



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



The Role of Parliaments in the Protection and Realisation of the Rule of Law and Human Rights

Monday 7th September 2015

**The Attlee Suite, Portcullis House
Westminster**

Conference Programme

0900 - 0915 Registration and coffee

0915 - 0930 Introductions and welcome: **Professor Andrew Thompson, Arts and Humanities Research Council**

0930 - 1000 **Keynote addresses:**

Gianni Magazzeni, Chief of the Americas, Europe and Central Asia Branch, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Nico Schrijver, Professor of International Law, Leiden University, Member of Dutch Senate and Executive Committee Member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1000 - 1100 **Session 1: Parliament's Role in relation to the rule of law and human rights**

Chair: **Katherine Zappone, Member of the Irish Senate**

Panel:

Murray Hunt, Legal Adviser, Joint Committee on Human Rights

Natalie Samarasinghe, Executive Director, United Nations Association – UK

Robert Spano, Judge of the European Court of Human Rights

- Why should parliaments have a role in the protection and realisation of the rule of law, including human rights, and what is that role?
- What institutional machinery do parliaments need to perform their role?

- What is the role of legal advice to parliament?
- How can the rule of law and human rights be mainstreamed across all of a parliament's activities and functions?
- What will give politicians a sense of ownership of the rule of law and human rights?

1100 - 1115 Tea/Coffee break

**1115 -1130 Keynote address: Dr. Josephine Ojiambo, Deputy Secretary
General of the Commonwealth**

**1130 - 1230 Session 2: Desirability of internationally agreed principles and
guidelines.**

Chair: **Dr. Josephine Ojiambo**

Panel:

**George Kunnath, Head of Programmes, Westminster Foundation
for Democracy**

**Karen McKenzie, Head of Human Rights, Commonwealth
Secretariat**

**Hon Neto Agostinho MP, Member of Kenyan Parliament and
Convenor of the Kenya Parliamentary Human Rights Association**

- Does the experience of parliaments trying to build their capacity in relation to rule of law and human rights suggest that some principles and guidelines would be useful?
- Are there examples of the advantages and disadvantages of using some principles and guidelines to develop the ability of parliaments to perform their role?
- Are cultural differences between states an insuperable obstacle to international agreement on some principles and guidelines?

1230 - 1330 Lunch

**1330 - 1445 Session 3: Substance: what should be the content of any
principles and guidelines?**

Chair: **Professor Sir Jeffrey Jowell QC, Director of the Bingham
Centre for the Rule of Law**

Panel:

**Sarah Cleveland, Professor of Human and Constitutional Rights at
Columbia Law School and Member of UN Human Rights Committee**

Kirsten Roberts, Dickson Poon School of Law, Kings College

**Sam Muller, Director, Hague Institute for the Internationalisation
of Law and former Chair of the Rule of Law Global Agenda Council
of the World Economic Forum**

- What guidelines already exist for parliamentarians and is there scope for more?
- What sorts of subjects should be included in a set of principles and guidelines?
- Which matters should be covered by principles and which by guidelines?
- How can we judge the effectiveness of parliaments' work for the protection and realisation of the rule of law and human rights?
- Should parliaments evaluate their own performance in the protection and realisation of the rule of law and human rights, and what methodologies might be used?

1445 - 1515

Tea/Coffee break

**1515 - 1630
agreement**

Session 4: Process: how to get from here to international

Chair: **Dr. Michael Addo, Professor of International Law, University of Exeter, Member of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights and Chair of the Co-ordination Committee of UN Special Procedure Mandate Holders**

Panel:

Gianni Magazzeni, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Nico Schrijver, Professor of International Law, Leiden University and Member of Dutch Senate

Rashida Manjoo, Professor in the Department of Public Law, University of Cape Town and former UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women

- What should be the process for taking forward a set of principles and guidelines?
- Should the objective be adoption by the UN General Assembly, as with the Paris Principles and the Belgrade Principles?
- Is there scope for more detailed principles and guidelines at regional level?
- How will any adopted principles and guidelines have the maximum impact?
- What are the relevant lessons to be learned from the history of international standard-setting?

1630 - 1650

Wrap up general discussion and agreement of next steps.

1650 - 1700

Final remarks from the Chair and close.