



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

T +41 22 919 41 50
F +41 22 919 41 60
E postbox@ipu.org
www.ipu.org

Chemin du Pommier 5
Case postale 330
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland

IPU Science for Peace Schools programme

Programme outline and five-year plan

I. References and objectives

Institutional references

Since its establishment in 1987, the core mission of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) [Committee on Middle East Questions](#) (the Committee) has been to support the peace process in the Middle East through dialogue, mediation and field visits. This task has been particularly challenging due to the politicized environment and the inability of traditional dialogue methods to address political tensions. In response to the difficulty in achieving tangible results in a parliamentary environment conducive to peaceful dialogue and to support the governmental peace negotiations, in recent years the Committee has turned to science as an avenue for bringing parliamentarians together on common challenging issues on the national and regional level.

In 2014, the IPU Secretary General, Mr. Martin Chungong, initiated discussions with the scientific community on how to apply scientific cooperative models to politics. Subsequently, the IPU institutionalized this science-oriented strategy by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in 2016.

In 2016 and 2017 the Committee held two round tables on water scarcity and the potential of new water technologies respectively. CERN contributed to both events by presenting its science for peace initiatives – its contribution to the creation of the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME) among others – and cooperation models that allow researchers from all over the world to work together peacefully to reach CERN's ambitious scientific objectives. These round tables confirmed that, in the search for solutions, science can be a neutral platform for dialogue based on scientific values and demonstrated that science could turn elements of conflict into reasons for coexistence. To that end, the IPU Secretariat undertook to design an evidence-based approach to identify and prioritize key elements that foster peaceful coexistence, following which they could be invested in accordingly.

In October 2017, during the 137th IPU Assembly, the IPU Governing Council endorsed the Committee's recommendation to establish the Science for Peace Schools programme and relevant parliamentary expert communities. That was the foundation for the establishment, in May 2021, of the IPU [Working Group on Science and Technology](#) as the parliamentary focal point on issues relating to science and technology. In 2022, Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General, was appointed Diplomacy Forum Moderator of the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA) and Co-Chair of the Geneva Coalition on Anticipatory Science and Diplomacy.

About the Science for Peace Schools programme

The IPU Science for Peace Schools programme is the first joint activity between the IPU's Committee on Middle East Questions and its Working Group on Science and Technology. It was inspired by the Teacher Training Schools developed by CERN where participants are fully embedded into CERN's everyday life to enable them to directly see how international collaboration in basic science is capable of bringing together heterogeneous research communities to achieve scientific goals. The underlying belief is that these models, when appropriately adapted, can be applied to foster dialogue and collaboration in other fields as well.

The IPU Science for Peace Schools programme, which is an advanced in-person parliamentary training scheme followed by virtual classes, is committed to promoting an evidence-based approach in addressing regional and global challenges to establish an environment of trust and understanding on elements of conflict by replicating neutral regional scientific and international cooperation models. The aim is to bridge the worlds of science and politics by initiating dialogue and to help create **parliamentary expert communities** to address challenges together under the neutral umbrella of science.

The Science for Peace Schools are designed to serve as a continuous **learning mechanism** that will enhance the implementation and capacity-building efforts of the IPU programmes and initiatives, and feed into the IPU resolutions. The Schools sessions and classes will be integrated into a sustainable digital learning mechanism.

The IPU's institutional partners

The IPU signed a:

- Memorandum of Understanding with the European Organization for Nuclear Research ([CERN](#)) on 1 November 2016
- Cooperation Agreement with the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator ([GESDA](#)) on 26 September 2022
- Memorandum of Understanding with the International Centre for Interdisciplinary Science and Education ([ICISE](#)) on 30 May 2023
- Cooperation Agreement with the Institute for Economics and Peace ([IEP](#)) on 27 June 2024
- Cooperation Agreement with the King Hamad Global Center for Peaceful Coexistence ([KHGC](#)) on 31 July 2024.

Special cooperation on the Science for Peace Schools has also been established with the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East ([SESAME](#)).

The Schools will be conducted across three prestigious campuses – CERN, ICISE and SESAME. Each of these renowned institutions provides a unique environment that fosters innovation, collaboration and interdisciplinary learning.

Objectives

Core objectives: The primary objective of the Science for Peace Schools is to foster genuine dialogue and collaboration between parliaments and parliamentarians, particularly between those who are disengaged from each other, through the application of scientific methods and tools of inquiry. By promoting a culture of problem-solving and cooperation, and leveraging scientific discourse to address global challenges, the Schools aim to strengthen diplomatic ties and build lasting peace between historically divided peoples.

The initiative aims to support achieving the vision of unity through science by acting as a dynamic platform for dialogue between parliaments and parliamentarians on issues central to the IPU's core objectives, ultimately fostering peaceful coexistence and collaborative action, while preserving parliamentary knowledge and ensuring that it is accessible, interactive and constantly updated.

Science for Peace Schools objectives: The aim of the Schools is to provide a parliamentary sphere for the exchange of experiences and collaboration in addressing regional and international challenges under the neutral umbrella of science. The spirit of the Schools is rooted in the [IPU 2022-2026 Strategy](#), in particular Strategic Objective (SO) 1 on building effective and empowered parliaments, SO 3 on supporting resilient and innovative parliaments and SO 4 on catalysing collective parliamentary action.

The Schools also serve as a dedicated platform where parliamentarians, parliamentary secretariats and staff, scientists and relevant key stakeholders can engage in **meaningful discussions outside of the constraints of busy IPU Assemblies**, enabling a focused and uninterrupted environment for the development of informed and effective policies.

The ultimate target of the Schools is to establish a comprehensive Legislation Lab, dedicated to the meticulous crafting and drafting of policies and legislation. This innovative lab would serve as a dynamic environment where lawmakers, parliamentary secretariat, scientists and experts can collaboratively develop, test and refine legislative and policy proposals, and parliamentary initiatives.

II. Modalities of the Science for Peace Schools

Management of the Schools

The **stakeholders** involved in the preparation and management of the Schools programme and editions are:

- the Inter-Parliamentary Union ([IPU](#))
- the King Hamad Global Center for Peaceful Coexistence ([KHGC](#))
- the International Centre for Interdisciplinary Science and Education ([ICISE](#))
- the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East ([SESAME](#)).

Topics:

- **Water:** The topic of the Schools first edition held in 2022 and 2023 was water. The topic will be pursued in subsequent sessions to ensure consistency and continuity.
- **Science and artificial intelligence (AI):** The topic of the upcoming 2025 Schools edition will be on science and AI. The aim is to address the rapid developments in science and technology including AI and quantum computing, and the parliamentary response to the implications of scientific and technological progress.
- **Sustainable environment with emphasis on energy:** The topic of the future 2026 Schools edition will cover green economy, energy, climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Peaceful coexistence:** Each Schools edition will include a session on peaceful coexistence. The aim is to establish an evidence-based approach in understanding the elements of peaceful coexistence, to present science as an instrument of peace, and explore the concepts of both positive and negative peace.

Editions:

1. There will be one School edition every year on an agreed upon topic. Each edition will have two in-person sessions – the first session will be for parliamentary staff and the second session will be for members of parliament. The first session for parliamentary staff will lay the groundwork for the second session for members of parliament and the yearly High-level meeting.

Each session will be followed by a virtual meeting with the session's participants via a dedicated virtual platform to ensure continuous follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of the School's session and the School's edition. This virtual tool will ensure the ongoing engagement of participants and will offer them support. It will also focus on sustaining the developed subjects by sharing and preserving knowledge through this interactive and close-knit learning mechanism. The platform will facilitate private communication among participants, enhancing the Schools overall learning experience.

Each Schools edition is intended to offer a platform for open and constructive dialogue between MPs, parliamentary staff, scientists and experts on the selected topic. The aim is to create parliamentary expert communities that can facilitate communication and cooperation among parliaments to enhance their efforts to address regional and international challenges to work towards peace.

2. There will be one High-level meeting every year (subject to the availability of funds). The participants will be: the stakeholders involved in the preparation and management of the Schools, the Schools parliamentarians and members of the parliamentary expert community established around the topic addressed in that year's Schools edition. The meeting will be crucial for evaluating the long-term impact of the Schools edition and will provide an opportunity to incorporate insights from experts across various societal fields.

Session participants:

First School session for parliamentary staff (to be held in SESAME): This School session will accommodate a maximum of 35 participants including: parliamentary staff (four from each of the six IPU geopolitical groups); six representatives of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

(ASGP); and five parliamentary staff representatives of parliaments directly concerned by the topic, with priority to be given to participants from the Global South. In principle, participants will be selected based on the relevance of the topic to their work in their respective, invited parliaments.

Second School session for members of parliament (to be held in ICISE): This School session will accommodate a maximum of 35 participants including: interested members of the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions and of the Working Group on Science and Technology; six Heads of the IPU Standing Committees and governing bodies or their representatives; six Presidents of the IPU geopolitical groups; and three representatives of the parliamentary staff alumni.

Calendar:

Following the first Schools edition of 2022-2023, annual Schools editions will comprise two distinct sessions as follows:

- The first session for parliamentary staff will be held at SESAME in spring – in April or May, and will focus on empowering parliamentary staff in close coordination with the President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP). It was agreed that the ASGP will dedicate a timeslot of their meetings at the IPU Assemblies to promote the Schools session dedicated to parliamentary staff.
- The second session for members of parliament will be held at ICISE in autumn – in September.

Two virtual Schools meetings will be held annually to ensure continuity of the Schools sessions: the first virtual meeting in June for parliamentary staff alumni, and the second virtual meeting at the end of November for MP alumni.

Each Schools edition will be followed by a High-level meeting at KHGC in winter (ideally in December). The Schools institutional partners, in particular the KHGC as the meeting host, may wish to invite other stakeholders as deemed appropriate.

Edition	Title	Participants	Theme	Date	Location
2025 edition	Second Science for Peace School	Parliamentary staff	<i>Understanding the ethics of artificial intelligence</i>	April/May 2025	SESAME, Jordan
		Parliamentary staff	(follow-up)	June 2025	Virtual
		Members of parliament	<i>Regulating AI: Ethics and the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology</i>	September 2025	ICISE, Viet Nam
		Members of parliament	(follow-up)	November 2025	Virtual
	Second High-level Meeting	School management and members of the parliamentary expert community	<i>Evaluating the long-term impact of that year's edition</i>	December 2025	KHGC, Bahrain
2026 edition	Third Science for Peace School	Parliamentary staff	<i>Green economy, energy and the Sustainable Development Goals</i>	April/May 2026	SESAME, Jordan
		Parliamentary staff	(follow-up)	June 2026	Virtual
		Members of parliament	<i>Energy and climate change</i>	September 2026	ICISE, Viet Nam
		Members of parliament	(follow-up)	November 2026	Virtual
	Third High-level Meeting	School management and members of the parliamentary expert community	<i>Evaluating the long-term impact of that year's edition</i>	December 2026	KHGC, Bahrain

IV. Previous and upcoming Schools editions

Previous editions

The first edition of the [Science for Peace Schools](#), held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 5 to 9 December 2022, was launched jointly by the IPU and CERN. Given the vital role of water in securing life, development and peace, and in line with the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions previous activities on water issues, this first session held under the theme *Dealing with water scarcity: an opportunity to rebuild peace with Science* focused on water management and the exploration of new and renewable sources of water to increase the availability of this precious resource, which was so often a source of conflict. The School aimed to contribute to a positive environment for technical cooperation by proposing alternative technologies and modalities to lessen the tensions related to water scarcity, thus encouraging coexistence between nations.

This first session was followed by the [Science for Peace Parliamentary Meeting](#) held in Quy Nhon, Viet Nam, from 11 to 13 September 2023, launched jointly by the IPU and ICISE. The participants, including parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, scientists, water experts, researchers and stakeholders from various sectors attended three days of lectures, panel discussions and case studies on the theme *Water security and insecurity: Rebuilding peaceful coexistence with science*. The curriculum was designed following a human rights-based approach, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the science of security and peace, and the application of fundamental science in support of water security to promote peace.

The outcomes of the Science for Peace Parliamentary Meeting were presented at the Parliamentary Meeting on the Occasion of the 10th World Water Forum held in May 2024 in Bali, Indonesia, and adopted by members of parliament in the [Nusa Dua Comminqué](#).

2025 Schools edition

Session 1: Understanding the ethics of artificial intelligence

Session 2: Regulating AI: Ethics and the IPU Charter on Ethics of Science and Technology

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a vast and multifaceted field, often discussed in overly broad terms. It is crucial to refine the focus of this topic to address areas of particular relevance to the participants of the School's two sessions (for parliamentary staff and MPs).

To this end, it is essential to engage experts with genuine proficiency in both the scientific and technical dimensions of AI, as well as its economic, social, cultural and ethical impacts. In addition to specialists in AI, it is recommended to include scholars from other disciplines, such as social sciences and the humanities, as well as science and technology researchers, and private sector representatives.

In the preparatory phase, the specific sub-topics relevant to the participants and the IPU must be identified. Given the rapid evolution of AI, it is pragmatic to consider that the 2025 Schools edition should assist parliaments in establishing boundary conditions for AI applications and implementing "watchdog initiatives" to ensure adherence to these boundaries and the monitoring of their evolution.

To this end, fostering dialogue among scientists from diverse fields, science and technology researchers and private sector representatives could provide valuable insights into how parliaments can navigate this complex landscape. For example, inviting a leading entrepreneur who has advocated for regulatory frameworks in AI before the US Congress would be interesting in the IPU context, but also on the level of individual parliaments.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the Schools approach to the AI topic be dynamic rather than unidirectional. A significant portion of the programme should be dedicated to interactive discussions involving speakers, parliamentarians and other key stakeholders, conducted under the Chatham House Rule.

Lastly, with the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology which developed the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology in Parliaments to be submitted for adoption at the 149th IPU Assembly in October 2024, it is proposed that the sessions of the 2025 School edition serve as a critical testing ground for the practical application of the Charter. Accordingly, a substantial focus of the two sessions should be dedicated to reflecting on and advancing parliamentary actions concerning the ethics of AI.

2026 Schools edition

Session 1: Green economy, energy and the Sustainable Development Goals

Session 2: Energy and climate change

(To be elaborated in due course.)

No topics have been discussed for the Schools editions of 2027, 2028 and 2029. While there is still ample time to identify and decide on the topics, it is recommended that the topic for each School edition be chosen well in advance, preferably a year and a half before the first session. So, for example, the topic for the 2027 School edition should be decided by the end of September 2025.

DRAFT 2