

# A1. Why should parliaments engage with the SDGs, and what is their role?

In democratic systems, MPs are elected to represent their constituents and their needs. By accepting this power of representation, MPs also accept the obligation to ensure that governments comply with commitments made to advance the rights and well-being of the citizens they represent.

The Global parliamentary report 2017 of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the UNDP (110) addresses parliaments' oversight role in its introductory note:

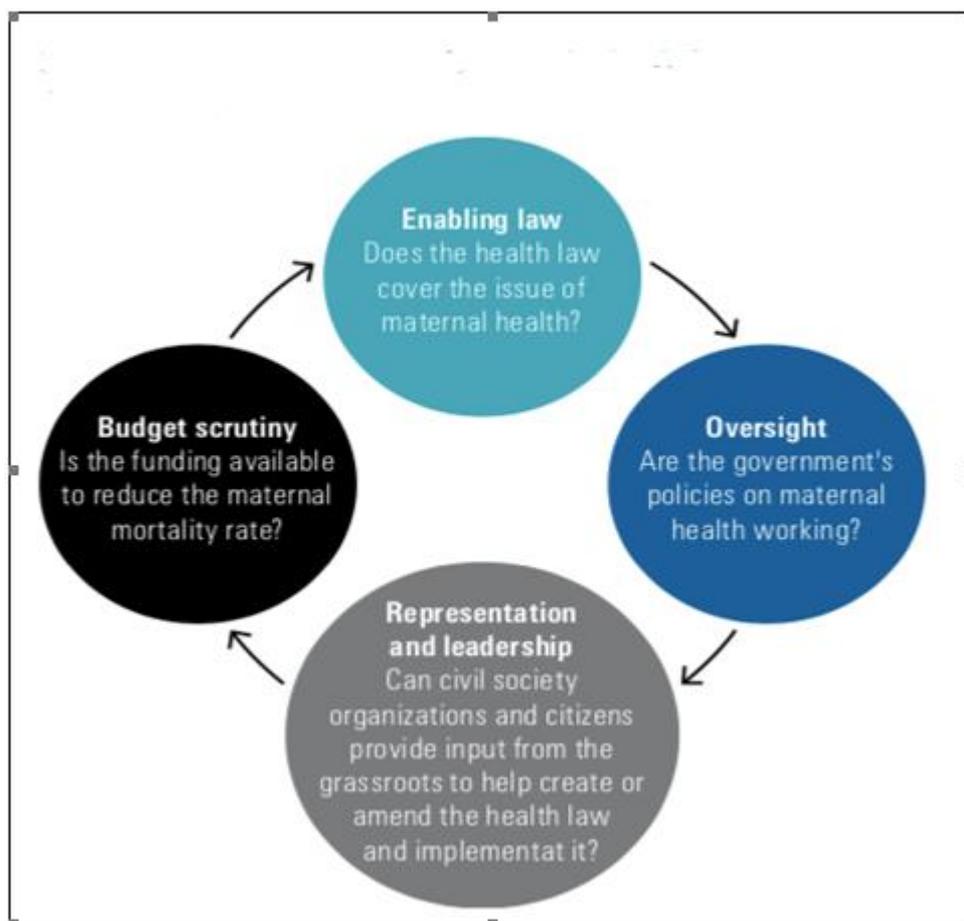
Parliamentary oversight improves the quality of government. It helps to keep in check the power of the executive and therefore contributes to strengthening democracy. Globally, parliamentary oversight is expected to underpin countries' progress toward the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The SDG agenda mobilized strong commitments to advancing the right to health of all peoples. SDG 3.8 mobilized the global health community, including states actors, to commit to progressive achievement of UHC. Furthermore, on the basis of experience with the Millennium Development Goals, the SDG agenda recognizes the value and potential impact of multi-stakeholder platforms and collaboration in achieving each of the Goals. Because of their unique oversight power, therefore, parliaments should be understood (and understand themselves) as key actors in monitoring and evaluating achievement of these goals at national level.

In the Global parliamentary report 2017 (111), the IPU and the UNDP recognized in relation to the SDGs that

Parliaments can drive significant change toward sustainable development by: translating the SDGs into enforceable national laws that respond to, and fit into existing, country-specific development priorities; monitoring implementation of these laws; and ensuring government is accountable to the people for progress on these goals. Fig. 10 illustrates the role of parliaments in achieving SDG 3.

**Fig. 10. Role of parliaments in achieving SDG 3, promoting healthy lives**



Source: reference 111

As for all the SDGs, parliaments have a fundamental role to play in ensuring that countries, according to their financial capacity, advance towards achievement of UHC. Because public budgets are instrumental to achieving UHC, the budget oversight function of parliaments can contribute to ensuring that governments choose the right budget priorities, allocations, distribution and use of public resources related to UHC.

Parliaments are also key in achieving SDG 16 and its targets for transparency, participation and accountability at all levels.