by national parliaments of international conventions against corruption, as well as the development and mastering of the best practices of model anti-corruption legislation.

New options for financial transactions opened by blockchain technologies also necessitate the improvement of existing legal regulation mechanisms and the joint efforts of national parliaments. At the same time, advanced information technologies can also improve control over budget administration and the financial operations of officials.

Nowadays, a broad range for interparliamentary cooperation in the fight against corruption is opening up at the global level. This not only concerns exchanging experience, but also searching for new approaches to address such extremely complex and widespread issues as corruption.

CONCLUSION

- ▶ The rapid dynamics of the global world development makes the institute of parliamentarism receptive to new challenges and changes in accordance with the requirements of the time. There are a number of global problems that cannot be solved at the national level. These require the consolidated efforts of the whole global community, including parliamentarians from the countries all over the world.
- ▶ Investing into human capital is one of the core tasks that governments face while the global economy shifts to a new technological mode which places humans at the center of the economic system.
- ▶ An all-round, socially protected, economically active individual is becoming both the main engine and the primary beneficiary of a new economy. In this context, the thesis defined by Aristotle that the middle class is the basis of every society takes an all-new relevance. This is also fully true for the society of the future.
- ▶ The efficient functioning of modern-day democratic institutes is impossible without the development of human capital. By involving the politically active, responsible, and pro-active middle class in the democratic process, both the stability and the development of the political system can be ensured. Thus, government investments in human capital and promoting democracy are inextricably connected in today's world.
- ▶ When parliaments focus on the issues of the legislative provision of national preservation and the development of human capital, they create a foundation for sustainable social and economic development, form the necessary prerequisites for an accelerated transition to a new technological mode.
- ▶ The goals of broadly developing human capital will require that significant financial resources be allocated in this direction. It is impossible to solve this task without the improvement of anti-corruption efficiency. According to expert estimates, corruption withdraws more than USD 1 tn from the world economy every year. It is a strategic resource that could be aimed at providing necessary structural reforms, in-depth modernization of the social sphere and, as a result, long-term investments in the human capital.
- ▶ No country in the world is able to singlehandedly solve the corruption problem that has assumed systemic, cross-border proportions. A global criminal system of shadow transit and corruptive money laundering has arisen.
- ▶ Efficient international cooperation in the anti-corruption field is impossible without improving and harmonizing national anti-corruption laws, a process which would require the intensive exchange of best practices and the development of inter-parliamentary coordination.
- ▶ The request of citizens for more active participation in the political process and, in particular, in legislative decision-making is a global trend. The experience exchange in respect of forms and technologies that provide the involvement of citizens in law-making represents one of the popular dimensions in inter-parliamentary cooperation. The experience of Russia can be of interest in terms of its consistent arrangement of public discussion of draft laws in the form of large parliamentary hearings as could the experience of Switzerland where key laws are adopted by direct voting of citizens.
- ▶ Digitization is opening a wide channel for the involvement of interested citizens in the parliamentary process, makes it possible to structure anew and improve considerably the efficient interaction between deputies and voters.
- ▶ It is expected that the world practice will include digital platforms which allow citizens to monitor the activities of their deputies online, track legislative aspects that can be of interest for them, receive direct and immediate access to an extensive parliamentary information base, have an impact on making legislative decisions through remote participation in their discussion and, eventually, in digital referenda.
- ▶ Thus, due to new digital technologies, in respect of the level of the citizens involvement in the law-making process, the political system of present-day parliamentarism is reaching an ideal ancient policy model where all citizens were allowed to make decisions.
- ▶ Also, digitization offers wide possibilities to reach a new level of inter-parliamentary interaction for the exchange of legislative experience, up-to-date information, mutual coordination during the legal rules development, including within model legislation, as well as intensification of the political dialogue and consolidation of the parliamentary community. Modern-day reality requires parliaments to keep pace with the information exchange in the society and economy.
- ▶ Parliamentary focus on solving the above-mentioned priority tasks meets the key requests and expectations of the society and economy, enables social and political stability at all levels, results in the strengthening of authority, legitimacy and enhancement of the role of parliaments in the political system, both in the national and international contexts.