



Indicator 6.3: Participation of diverse groups in the work of parliament

About this indicator

It takes strategic and concerted effort and resources to make parliament accessible to all groups. This often requires proactive outreach and collaboration with others who can connect with certain groups within the community and bridge the divides that exist.

Parliaments have a responsibility to create an environment that allows civil society to make its voice heard. They therefore need to engage with civil society organizations (CSOs) and ensure that participatory processes are both inclusive and invite input from diverse groups.

Parliament should place a special emphasis on those who have historically been marginalized, such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, and remote and minority groups, including by developing specific engagement tools for these sections of the community.

Without this effort, parliaments risk speaking only with politically engaged groups and hearing only those voices that can reach them easily – those who are often already empowered.

This indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- Dimension 6.3.1: Engaging civil society organizations
- Dimension 6.3.2: Reaching out to all communities

The Indicators for Democratic Parliaments are a multi-partner initiative coordinated by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in partnership with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Directorio Legislativo Foundation, Inter Pares / International IDEA, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD).

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Dimension 6.3.1: Engaging civil society organizations

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 6.3: Participation of diverse groups in the work of parliament
- Target 6: Participatory parliament

About this dimension

This dimension focuses on the engagement of CSOs in the work of parliament.

Having CSOs participate in parliamentary processes brings additional opinions and expertise into the discussion. CSO participation can contribute to more informed policymaking and has the potential to amplify the voices of the most vulnerable in society. It should therefore be encouraged in a thriving democracy.

Aspiring goal

Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of “engaging civil society organizations” is as follows:

The procedures by which CSOs can participate in the work of parliament are set out in the legal framework and/or in rules of procedure.

Parliament regularly invites a wide range of CSOs to contribute to the law-making process, oversight activities, parliamentary consultations and committee inquiries.

Parliament makes particular efforts to engage with CSOs that help it to connect with hard-to-reach and historically marginalized groups.

Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Laws or rules of procedure that support consultation with CSOs
- Clauses specifically focused on remedies for redress where participation obligations are not met
- Evidence of published information on parliamentary processes

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

Assessment criterion 1: Legal framework

The legal framework sets out the procedures by which CSOs can participate in the work of parliament.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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Assessment criterion 2: Consultation

Parliament systematically consults with CSOs in its law-making and oversight activities. CSO representatives can access parliamentary premises and attend relevant meetings. Parliament creates tools for engaging CSOs in consultation processes both in person and online.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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<p style="color: #4F81BD;">Evidence for this assessment criterion:</p>
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Assessment criterion 3: Diversity

Parliament facilitates participation from a broad range of CSOs representing diverse points of view, including those that work with hard-to-reach and historically marginalized groups. Parliament ensures a level playing field for all CSOs that engage with parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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<p style="color: #4F81BD;">Evidence for this assessment criterion:</p>
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Recommendations for change

<p><i>Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.</i></p>
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Dimension 6.3.2: Reaching out to all communities

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 6.3: Participation of diverse groups in the work of parliament
- Target 6: Participatory parliament

About this dimension

This dimension covers parliament's capacity to reach all communities. Without a proactive effort from parliament, structural barriers are likely to limit some voices and inequalities can be widened. It is vital for parliament to promote participation from all communities. This might entail making strategic choices about whom to target, identifying the most effective ways of working with the target communities and investing resources in making parliament more accessible to all.

Groups facing barriers to engagement with parliament include women, youth, older people, rural groups, LGBTQI+ people, Indigenous communities, national, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, and migrants and refugees.

See also *Dimension 5.1.5: Youth inclusion*.

Aspiring goal

Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "reaching out to all communities" is as follows:

Parliament's law-making and oversight activities are accessible to all members of the public regardless of their age, gender, location, physical ability or any other characteristic.

Parliamentary consultations, including committee inquiries, are conducted in an accessible and inclusive way. Information about these engagement opportunities is made available in a timely manner and to a wide and diverse audience.

The participation of women is institutionalized and mainstreamed throughout the work of parliament.

Parliament provides targeted engagement opportunities for groups who may otherwise face barriers to engagement.

Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Parliamentary strategies or action plans outlining the inclusivity of parliamentary engagement programmes
- Data on diverse participation in parliamentary consultations
- Gender balance in public consultation and among witnesses over the course of a year
- Data on young people consulted by parliament over the course of a year
- Materials in sign language or Braille
- Records showing diverse participation in committee processes/hearings

- Information about remote parliamentary committee meetings and/or other programmes outside the parliamentary premises

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

Assessment criterion 1: Policies

Parliament sets out strategies for engaging all groups within the community, especially those facing barriers to engagement with parliament, regardless of their age, gender, location, physical ability or any other characteristic.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 2: Accessibility

Information about parliamentary consultations is made available in a timely manner and to a wide and diverse audience. Parliamentary buildings and infrastructure, as well as print and digital materials, are accessible and inclusive.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 3: Engaging women

The participation of women is institutionalized and mainstreamed throughout the work of parliament. Engagement is safe and accessible for women. Parliament ensures that both women and men are equally represented among experts and other witnesses at committee hearings.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 4: Engaging youth

Parliament provides targeted engagement opportunities for youth and young people are systematically consulted on matters that are important to them.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 5: Engaging remote communities

Parliament proactively offers engagement opportunities for communities that are geographically remote from parliament. These may include bringing people to parliament, organizing committee hearings outside the parliamentary premises or offering educational programmes to people in remote areas.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Recommendations for change

Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.