



## British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union

British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union Newsletter April 2015

This is the final BGIPU newsletter of the 2010-15 Parliament and the BGIPU Secretariat would like to express our gratitude to all members for their contribution as we enter the period prior to the May 7 General Elections. We wish all House of Commons members the very best wishes for the future, be they standing down or seeking re-election. We look forward to providing to members in both Houses an extensive, timely and relevant programme of BGIPU activities following the elections for the rest of the 2015/16.

**Rick Nimmo, Director**

### Post-2015 SDGs and fight against global terrorism dominate Hanoi agenda

1 April 2015 - by *BGIPU*



The 132nd Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly convened in Hanoi, Vietnam from 28 March to 1 April 2015 was attended by over 1,500 participants including 715 members from 132 parliaments, 51 Speakers and 201 women MPs. The key theme of “The Sustainable Development Goals: Turning words into action” saw adoption of the Hanoi Declaration in advance of the post-2015 sustainable development goals, in addition to an emergency item debate on the role of parliaments in addressing the scourge of global terrorism.

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### UK Parliamentarians at CSW 59: If women thrive so shall we all

9 March 2015 - by *BGIPU*



This year CSW welcomed the largest contingent of 1100 NGOs (non-governmental organisations) from all over the world, composing 8600 women. I led a delegation of UK parliamentary delegates including Gavin Shuker MP, Roberta Blackman-Woods MP, and Diane Abbott MP for first week sponsored by the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU). It is a truly amazing conference on many levels. Especially moving are some of the NGO events where one hears from human rights defenders often under threat on the ground.

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### Parliamentary links support full restoration of UK-Iran relations

9 March 2015 - by [BGIPU](#)



BGIPU, in close collaboration with Co-Chairs of the Iran All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), Rt Hon Jack Straw MP and Mr Richard Bacon MP, hosted a parliamentary delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran from 9 to 13 March 2015 in return for a successful visit undertaken by the APPG to Tehran in January 2014. The visit was successful in strengthening inter-parliamentary relations between both countries in support of official government efforts to fully restore bilateral relations.

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## Drugs, Poverty & Development - Policy Solutions?

26 February 2015 - by [BGIPU](#)



On 26 February 2015, BGIPU and Health Poverty Action (HPA) brought a panel together to discuss drug policy as a driver of poverty and its impact on human rights and international development. The occasion was in honour of the launch of the HPA report “Casualties of War” which highlights how the war on drugs is harming the world's poorest.

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## Timely UK Parliament visit to Ukraine

17 February 2015 - by [BGIPU](#)



A small delegation from the BGIPU visited Kyiv for 3 days in mid-February to establish links with new members of the Ukrainian Parliament, to help establish a British Friendship Group and to discuss how our two Parliaments might work more closely together to strengthen Parliamentary democracy and the accountability of Government in Ukraine. Inevitably the visit and meetings were dominated by the more urgent issue of the war in Eastern Ukraine and the fragile ceasefire that had been agreed in Minsk.

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## Annual Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO – Geneva

16 February 2015 - by [BGIPU](#)



The Annual 2015 Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO took place in Geneva, on 16 and 17 February 2015. The WTO Director General, Mr. Roberto Azevêdo, addressed the meeting making a good case for the need to maintain momentum and to agree a clearly defined work plan by July 2015; before the ministerial meeting in Nairobi should finalise the Doha Round. He emphasised that all discussions were being conducted on the most transparent basis, with all members represented by ambassadors at key meetings. The WTO Secretariat also explained to participants the steps for implementation of the Bali Trade Facilitation Agreement and how developing countries will be supported through assistance and grants for implementation.

## British and Burmese Women Parliamentarians Unite

8 February 2015 - by [BGIPU](#)



This visit intended to strengthen women's political participation at national level and engage current women MPs in Burma on political empowerment and gender-sensitive parliamentary practices through targeted workshops with UK counterparts. It was a standalone project, complementary to other parliamentary strengthening activities in the country, undertaken in partnership with the British Embassy in Rangoon.

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## Morocco Speaker visit underscores close relations with UK

26 January 2015 - by [BGIPU](#)



BGIPU hosted a parliamentary delegation from Morocco from 26 to 30 January 2015. This high level delegation was led by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr Rachid Talbi Alami MP. The delegation highlighted the strength of the bilateral relationship with the UK and the key role that Morocco plays in the Maghreb region. They were concerned that the situation in Western Sahara posed difficulties related to illicit arms and drugs trafficking and UK counterparts expressed support for peaceful resolution of this issue.

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## BGIPU Annual General Meeting adopts 2014 Annual Report

3 December 2014 - by [BGIPU](#)



The Annual General Meeting of the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, presided over by the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Honorary President of the Group, was held on Wednesday 3 December 2014 where BGIPU members adopted the 2014 Annual Report, including hearing financial statements from the Treasurer, made amendments to BGIPU Rules and elected the Executive Committee for 2014/15.

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## Sharing perspectives with Romania on EU cooperation issues

24 November 2014 - by [BGIPU](#)



BGIPU hosted a parliamentary delegation from Romania from 24-28 November 2014 led by Mr Dumitru Oprea, Chairman of the Democratic Liberal Party in the Senate. The key focus of the visit was on bilateral relations, EU cooperation and migration issues, providing valuable opportunities to explore the contribution being made by the Romanian community in the UK against the backdrop of the current UK debate regarding free movement provisions within the EU.

## Parliamentary Hearing at the UN debates post-2015 SDGs

19 November 2014 - by *BGIPU*



This year's Parliamentary Hearing at the UN, jointly convened by the IPU and the UN from 19-20 November, was entitled, "Ensuring a people-centred approach to the new SDGs: A shared responsibility". Key issues which drove the discussion included: how economic and social inequality, as well as discrimination, risked undermining people-centred development; the need to strengthen transparency and accountability to the people in both the public and private sectors; the responsibility of governments vis-à-vis the market; and how countries could deal more effectively with their human rights responsibilities and obligations

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## UK Delegation gains new insights into Guatemala & Honduras

10 November 2014 - by *BGIPU*



A little bit of BGIPU history was made when a Parliamentary delegation from our Parliament visited Guatemala and Honduras in the second week of November. We had not sent a delegation to Guatemala since 2008 and Honduras had never had a visit from the BGIPU. The visit highlighted the key difficulties Guatemala and Honduras are facing in the light of the current security situation and social inequalities, in addition to seeing potential opportunities for British investment and economic engagement.

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### **FORTHCOMING BGIPU ACTIVITIES**

Future BGIPU activities will be confirmed following the UK General Election on 7 May 2015