



Parliamentarians for Global Action  
Parlamentarios para la Acción Global  
Action Mondiale des Parlementaires  
برلمانيون من أجل التحرك العالمي

***PRAIA PLAN OF ACTION ON PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL AND INCLUSION,  
SAFEGUARDING HUMAN RIGHTS, AND PROTECTING THE OCEANS***

We, the Members of Parliament from 50 countries from all regions of the world participating in the 41st Annual Forum of Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), at the end of the deliberations held in the National Assembly of Cape Verde in Praia, on 21 and 22 November 2019, on the topic “*The Role of Parliamentarians in the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 16 and 14 - Promoting Democratic Renewal and Inclusion, Safeguarding Human Rights, and Protection the Oceans*”,

***Express gratitude*** to the Parliament of Cape Verde and the Organizing Committee of the PGA Cape Verde National Group for the organization of this Annual Forum, *as well as* to donors and institutional partners that made this Forum possible;

***Recognize*** that these deliberations took place within the framework of PGA’s action-driven and results-oriented *Campaigns for democratic renewal and human rights and for the protection of the oceans*;

and, therefore,

***Adopt*** the following Plan of Action:

**I) On Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.**

We recognize that democracy is at risk and that this crisis has touched all parts of the world.<sup>1</sup> We note with profound concern that the numerous, serious, and sophisticated threats to democracy include: increasing erosion of democratic principles, such as separation of powers, checks-and-balances, independence of the judiciary, for autonomy of prosecutorial authorities, and equality of all before the law; escalating perpetuation of “disinformation”, dismantling of protections for freedoms of expression, and “weaponization” of the media space through incendiary rhetoric; and increasing repression and curtailment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We affirm that, where human rights are abused, democratic practices are abandoned, justice retreats, and attacks on democracy become more sophisticated, moving from the city square to dark corners of the web, we, as legislators with the mandate and political will to halt democratic decline, must unite and renew our commitment to democracy as the only system of government that can safeguard and allow human dignity to flourish. The present crisis provides an opportunity for parliamentarians, as the democratically elected representatives of the people, to mobilize. We must seize it.

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<sup>1</sup> Broad consensus holds that democracy is in “decline,” [Journal of Democracy] “decay,” [Open Democracy] or “retreat” [Freedom House] worldwide. The annual Freedom House “Freedom in the World” report found 2018 to be the thirteenth consecutive year of deteriorating freedoms across the globe.

We note that the vision of ‘leaving no one behind’ in the United Nations (UN) Development Agenda can only be achieved by creating the conditions to equal access to justice and enjoyment of rights, freedom from violence, and full political participation of all individuals, including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) people in our countries. We are concerned that discriminatory laws and policies against LGBTI individuals continue to perpetuate prejudices; fuel stigma; and contribute to marginalization, harassment and attacks. Furthermore, we take note of the 2019 report by the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), which underscores the need to dismantle all legislation that criminalizes sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, and that negates the identity of a person, to attain social inclusion. We call on our fellow parliamentarians and our governments to foster spaces for dialogue with local LGBTI groups to understand their lived realities.

We are cognizant of the role Parliamentarians can play to advance Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, particularly achieving targets to: Significantly reduce all forms of violence (16.1); Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all (16.3); Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (16.7); and Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development (16B) in reference to LGBTI people. Finally, we recognize the important role of Parliamentarians in addressing the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), promoting implementation of the UN Programme of Action on SALW and universality and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT); and promoting universality and implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004).

**We resolve to:**

*Promote democratic renewal and safeguard human rights by:*

- Opposing and combatting any legislative initiatives aimed at eroding constitutional legitimacy, dismantling the system of checks and balances among organs of the State and entrenching Executive power, and curtailing human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to and freedom from retaliation for peaceful dissent.
- Proactively promoting an adequate legal framework that respects human rights, as well as functioning mechanisms for accountability when those rights are compromised.
- Demanding political dialogue that is respectful of all; resisting hate speech, derogatory language, and incendiary rhetoric; and utilizing our platforms to expose disinformation and defamation, including online and through social media.
- End foreign meddling that constitutes an obstacle to democratic processes.
- Include human rights culture and human rights education in school programmes.
- Affirming that there is no excuse for silence or inaction when the human rights of elected parliamentarians are compromised, and pledging to draw attention to and condemn conduct that aims to intimidate democracy and human rights defenders through all the prerogatives of our office.

*Promote policies and practices to promote open, diverse and inclusive societies by:*

- Encouraging a positive and accurate public discourse about LGBTI people in our societies – as far as possible – to prevent and stop the intentional spread of hate and misconceptions in the political arena.
- Reviewing laws and exercising reforms, where needed, to ensure conformity with international human rights law.
- Engaging regularly with local LGBTI groups in both the design and implementation of programs to make sure their needs are met and no harm is done.
- Promoting and adopting non-discrimination laws and measures to guarantee equal access to public services such as education, health, housing, employment, justice, social security, civil registries, property, and political participation, among others.

*Work together toward peaceful societies and reduce the scourge of armed conflict by 2030 by:*

- Encouraging our respective Governments to submit regular National Reports to the United Nations on Implementation of the UN Programme of Action Addressing the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.
- Encouraging our respective Governments to ratify, accede to, and implement the Arms Trade Treaty, as appropriate.
- Reviewing existing national legislation to ensure adequacy of level of implementation of Arms Trade Treaty and encouraging national authorities to comply with reporting requirements arising under this Treaty.
- Reviewing existing domestic national firearms legislation to ensure its adequacy in addressing current national security challenges.
- Encouraging our respective Governments to take steps to ratify, accede to, and fully implement the Biological Weapons Convention, as appropriate.
- Encouraging our respective Governments to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) on the prevention of proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction to Non State Actors, including terrorist organizations, as well as complying with Reporting requirements that arise under this UN Security Council Resolution.

## **II) On Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.**

We recognize that the ratification and implementation of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations' Port State Measures Agreement, the International Labour Organization's (ILO's) Work in Fishing Convention 188 and the International Maritime Organization's (IMO's) Cape Town Agreement are crucial to addressing illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. We realize that, when implemented together, these treaties thwart the many human rights abuses related to IUU fishing including, but not limited to, threats to food security and livelihoods, human trafficking, enslavement, horrific labor conditions, and forced migration. We affirm that these three treaties strengthen port controls, set basic standards for decent working conditions, and outline safety standards for commercial fishing vessels that are instrumental in creating powerful international standards that fill a current legal void.

We recognize the need to setup a legal framework for international cooperation and exchange information across borders to combat IUU fishing.

We acknowledge that small-scale fisheries, which serve as a critical source of livelihood and development for communities and island nations across the globe, increasingly are threatened by the effects of illegal fishing. We recognize that small-scale fisheries support economies, provide food security, and overwhelmingly employ women in fishery processing.

We affirm that the [scientific community has emphasized](#) the need to protect 30% of the ocean in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by 2030 in order to maximize fisheries yield and safeguard marine resources. By creating these MPAs to protect 30% of the ocean, we recognize the importance of the effects of bigger and more abundant fish and marine life; healthier coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass; improved fishing and sustainable tourism livelihoods; improved ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change; and more opportunities for future generations.<sup>2</sup>

We recognize that UN SDG 14 on conservation and sustainable use of the oceans includes Target 14.1 regarding the prevention and significant reduction of marine pollution of all kinds, “in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.”<sup>3</sup> We further recognize the Indicator for Target 14.1 includes the density of floating plastic debris.

We recognize that marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) comprise nearly two-thirds of the world’s ocean and provide incalculable ecological, economic, social, cultural, scientific and food security benefits to humanity. We recognize that ABNJ is a global commons and all States have a duty to protect and conserve marine biodiversity, and we are concerned about rising threats to marine biodiversity in ABNJ, including climate change, ocean acidification, deoxygenation, overfishing, habitat disruption, and chemical, energy, noise, and plastic pollution. We further recall that the UN General Assembly resolution 72/249 has contributed to the development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in ABNJ, and that international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, provides the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. We further note that marine protected areas (MPAs) and prior environmental impact assessments (EIAs) are critical tools for safeguarding marine biodiversity, but less than one percent of the ocean in ABNJ is highly protected and uniform EIA requirements are lacking for ABNJ.

**We resolve to:**

*Promote ratification and implementation of the Three Treaties to End Illegal Fishing by:*

- Engaging with our colleagues from all political affiliations to achieve national and multi-partisan consensus to remove the barriers toward ratification, and requesting that our own governments promote the ratification and domestic implementation of the three treaties to end IUU fishing.
- Intensifying our efforts to end IUU fishing and its associated human rights violations by making it a priority in our parliamentary agendas and aligning our efforts to implement the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goal 14 (UN SDG 14).

*Build sustainability of small-scale fisheries as an essential source of livelihood and development by:*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.blueprosperity.org/why-protect-30>

<sup>3</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg14>

- Promoting the adoption of legislation that recognizes, protects, sustains and empowers small-scale fisheries and the communities that rely on them as well as the implementation of the FAO Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries.
- Calling for the recognition of small-scale fisheries in the process of adopting legislation that aims to end IUU fishing, including issues of marine biodiversity, seafood processing, and safety and decent treatment of fishers and fish workers.

*Reduce harmful fishing subsidies by:*

- Informing our constituencies, stakeholders, governments and parliamentary colleagues on the effects of fisheries subsidies that offset costs such as fuel, gear, and vessel construction, which can promote fishing beyond sustainable limits.
- Encouraging States to engage in the World Trade Organization process to adopt measures that substantially reduce harmful fisheries subsidies by 2020.

*Support the protection of 30% of the ocean by 2030 by:*

- Working diligently towards the protection of 30% of the ocean by 2030 through the creation of MPAs to ensure the health of both the ocean and those who rely on it.

*Combat marine litter by:*

- Intensifying our efforts to reduce single-use plastics in both our capacities as representatives of our constituencies and as lawmakers.
- Informing our constituencies, stakeholders, governments, and parliamentary colleagues of the urgency to prioritize the reduction of marine litter, such as plastics, pesticides, medical waste, and other substances.

*Create a new treaty to protect the High Seas by:*

- Encouraging States to develop an international legally-binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in ABNJ, and ensuring the text provides for: a strong legal process for highly and fully protected MPAs; specific measures to ensure that EIAs are objective, rigorous, and in line with international standards; appropriate and accountable decision-making and advisory bodies; effective monitoring, compliance, and enforcement; effective capacity building and transfer of marine technology; and fair and equitable sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits from marine genetic resources from ABNJ.