



Union Interparlementaire

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T +43 1 40 110 27 27
M +43 676 8900 27 27
www.ipu.org

Stubenring 8-10
Vienne, 1010
Autriche

**Bureau de l'Observateur
permanent de l'Union
interparlementaire
auprès de l'ONU et
les organisations
internationales à Vienne**

Statement by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Ambassador Brigitte Brenner,
Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations and international
organizations in Vienna

Item 3 General debate, First Session of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a
Comprehensive International Convention Countering the Use of Information and
Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Taking the floor for the first time, allow me to state that the Inter-Parliamentary Union very much welcomes the creation of this Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate an International Convention on countering the use of ICT for criminal purposes. We commend the chair and her secretariat for their tireless efforts to make this Committee a success in the times of a dire pandemic and unprecedented global insecurity.

Cyberattacks are a real concern for parliaments and parliamentarians. Multiple targeted attacks on the institution of parliaments worldwide have been signalled, while the number of such attacks grew substantially over the past years.

With the pandemic, parliaments have embarked on communicating with their electorate via the means of ICT, electoral processes have more and more been set up online while a lot of MPs contact their voters via new IT technologies.

Cybercrime undermines democracy as well as any other large scale organized crime does. It harms its citizens and profits from the lack of effective laws and robust international cooperation. A lot has been said already in this debate how cybercrime targets the most vulnerable individuals and the most vulnerably societies and states.

Crime is not gender neutral, and, as we all are much aware of, neither is the cyberspace. Female MPs are targeted in an extraordinary way by hate attacks, and there are far too few women in cybersecurity. The IPU focuses on strengthening female parliamentarians and young parliamentarians to be able to bring in their full potential, also in this area of international decision-making.

The IPU, as the global organisation of parliaments with 178 parliaments as members, held already in 2015 a large debate on cyberwarfare and cybercrime at its General Assembly in Hanoi.

The resolution of this meeting called for a number of measures to be implemented both by parliaments as well as by the international community. It encourages parliaments to strengthen national legislation and enhance the effectiveness of international cooperation against cybercrime. Debates on the balance between freedom of expression and the need to ensure and enhance security were amongst others at the core of the meeting.

Since this time, the IPU and its global members have worked further on the possibilities and threats of parliaments and parliamentarians in the Digital Age. The IPU supports actively parliaments with limited resources to be able to use the tool-boxes that are internationally available.

Faced with these highly technical, complex and fast-evolving criminal challenges, we think it essential that legislators worldwide are well informed about the works of this Ad Hoc Committee, being the ones who are ratifying the convention in their parliaments and explaining it to their voters.

Being the global organization with 178 parliaments from all geographical regions, we deem it enriching for both sides to share the results of our work and add the experiences of the parliamentary side to the elaboration of this important convention.

Therefore the IPU would like to ask the chair to allow for an inter-sessional consultation with members of parliaments, preferably this year in Vienna, which the IPU could help to organise.

We look forward to a productive and successful sitting of the Committee. Thank you for your attention.