



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

5, CHEMIN DU POMMIER
CASE POSTALE 330
1218 LE GRAND SACONNEX / GENÈVE (SUISSE)

TELEPHONE (41.22) 919 41 50 - FAX (41.22) 919 41 60 - E-MAIL postbox@mail.ipu.org
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS : INTERPARLEMENT GENEVE

MEETING NY/XXII/2001/SR
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MEETING OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

attending the

56th session of the

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(New York, 4 December 2001)

SUMMARY RECORD

This meeting of members of Parliament was convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and organized in close co-operation with the United Nations Secretariat. It was attended by 65 members of Parliament from 29 national delegations to the General Assembly, as well as from one regional parliamentary assembly,* and was chaired by Mr. Mosé Tjitendero (Namibia), Vice- President of the IPU Executive Committee.

Participants were welcomed by Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General, and by Mrs. Gillian Sorensen, Assistant Secretary-General for External Relations. Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom), Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council; Ms. Carolyn McAskie, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Sir Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Mr. Patrizio Civili, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; and Mr. Oscar de Rojas, Executive Secretary of the Financing for Development Secretariat, addressed the members of Parliament and exchanged views with them.

* See List in Annex.

Introduction

The meeting was opened by the Chairman, speaking also in his capacity as Vice-President of the IPU Executive Committee and Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia. Because of the tragic events of 11 September, the meeting was being held very late and at a less than auspicious time for foreign travel by parliamentarians, but he was pleased to observe that all regions of the world were represented, albeit in smaller numbers than usual. He then introduced the Secretary-General, who had been a consistently strong supporter of parliaments and a friend of the IPU, and to whom he was particularly grateful for agreeing to welcome the participants.

Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said he was pleased to see a continuation of the momentum generated by the historic meeting, held on the eve of the Millennium Summit, at which 145 presiding officers of national parliaments had set out their vision of peace and progress for the new century.

The parliamentary voice had to be an integral component of the work of the United Nations. It was in parliaments that much of countries' important business was carried out. Parliaments, which were makers of law and fora for dialogue and debate, had a more pivotal role than ever. With the spread of democracy they embodied the will of the people. Schooled in the art of discussion and compromise, parliamentarians could also help the nations of the world confront and work together on major challenges.

One such challenge with a global dimension was the struggle against terrorism, which had acquired new urgency in the aftermath of the September 2001 attacks on the United States of America. Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), aimed at targeting terrorists and those who gave them harbour, aid and support, required Member States to cooperate in suppressing the financing of terrorism, in conducting criminal investigations and in exchanging information on possible terrorist acts. Parliamentarians would be responsible for enacting national legislation to give force to resolution 1373 (2001). They could also come to the assistance of the many Member States who lacked the means or technical expertise to implement the resolution as well as the 12 conventions and protocols on international terrorism already adopted under United Nations auspices.

He reminded participants that, over and above the struggle against terrorism and the challenge of Afghanistan, parliamentarians had a crucial advocacy role when it came to issues such as conflict, poverty, AIDS, environmental degradation and advancing the rule of law, which had become more rather than less pressing. In 2002 he hoped that parliaments would pay particular attention to two United Nations events. The International Conference on Financing for Development (March, Monterrey, Mexico) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (August, Johannesburg, South Africa) held great promise for reinvigorating the development process and ensuring that economic growth would be compatible with the needs of future generations. Again, the unique legislative power of parliaments, including the power of the purse, would be required to translate international agreements into domestic action.

Lastly, the Secretary-General called on parliamentarians to do their utmost to improve the representation of women in their ranks and enact legislation that would protect women's rights, promote their participation in decision-making and provide for their well-being and advancement. Some parliaments had been real pioneers in that struggle and he hoped the rest would emulate them.

He concluded by reiterating his commitment to strengthening the parliamentary dimension in the work of the United Nations and to building further on the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU signed in 1996. The majority of Member States agreed with his views and endorsed his recommendation for a stronger and formalized relationship and the granting of observer status to the IPU by the General Assembly. He was hopeful that the General Assembly when considering the matter would codify that relationship and usher in a new era in the IPU's long-standing cooperation with the Organisation.

The Chairman said he was grateful to the Secretary-General for his endeavours to establish stronger bonds between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and for his public support for the IPU's ongoing activities. [*The Chairman escorted the Secretary-General from the meeting room.*] He then introduced Mrs. Gillian Sorensen, who had served as the Secretary-General's representative at the meeting of parliamentarians held on 30 August-1 September 2000 in connection with the Millennium Summit.

Mrs. Gillian Sorensen, Assistant Secretary-General for External Relations, said that she was, as always, pleased and privileged to welcome the parliamentarians, with whose representatives she had continued to work productively over the past year. The Secretary-General was about to travel to Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. The Prize was a high honour dedicated not only to the Secretary-General but also, quite explicitly and in equal measure, to the United Nations organization as such. All involved thus bore both the honour and the additional responsibility that it conveyed.

She stressed the Secretary-General's long-standing support for and interest in the role of legislators and parliaments, who brought the authentic voice of the people to the Organization. Aware that the United Nations alone could not be as effective, he was extremely pleased at the progress made in developing a closer relationship with parliamentarians and with the IPU, whose agenda was in striking harmony with that of the United Nations. Today's meeting, like those of years past, offered a welcome opportunity for parliamentarians and United Nations officials to share their views, exchange information and consider synergistic action on many pressing global issues.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Sorensen for her continuing support for the IPU and its joint activities with the United Nations.

He took pleasure in announcing that the meeting, for the first time, would be addressed by an ambassador -- Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations. Sir Jeremy would be speaking to and taking questions from the participants in his capacity as Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council, which had issued important resolutions on the subject.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom), Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council, said that he was pleased to participate in the meeting convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union. His country strongly supported an enhanced relationship between the United Nations and parliaments.

In the course of his talk followed by questions and comments from the meeting, he hoped to convey something of the politics behind resolution 1373 (2001), to which the Secretary-General had referred, to inform participants of other counter-terrorism measures adopted and under consideration, and to illustrate how fast the United Nations was moving in matching the speed of developments since 11 September in dealing with the new and explosive threat from terrorism.

On 11 September, the United Nations had prudently closed down Headquarters following the attacks. The next morning, within two hours of having a draft resolution the Security Council had adopted resolution 1368 (2001), globally condemning the attacks and underwriting the legitimacy of counter-action under article 51 of the United Nations Charter. A similar resolution had been passed the same day by the General Assembly.

By 28 September, the Security Council had adopted resolution 1373 (2001). Uniquely broad in its scope, the resolution was also unprecedented in demanding that every Member State take specific and active measures and report back to the Secretary-General on how it was enhancing its capability to counter terrorism on its own territory. It was the task of the 15-member Counter-Terrorism Committee, which he chaired, to monitor progress and help raise global capacity for action.

One short-term but crucial task following the 11 September attacks was to deal with the perpetrators, Al-Qa'ida, and the senior Taliban leadership who had harboured and virtually merged with them. The USA was leading that effort, although the United Kingdom and others were present in Afghanistan to support action under article 51 of the Charter. The so-called "Arab Afghans" – the foreigners who had been conducting terrorism, money laundering and drug running from the Afghan territory – would hopefully be dealt with down to the last terrorist cell.

But 11 September had also opened the door to an unprecedented scale of terrorist action by others who shared the outlook of Bin Laden. Even a superpower could do only so much on its own to counter that new threat. What was needed was comprehensive, collective action by the world – a long-term endeavour. As the only international organization with the necessary reach, the United Nations had to be the vehicle not only for advocating the need for action but for spreading the means for action.

Virtually everything in resolution 1373 (2001) reflected the contents of 12 earlier conventions and protocols, which however had been ratified by fewer than half of all Member States and were unlikely to be accepted by countries with some sympathy for the apparent aims of the recent terrorist acts. What the resolution achieved was to single out the most important executive and legislative actions and make them binding on every Member State: (a) containment and eventual elimination of financial support for terrorism (a complex area with linkages to illegal financial transactions and the trafficking of arms, drugs and people); (b) denial of safe haven or protection for terrorist cells; and (c) proactive sharing of information and investigative material within and across regional lines.

To illustrate the Security Council's unusual approach, its Counter-Terrorism Committee was charged not only with monitoring the reports of Member States (to be submitted by 27 December 2001) and following up where necessary, but, most importantly, working with countries to ensure they had the financial and technical help they needed to raise their capacity for taking action under the resolution, matching Member States in need of assistance with donor countries. He and the Committee's Vice-Chairman had been travelling to regional meetings and holding fortnightly question-and-answer sessions with all Member States to clarify aspects of the resolution, dispel suspicions that the Committee might have a Western or superpower agenda, and explain the even-handed, transparent and cooperative approach being taken to all Member States. Outreach was bearing exceptional dividends. For example, instead of the 60 or so replies that would normally be expected, the Secretariat had already been informed by 130 Member States of their designated desk or contact point.

The Committee had also issued guidelines detailing the legislative measures called for by the resolution and the executive action required to give effect to that legislation. Later on, the Committee at the request of the Security Council would assess the performance of Member States in terms of their ability to participate fully in the cooperative response to terrorism.

Altogether, the outreach, explanations, transparency, monitoring and analysis that constituted the Committee's approach signalled a new phenomenon in the relationship between the Security Council and the Organization's Member States.

One highly political area – defining what was meant by terrorism – was not the job of the Committee, nor in Sir Jeremy's view the job of the Security Council. His Committee's responsibility was to monitor the response of every country to terrorism as that country viewed it in its jurisdiction. There was of course a political need to define terrorism, but it was important for the Committee not to become involved in definitions because, in practice, the Committee would be unanimous in recognizing terrorism in the vast majority of instances – as indiscriminate violence against civilians for the sake of a narrow political point. In instances where actions might be viewed as liberation or self-defence – e.g. in a difficult regional context or in the event of disagreements by neighbouring countries – those subjective perceptions would have to be dealt with by the relevant regional or bilateral forum, or indeed by the General Assembly as definer of the applicability or limitations of the relevant conventions.

Personally, he could see no single set of words that would satisfy all subjective perceptions of terrorism and therefore felt that there should be no effort at definition within the Security Council. The Counter-Terrorism Committee would proceed pragmatically, treating as terrorism what all 15 Committee members saw as terrorism, and promoting the long-term and perhaps indefinite collective endeavour to stop evil people from imitating the example of 11 September. Parliamentarians worldwide were crucial to that endeavour. He hoped the participants could carry away from today's meeting the message that the more responsive parliaments could be, and the more demanding of their governments, the safer the world would be.

Mr. Mannan (Bangladesh) asked whether the Committee's work would be limited by the lack of a definition of terrorism, which made it difficult to distinguish individual or group terrorism from State terrorism. Secondly, since in Sir Jeremy's view there was no difference between Al-Qa'ida and the Taliban, would the Committee classify as State terrorism both the events of 11 September and the atrocities committed by Israel against the population of Palestine?

Mrs. Finestone (Canada) thanked Sir Jeremy for his fine overview and welcomed the shared Nobel Peace Prize as evidence of the joint efforts carried out by the current leadership of the Organization. She asked how the Counter-Terrorism Committee could help prevent the kinds of terrorist attacks recently witnessed in Israel, which made it more difficult to achieve peace in the Middle East for the benefit of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Mr. Valdes (Chile) said that his country had a definition of terrorism in its Constitution. Chile unhesitatingly supported everything the United Nations was doing against terrorism and expressed solidarity with the American people. In his view, the Organization had reached a crossroads: it was acting in accordance with the supranational powers accorded it under Chapter 7 of the Charter. Those powers were important innovations in international law because they limited national sovereignty and made it mandatory for countries to subject themselves to a common struggle against the hydra-headed monster of terrorism. Along with other Latin American countries, Chile had embarked on the long-term endeavour to incorporate into its criminal and financial laws the norms agreed in resolution 1373 (2001). In other words, countries were now creating international law just as they had done, for example, in the area of human rights. The logical consequence of those efforts would be to criminalize terrorism and establish the International Criminal Court, the treaty for which had already been signed by Chile. Without the Court barbarism would continue to reign in the form of individual revenge or bilateral action. It was vital to democratize the international criminal system so that all were subject to international law, those accused were tried according to a clear-cut definition of criminal acts, and those deemed guilty, punished. In that connection, he congratulated Sir Jeremy on the elegant, clear-cut and broad approach being taken by the Committee. There had to be an understanding of terrorism, but the task of defining such acts had to be taken up broadly and democratically by all countries.

Mr. Belhaj (Morocco) thanked the IPU for convening the present meeting and welcomed the other gatherings devoted to the important subject under discussion. Ever since his country had achieved independence, it had consistently combated blind, cowardly terrorism. He would define as terrorists those who attacked a country with which they were not at war, not nations or citizens defending their freedom on their own soil -- struggles traditionally carried out by all peoples. Terrorism involved using reprehensible means, attacking unarmed civilians, preventing cooperation among nations or peoples. Morocco had never shrunk from combating vandalism of that kind, not even during the Cold War. Moroccans were well aware of the depredations by Carlos and his gang and had never hesitated to help the victims of terrorism.

The terrorist threat had now become more serious, threatening progress against poverty and illiteracy and the unification of peoples toward a more prosperous future. Against that scourge, civilized peoples and their parliaments had to take legislative and other measures, but given current inequalities, some countries were not as well equipped as others to implement such action. He called on the rich industrialized countries to provide developing nations with the technical, financial and professional assistance they needed to match the considerable means at the disposal of terrorists.

He and his fellow citizens presented their condolences to the American people and government. He called on all justice-loving peoples to cooperate in a spirit of brotherhood and understanding, including in the Middle East, where he hoped a human solution could be found with the help of the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and people of good will.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock, replying to Mr. Mannan's distinction between individual, group and State terrorism, said that the Security Council through its Counter-Terrorism Committee was deliberately placing the obligation for responding to terrorism on the shoulders of governments, and indeed parliaments and the whole state structure. The Committee was not itself making any such distinctions but helping countries to combat terrorism more efficiently, however they wished to define it. As Mr. Valdes had explained, Chile already had an official definition of terrorism. Countries who had ratified the relevant conventions had taken on their definition of terrorism in the process. In the speaker's experience, the term "State terrorism" had a metaphorical or rhetorical element to it, and there existed no single definition that all countries could agree upon. The Committee would not venture into the terrain where States could be arraigned for reprehensible action as defined under the Geneva conventions or in humanitarian law. Perhaps down the road, as Mr. Valdes had said, there would be a need for a court dealing with international terrorism, or an international executive agency for it, in the manner of Interpol. In the meantime, those accused of State terrorism had to be dealt with militarily, if justified under the United Nations Charter, or politically within the context of their regional conflict.

In reply to Mrs. Finestone, he said that the Committee's approach to preventing attacks of the kind witnessed in Israel was to make every country or authority more efficient in suppressing terrorism. That implied the need for a relationship with the Palestinian Authority requiring them to suppress terrorism within the territory under their jurisdiction. The Organization's resolutions did not apply to the Palestinian Authority, since it was an observer to the United Nations without vote, but he hoped that, like Switzerland, it would choose to respond to resolution 1373 (2001). In the long term, the aim was to raise the abhorrence of terrorism and those who allowed it to occur. Those who drifted close to that line might find themselves facing international action – perhaps, some day, action by an international tribunal.

That related to the comments of Mr. Belhaj. The General Assembly was having a problem in finalizing the framework convention on terrorism because certain Member States wished to distinguish terrorists from freedom-fighters. The Islamic States would like the convention to mention occupying powers and their responsibility to avoid terrorist action. Those were, once again, subjective judgments that could not be solved by consensus within the General Assembly. Since it was best for the convention to be adopted by consensus, rather than voted upon, either there would be no convention at all or the convention would not go into such distinctions but request that they be dealt with elsewhere, such as in the context of the regional or political conflict involved. For that, the understanding of Islamic States would be required.

Ms. Ionescu (Romania), Deputy Vice-President of the Romanian IPU Group, thanked Sir Jeremy for his presentation. Her country had been saddened by the events of 11 September and was chagrined to see that those acts had not been the last of their kind, having now been followed by fresh attacks in the Middle East. The fight against the scourge of terrorism had to be strengthened and broadened beyond governments to parliaments and international organizations.

In that context, her country was making amendments to existing legislation and considering drawing up a new law on terrorism that would comprise both prevention and sanctions. It would be important for Romania to learn how other countries had approached the problem, especially from the legislative point of view. In so far as the reports by Member States were concerned, she asked whether the Counter-Terrorism Committee might consider

collaborating with the IPU in disseminating those considered most effective as examples for other countries.

Mr. Karoui (Tunisia) thanked Sir Jeremy for his interesting presentation and reassured him that those who believed in human rights would pass along the message that fighting terrorism was everyone's business. Tunisia, which had experienced terrorism in 1984-1985, had joined other countries in condemning the acts committed in New York on 11 September.

The counter-measures currently being taken to address the problem were necessary in the short term, a way of treating the "symptoms" of terrorism, to use a medical metaphor. But over the longer term it was necessary to develop a "vaccine" – a strategy that addressed the root causes of terrorism. In that connection, he asked whether poverty, regional conflicts, fanaticism and religious fundamentalism (not Islam as such) were slated for study in the Counter-Terrorism Committee or elsewhere in the United Nations.

If counter-measures were to be harmonized, a consensus was needed on the definition of terrorism. He believed that the IPU could contribute to facilitating a common understanding by creating a task force on the subject.

Mr. Saporito (Italy) agreed that the Committee should go forward without worrying about definitions of terrorism, but in terms of the basic problem he favoured an intermediate position as compared with Mr. Karoui. Many conventions had already been adopted by the General Assembly, which meant that a legal framework already existed. Between that international legal framework and that of the IPU, it would be possible to reach an acceptable definition, without sacrificing the individual spirit of parliaments who wished to move forward against terrorism.

Mr. Milushev (Bulgaria) said that a single question faced the world at the dawn of a new century – whether mankind would continue to pursue its historical path of development, progress and civilization, and continue to wage the eternal struggle of good against evil. Only if the world united against terrorism could the miracle of civilization be preserved.

Mr. Fjuk (Estonia) asked whether the Committee would examine the impact of 11 September on migrants and asylum seekers, and whether it would put forward any proposals.

Mr. Davis (United Kingdom), also representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, said that if subjective judgments were not to be relied upon, the appropriate place to decide whether someone was a terrorist was a court of law. An international court of law had to have internationally agreed definitions. If coming up with such definitions was not the responsibility of the Committee or the Security Council, whose job was it?

Mr. Enright (Ireland), also representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, said that in his country, which had suffered from struggles for generations and especially since the mid-1960s, different definitions of terrorism and its causes had held sway at different times. However, with the cooperation of successive UK and Irish prime ministers and with the help of US presidents, most notably Bill Clinton, dialogue and discussion had been set in motion. The road had been rocky, and progress had alternated with setbacks, but peace had been achieved. He was alarmed by the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and wondered how the United Nations could help replicate Ireland's success in that troubled region.

Mr. Tepshi (Albania), expressing his country's solidarity with the American people, said that since 11 September the Albanian parliament had taken the fight against terrorism seriously and committed itself to fulfilling its European and international obligations. The parliament would review the action taken in various national spheres both quarterly and semiannually.

Mr. Malofeev (Belarus) asked whether the Counter-Terrorism Committee might consider opening representations in specific regions and even in some individual countries where governments lacked the capacity to combat terrorism. He further asked whether the Committee working jointly with the IPU could develop model legislation on the proper role of the mass media, which reacted in ways that sometimes helped terrorists achieve their goals.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock said that he found Mr. Bindea's suggestion of disseminating national best practice through the IPU very interesting. There were good models of counter-terrorism legislation, and the Committee intended to collect them as part of its monitoring process, but national structures could act either on their own or in subregional groupings which shared a language without having to come through the Committee. The Committee would be happy to interact with any working group on the subject that the IPU might set up.

Mr. Karoui had aptly referred to a long-term strategy for combating terrorism. In any form of organized crime, it was said, the offence was ahead of the defence, which tended to take measures only after the fact. It was necessary to devise a long-term strategy that would prevent terrorism from growing cells to the point where they could take action. Inter-country collaboration was essential because of the ease with which terrorists crossed porous borders. As for the root causes, he believed that the United Nations as a whole was taking a new look at what constituted a catchment area for terrorists, but nothing could explain what prompted someone to cross the line from hatred and resentment over to indiscriminate murder.

He applauded Mr. Saporito in defending the right of individual parliaments to do what they could. Even global conventions had to be translated into local law, so parliamentarians had perforce to address the problem of definitions.

Mr. Fjuk had raised a very broad issue indeed, that of singling out asylum seekers and others with honourable and justified intentions. The relationship between liberty and security had shifted since 11 September. Absolute liberty and absolute security were incompatible and it would be for parliamentarians to judge where the pendulum ought to stop. His Committee would be taking advice on protecting human rights and asylum in the fight against terrorism.

Regarding the Middle East, an issue that deserved a session to itself, he agreed that the example of Ireland was one that should be followed. Commenting personally, he said that negotiations on a conflict as deep as the Israeli-Palestinian issue were for peoples, not for governments alone -- just as in Ireland and the United Kingdom, where ultimately the peoples' demand for an end to terrorism had made it possible for the governments to come to agreement.

Replying to Mr. Tepshi, Sir Jeremy agreed that coordination and collaboration between countries and groupings was the right path. The Committee might be able to facilitate that process. However, care was needed in responding to Mr. Malofeev: mass media were not in the remit of the Committee, which would stick to the letter of resolution 1373 (2001) while attempting to engender a spirit of coordination among all concerned.

The Chairman thanked Sir Jeremy for his thought-provoking, well presented and candid comments and hoped the dialogue would continue. A spirit of candour would indeed be needed to face the challenges at hand. He then introduced Ms. Carolyn McAskie, who would add the necessary humanitarian components to the United Nation's political action and share the Organization's efforts to include the gender dimension in its endeavours.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie, Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, began by sketching the background to her work.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was a fairly new department formed in response to the need for leadership authority, given the increasing numbers of humanitarian emergencies and players on the scene. The Office appointed humanitarian coordinators in the field charged with bringing together all humanitarian actors in a given crisis country. Such coordinators were now operating in around 20 countries, not only Afghanistan, but the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Angola, Burundi, and in the north Caucasus.

Apart from coordination on the ground, OCHA had a second and growing role: coordinating and integrating humanitarian elements into the policy and operational discussions at United Nations headquarters, working closely with colleagues in peacekeeping, development and political affairs. The Security Council in recent years had become more involved in the humanitarian agenda, including the protection of civilians in armed conflict, in which civilians were increasingly not merely unintended victims but deliberate targets. Alongside the protection of civilians, coordination was needed more than ever in the multilateral provision of impartial assistance to all sides in conflicts – a dangerous job. Just two years ago, more humanitarian workers than peacekeepers were being killed in the line of duty.

The Office also helped mobilize the international community to respond to the needs of those involved in conflict. One approach to defining those needs was to bring together all players on the ground in a given country to analyse problems, develop common humanitarian action plans and agree on the financial resources required. "Consolidated appeals" had been launched by the Secretary-General as a fund-raising tool to finance the humanitarian work of the Organization and its partners, including the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which also had effective fund-raising mechanisms of their own.

In the last analysis, the United Nations could not reach its goals, however well thought out, without the financial support of Member States. Parliamentarians played a vital role in that process, debating budgets and deciding on allocations. Aid to multilateral humanitarian action had decreased steadily over the years, with donors preferring to give aid bilaterally but nevertheless relying increasingly on the United Nations for coordination of the complex response. For the year 2001, 22 appeals totalling US\$ 2.5 billion had been launched, but divided among over 20 countries and 30 million people directly in crisis, the amount paled into insignificance compared with military expenditure. For example, at the time of the Somalia crisis, the cost of feeding a US soldier was 600 times the cost of feeding a displaced Somali.

As certain crises peaked, becoming media events, it became easier to raise money for them. Conversely, many crises tended to recede from view. Prior to 11 September Afghans were dying of cold and famine for lack of humanitarian assistance in a crisis generated by 20 years of war and three years of drought. In 2000, only 45% of those needs could be met. The

irony was that it had taken the terrorist acts of 11 September to focus attention on Afghanistan. The speaker wondered whether the international community would continue to be interested in Afghanistan two or three years ahead, when the country's needs would be just as great.

Fund-raising for humanitarian needs suffered from regional distortions; for example, there was a natural tendency for Europeans to focus on Kosovo, though people were also suffering in many countries of Africa and in Indonesia, with its massive population displacement. It also suffered from sectoral distortions, with money being easier to raise for food than for water and sanitation, education or health.

For 2002 new appeals totaling \$2.5 billion had been launched. This highlighted many issues, including the challenge of getting access to people trapped behind rebel lines. Again in 2001 security remained a problem. Humanitarian workers had died not only in the course of conflict but also because they had been deliberately targeted in order to discourage the international community from reaching people with assistance.

Finally, she turned to an issue highlighted in the consolidated appeals of 2000, namely the protection of women in crises and the positive role they could play in such situations. The Security Council had engaged in a ground-breaking discussion on women and peace and security that had resulted in resolution 1325 (2000) highlighting women's critical role in making and building peace. The United Nations was attempting to bring women into that process in Afghanistan. Strategies were needed to prevent women from becoming victims, for instance when they were left at home when men joined or were abducted into armed groups, or when they were exposed to rape on the road or in refugee camps. For example, women had to be consulted on where to locate water sources in a refugee camp. The decision could not be left just to the engineers, who might place them on the edge of the camp instead of in the centre, where women could access them without risking sexual assault. Rape was not an occasional occurrence but a systematic practice in societies that had broken down, and was even used as a weapon of war and intimidation. Afghani women also needed help and protection in pregnancy, in caring for small children, and in rejoining the workforce. At the same time, they had to be brought into the decision-making process as in Somalia, where women had participated in the consultations leading up to the transitional national government.

She concluded by appealing for support from parliaments worldwide for the United Nations, which was at work providing and coordinating humanitarian assistance in countries suffering manmade and natural disasters, in and out of the media spotlight.

Mrs. Finestone (Canada) thanked her compatriot Ms. McAskie for the comprehensive report and the chilling portrait of women in crisis situations. She asked whether any action had been taken on treating rape in war as a war crime, as discussed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. In connection with the consolidated appeals for US\$ 2.5 billion, she wondered whether it would be worth while to review the public relations aspect of fund-raising. The Inter-Parliamentary Union reached all corners of the globe. If the IPU had the appropriate documents, they could aid the fund-raising effort among its 149 members. The IPU was already actively collaborating with other United Nations bodies, notably with UNDP in the promotion of education and democracy-building.

Drawing attention to the Ottawa Convention on antipersonnel land mines, she said that those weapons were still making 1500-2000 victims a month despite land mine clearance. She suggested that the 122 countries that had signed the Convention might want to look not

only at mine clearance but at the human face of suffering and the need for prostheses, rehabilitation, training and reinsertion into society. Fund-raising concepts such as the "Night of the Thousand Dinners", in which hosts in North America had received altogether 17 000 guests, could be circulated as examples of public-private partnerships in aid of United Nations efforts.

Mr. Mannan (Bangladesh) felt that, given the bureaucracy involved, the United Nations might wish to hand over emergency relief work to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and simply oversee the operations.

Mr. Belhaj (Morocco) recognized that the United Nations had achieved a great deal in humanitarian aid but the problems had become so diverse and complex that a Marshall-type plan for Africa and Asia might be preferable. For some time, King Hassan II had proposed to donor countries that instead of spending money on individual crises, they could help fund a broad development plan that could reduce tensions, avoid child deaths, narrow the gender gap, and even diminish opportunities for terrorism.

Mr. Timmermans (Netherlands), also representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, said he had been impressed by Ms. McAskie's presentation of the problems faced. It was a real challenge to get across the need for post-conflict rehabilitation and structural development once a crisis had disappeared from the television screen. He asked what the United Nations intended to do to convince donors to meet those needs, especially when frustratingly few industrialized countries practised what they preached, namely - the obligation to give 0.7% of their gross national product as official development assistance. Just a few days ago the world had marked World AIDS Day; he asked how the struggle against that epidemic - and against the rape that helped fuel it - could be integrated into the humanitarian effort.

Ms. Carolyn McAskie said that Mrs. Finestone's idea of using the good offices of the IPU for advocacy and fund-raising was excellent. A new director of advocacy had just been appointed in OCHA and a series of measures was being developed. The issue of land mines was also intricately linked to the humanitarian affairs. The UN office in Afghanistan was currently running the largest demining operation in the world. Both demining and working with the victims of land mines were high priorities for the international humanitarian community.

In reply to the intriguing proposal from Mr. Mannan, she said that the United Nations enjoyed close cooperation with the Red Cross. In fact, the Office had been created by a unique General Assembly resolution that gave the United Nations coordination responsibility not just over United Nations staff but over Red Cross and NGO actors as well. However, she doubted whether the ICRC or the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which she admired for their advocacy and field work and their links with national Red Cross societies, had the capacity or desire to take over the entire United Nations operations.

Mr. Belhaj had raised the issue of continuing crises and their prevention. The United Nations was working seriously on those matters, and the resolution of global conflicts was high on the Secretary-General's agenda. As for a new Marshall plan, the idea had been discussed in the context of both Kosovo and Afghanistan. The original plan had been conceived and launched by a single government, at the end of the Second World War, however. Replicating it today would require agreement among a coalition of countries. If the Organisation's Member States were to take up that challenge, the Secretariat would welcome it.

She paid tribute to the leadership shown by the Netherlands in meeting its financial commitments and ranking among the United Nations' biggest donors. In reply to Mr. Timmermans, she said that advocacy for commitment could be carried out by both the Secretariat and Member States.

Securing timely commitment was a constant dilemma. For instance, if the political process had focused on analysing the consequences of neglect in Afghanistan, the present crisis might have been averted. To address that problem, the United Nations was trying to refine its early-warning and contingency planning tools. Above all, the Secretary-General was committed to dealing with conflicts on the political and socio-economic levels as well as the humanitarian level, as he was doing in Afghanistan with the appointment of Mr. Brahimi, his former political representative. But the challenge remained of convincing governments to invest in prevention. It was a hundred times easier to mobilize funds for an existing crisis, with its vivid images in the media, than to get parliaments to focus on an impending problem that could be averted at a tiny cost compared with that of managing the full-blown crisis. Once governments had the full analysis and all the statistics at their disposal, the choice would be theirs.

Mr. Tepshi (Albania) thanked Ms. McAskie for mentioning humanitarian aid to the peoples of Kosovo, which had been plundered by the terrorist regime of Milosevic and had suffered massacres on a scale not seen since the Second World War. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had turned the situation around, enabling the people of Kosovo to live and contribute in their own way to the stability of Europe.

Mr. Grogan (United Kingdom) asked whether in the longer term Ms. McAskie would favour a system of funding through a truly consolidated appeal so that the Secretariat could allocate assistance according to need rather than having the availability of funds depend on the momentary popularity of one crisis or another.

Ms. McAskie noted that the United Kingdom's Department for International Development was hosting a meeting on that very subject on 10 December. She said that Mr. Grogan's proposal was part of the solution, but there could be no single answer unless governments were prepared to be assessed contributions according to a budgetary formula. At present, governments financed parts of the consolidated appeal according to their own priorities, including direct financing to NGOs, which was a fine thing. Having all donors contribute to a "common pot" that would be divided up according to need, transparently and with accountability by the Secretariat, would certainly facilitate the rational movement of funds from one crisis to another. That flexibility would have been welcome in January 2001, when the international community had sent 30 expensive search-and-rescue teams to Gujarat while, next door in Afghanistan, hundreds of thousands of people had descended on Herat and children were dying of cold for lack of tents and shelter. The potential disadvantage of a common pot was that it might bring in less money in total than might be mobilized by letting a hundred flowers bloom and appealing to a wide spectrum of interests. What was needed was a combination of both approaches, with a core amount available for rapid allocation to priorities that were not in the public's eye.

The Chairman thanked Ms. McAskie for her passionate plea to the world's parliaments. Judging from the response of participants, it had been heeded.

Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, said that in a few days' time the General Assembly would be debating the nature and direction of cooperation with the IPU and other international organizations, and he encouraged participants to co-sponsor the draft resolution on the subject. Discussion of the relationship between the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs and the IPU was to be postponed to 2002, however. He also drew attention to the availability of IPU documents, including a new quarterly review entitled *The World of Parliaments*, and assured participants that they would soon receive a summary record of the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Sir Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

Sir Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, said that he was always pleased to participate in meetings with parliamentarians, who preferred interaction to lectures. He would begin by presenting a menu of his Department's current concerns, after which participants could inquire more deeply about any or all of them.

The terrible events of 11 September had changed everything at the United Nations, as elsewhere. Once the second plane had hit and it had become clear that the first crash had not been mere pilot error, a decision had been taken to evacuate the Headquarters building and postpone the opening of the General Assembly, scheduled for the afternoon of 11 September. Both the Assembly and the Security Council had met the next day and by acclamation adopted a first resolution -- this despite a second closure of the building after the US authorities had warned of a credible threat against the United Nations, which had been on the terrorists' list for action in 1993 in connection with the first attack on the World Trade Center.

Resolution 1373 (2001), passed by the Security Council on 28 September, required Member States to report by 27 December on the measures they had taken against terrorism. That resolution was unique: it had been adopted under Chapter 7 of the Charter, making it mandatory, was extremely broad in its scope, and was applicable to all Member States. As a result, the Secretariat's workload had increased sharply. For example, he had been asked by the Secretary-General to chair a policy working group on the United Nations and terrorism, not to replicate work by other bodies but to uncover gaps in action, identify interfaces, and see where the United Nations could best contribute. Paradoxically, the terrorist acts of 11 September had already improved certain sets of bilateral relations -- between the United States and the Russian Federation, for example, and between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the USA. They had also lowered the tolerance for terrorism and altered thinking about terrorists versus freedom-fighters; that might have been a factor in the decision by the Irish Republic Army to supervise destruction of some of its arms caches.

The terrorist attacks had also had a direct impact on Afghanistan, leading to the disintegration of the Taliban and, he hoped, to the launch of a longer-term peace process that would put the country back on its feet and end decades of suffering for the ordinary people. It was essential that the Bonn accord, once signed, should be implemented faithfully. The possibility of amnesty was a difficult issue; the Secretariat had insisted that amnesty not be considered for crimes against humanity or serious human rights offences. An international force of some kind would, in his view, be necessary to provide impartial security in the capital. The United Nations was also encouraging the international community to focus on the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of Afghanistan.

The Middle East situation was receiving attention but the recent signs were not encouraging, apart from the greater involvement of the United States. There was simply no alternative to a peaceful solution to the Israel-Palestine problem. Unfortunately, the bitterness and erosion of confidence were not helped either by suicide bombings or by an iron-fist policy. A mechanism for international involvement had been established in the form of a "Quartet" comprising the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and the Russian Federation.

In Africa, Burundi now had a transitional government incorporating both Tutsis and Hutus and enjoying more legitimacy than in the past, although unfortunately the security situation had deteriorated because two major armed groups remained outside the process. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a solution hinged on making progress in intra-Congolese dialogue. A meeting in Addis Abeba on 15 October had not been successful, mainly because of financial constraints on the numbers of participants. Efforts were under way to resuscitate what was called "the spirit of Gaborone" at a forthcoming meeting in South Africa. Both Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo were part of a larger nexus of problems around the Great Lakes; the United Nations was promoting the idea of a long-standing conference for that region, along the lines of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

In Sudan, where conflict had scarcely stopped since independence in 1956, the United Nations was stepping up its involvement to restart the stalled peace initiative. Sudan's conflict was far worse in terms of duration and human suffering than anything in Europe and deserved the full attention of the international community.

The United Nations was continuing to push the international community to be more proactive in conflict prevention, which was one of the Secretary-General's four main priorities for his second term of office.

The Chairman thanked Sir Kieran for his overarching presentation and invited participants to select points from it or related issues for their comments and questions.

Mr. Timmermans (Netherlands), also representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, asked whether the interesting idea of an OSCE for Africa might come to include all countries on the continent and inquired how it was intended to deal with the many actors, especially in the Great Lakes region, that could not be represented at State level.

He also asked about the Caucasus and especially Georgia. Given the heightened tensions between Georgia and the Russian Federation, what was the current situation and was a role in conflict prevention foreseen for the United Nations?

Mr. Malofeev (Belarus) asked for Sir Kieran's views concerning the creation of a representative government in Afghanistan that could deal not only with terrorism but with the challenges of economic rehabilitation. If those challenges remained unmet, the situation was bound to deteriorate locally and have serious regional consequences. In the short term it would be difficult to arrive at a solution but some thoughts on how to proceed were already on the table. His country was not a direct neighbour of Afghanistan but no State could be indifferent to the potential terrorist threat; Belarus was committed to cooperation with the United Nations in the fight against terrorism.

Mr. Karoui (Tunisia) observed that Africa, with its 18 open conflicts, had the highest rate of population growth in the world, the lowest economic growth rate and the lowest rate of industrialization, the least direct foreign investment, the greatest number of refugees and displaced persons, and 70% of the world's HIV-positive people. It was hard to avoid the conclusion that Africa's conflict situations were linked with under-development and poverty. Many United Nations initiatives had been put forward, including the Secretary-General's New Partnership for Africa's Development, but none had achieved all its objectives.

He proposed the establishment of a think-tank in the framework of the IPU. The aim of the group would be to broaden the discussion about Africa's problems and put forward solutions that, with the help of the international donor community and international financial institutions, might be able to alleviate the difficulties facing an entire continent that had thus far been left out of economic, social and technological globalization.

Tunisia had a "2626 Fund", which financed small rapid-impact development projects. Thanks to that fund, the percentage of people living below the poverty line was now 4.2%, down from 7.7% in 1985 and 22% in 1975, and both stability and social peace had been enhanced. Building on the country's practical experience, the President of the Republic of Tunisia had proposed the creation of a Global Solidarity Fund, financed by voluntary contributions from countries and financial institutions, which would assist the poorest people and regions of Africa through similar small-scale projects.

He asked what the United Nations' strategy was for motivating the international community to undertake initiatives for equitable and non-discriminatory development on a world scale.

Mr. Bársony (Hungary), also representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, observed that in conflicts, one side was typically a recognized State while the other was an underground organization not recognized by the international community. What then was the strategy of the United Nations in dealing with parties who could never be sanctioned under international law? In the Middle East, as well as in Rwanda and Afghanistan, one side could be influenced and punished but not the other.

Ms. Carroll (Canada), also representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, said that women could play a very important role in Afghanistan's post-war situation. She asked for an update on women's involvement in the Bonn negotiations.

Sir Kieran Prendergast, replying to Mr. Timmermans, said that the idea of an OSCE-type body was for the Great Lakes region. In parts of Africa he had seen how personal tiffs between leaders could easily damage relations between States. Relationships between countries could be put on a less precarious footing if they had an objective set of standards and obligations as reference point. The OSCE final document, which allowed individual Member States to complain or interfere when they believed another Member State was not living up to its obligations, had brought about a revolution of that kind in Europe. In his view, a similar document for the Great Lakes region should include chapters on political matters, human rights, and, very importantly, economics, since greater cooperation in trade could raise living standards and contribute to political stability. Such a format was admittedly imperfect, and would not readily accommodate non-State actors, but it might well be an improvement over the current state of affairs.

Georgia was one of the many conflict situations with United Nations involvement that he had not mentioned. The United Nations mission in Georgia, in place for a number of years, illustrated a few basic principles. One was that the Organization could not intervene unless it was invited to do so by the parties. Second, the United Nations did not duplicate or compete with negotiating initiatives taken by regional organizations. For example, within Georgia the United Nations was involved in the dispute between the Georgian Government and the Abkhaz authorities, while Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh were dealt with by the OSCE. He noted that the European Union and the OSCE were increasingly asserting themselves in the Balkans, an initiative that he welcomed.

On the subject of Afghanistan, he agreed with Mr. Malofeev that the aim was to help establish a broad, inclusive, ethnically diverse government that would pursue a different course from the Taliban with regard to terrorism. He further agreed that stability could only come from a government that enjoyed broad internal support and hence broad external support. The United Nations was also pushing for a structure elastic enough to accommodate important groups who were under-represented or not represented at Bonn.

He further agreed that, in our interdependent world, it was essential for the international community not to repeat the error of forgetting Afghanistan, where terrorism had, not surprisingly, taken root and flourished. Afghanistan needed sustained attention over the long term, and the rest of the world had to stay the course.

Mr. Civili, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, would soon be addressing the meeting on the subject of development. The Secretary-General, as spokesman for the majority of the world's population that lived in poverty, consistently asserted that no peoples or parts of the world could be regarded as less deserving of safe drinking water, primary health care, human rights and so on. Concerning Africa in particular, the feeling within the United Nations was that it was time to move on from reports to action. The Secretary-General applauded those taking debt-forgiveness initiatives. What was needed was a partnership arrangement whereby the poorer countries put their house in order with market economies and good governance, and the richer countries had the moral obligation to aid their development.

With regard to Mr. Bársony's valid point about the different sides to a conflict, the speaker hoped that the State was not always assumed to be the good side and the non-State actor the bad one. In fact, experience showed that conflicts tended to erupt in States that offered no proper outlet for the redress of legitimate grievances. Sanctions were not always the answer; they were blunt instruments and the United Nations was hoping to refine and target them better.

Since the 1980s most of the conflicts dealt with had been internal – a huge change from 1945, when the Charter assumed that the Organization was there to regulate conflicts between States. Academics were assuring the United Nations that the number of conflicts had in fact peaked in 1992. His own staff saw that as evidence of successful conflict prevention, but personally he resisted arguing *post hoc ergo propter hoc*.

In reply to Mrs. Carroll, he said the United Nations had been somewhat more successful than expected in pressing the delegations at Bonn to include women representatives. Women were serving in all four delegations as delegates, alternates and advisers. As far as the draft agreement was concerned, the speaker believed there was general agreement that the Deputy Chairman of the new interim authority should be a woman and

that there should significant representation of women in the interim and then the transitional authority.

Mr. Mannan (Bangladesh) asked whether Sir Kieran was in favour of the granting of observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union by the General Assembly. Querying the name of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, he proposed that it be changed to the Committee on Combat Terrorism.

Mr. Belhaj (Morocco) said that Sir Kieran had sketched a fairly unappetizing menu. He noted that the United Nations, by attacking problems at a late stage, left countries open to destabilization. With the need for United Nations involvement growing around the world, the Organization had to become more proactive and act as soon as a problem arose. What was the policy in that regard?

Sir Kieran Prendergast, replying to Mr. Mannan, said that the Secretary-General's report of June 2001 recommended giving a standing invitation to the IPU to attend the General Assembly and its organs and conferences. He hoped that the Assembly would approve that recommendation. He also noted that the Committee in question had first been called the Terrorism Committee and later renamed. He doubted whether a further name change was feasible.

In reply to Mr. Belhaj, the speaker observed that in practice the great majority of Member States attached more importance to national sovereignty and non-interference than to anything else. They possibly feared that if precedents to the contrary were set, they might come back to haunt them. For the Secretariat, it was a constant frustration not to be allowed to help proactively with a problem, either because the government did not recognize the problem or was convinced it could overcome it alone. The result was United Nations involvement that came very late or too late.

The Chairman thanked Sir Kieran and assured him that his presentation would help further dialogue on the subject. He then welcomed Mr. Patrizio Civili, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. Mr. Civili was a long-time friend of the IPU, which had benefited from his counsel.

Mr. Patrizio Civili, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, said that he welcomed the opportunity to present highlights of the Organization's work in the economic and social field to parliamentarians, who had a key role in maintaining their Governments' commitment to building peace and advancing development. The relationship between the United Nations and parliaments had taken on a new dimension with the Millennium Declaration, in which heads of State had pledged to strengthen that relationship as a way of enhancing the Organization's capacity to meet the commitments embodied in the Declaration.

The economic as well as the political environment was still reverberating from the shock of 11 September and the full impact was not yet known. On the positive side, those terrible acts had elicited a spirit of global solidarity in confronting terrorism that he hoped would translate into similar solidarity in fighting the violence inherent in poverty, malnutrition and disease. The main priority was for renewed cooperation to ensure that globalization benefited all the world's people.

Globalization was the main force to be harnessed against poverty. The potential that it embodies for freeing the creativity and the productive capabilities of peoples was tremendous. For this potential to be realized, however, it was essential that its downsides, in all their complexities should be addressed. The challenge of spreading the benefits was one side of the coin. The other side was shielding developing countries economies from the effects of economic downturns. The United Nations was convinced that globalization could indeed be managed. For that the world needed international governance and rules, international cooperation, and a sustained commitment to multilateralism.

From recent meetings, such as the launch at Doha of a new round of talks on global commerce, there were signs that the commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism was picking up. That commitment would be tested by several major international events in 2002.

Mr. Civili first referred to the Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002. While Monterrey could only be the starting point of a new phase of progress, he hoped that three concrete advances would emerge. First, Monterrey should help advance a consensus on the domestic conditions and policies that were most conducive to development and to the creation of a hospitable investment climate.

Second, the Conference had to reiterate and refine the basic proposition that aid remained indispensable for many countries and that, used appropriately, it could accelerate development and reduce poverty. There had to be a mutual commitment to improve aid effectiveness and hopefully commitments by donors to increase the quantity of ODA within certain timeframes. The United Nations was indeed hopeful that these commitments could add up to a doubling of current levels of ODA in the short term, as a landmark toward longer term commitments. Lastly, he hoped that the Monterrey Conference would recognize the need for developing countries to play a greater role in financial decision-making processes, in keeping with their participation in the global economy.

The Conference was being prepared through a process of unprecedented collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, which were strongly committed to its success. Those innovations had to be built on in the future and in the conference follow-up phase. Mr. de Rojas, the Executive Coordinator of the Conference, would shortly be providing an update on the preparations.

The next milestone for multilateralism would be the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August 2002. There, participants would review the implementation of Agenda 21 and related outcomes of the Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and identify concrete ways of improving its implementation.

Preparations at national and regional levels were proceeding apace, for example through national Sustainable Development Councils and regional round tables and intergovernmental meetings. Preparations at global level would begin with the first Preparatory Committee in New York in January 2002. In the meantime, Mr. Desai, the Secretary-General of the Summit, had addressed the General Assembly and drawn attention to the potential for progress on at least three fronts at the Summit.

First, the Johannesburg Summit could strengthen the integration between anti-poverty programmes and actions in the area of the environment and natural resources. With 70-75%

of the world's poor living in rural areas, poverty alleviation had to involve action from combating land degradation to improving water management. Second, Johannesburg had to focus on the long-term sustainability of both consumption and production. According to a recent report of the World Wide Fund for Nature, demands on the natural ecosystem were 30% higher than the system could handle. The twofold challenge involved not only addressing ways of finding more sustainable consumption patterns in OECD countries; but also, it had to be recognized that there was a dire need for consumption to increase in developing countries and to reflect on how to meet these needs in a sustainable manner. Third, Mr. Desai was challenging the Summit to look more broadly at the overall impact that development efforts were having on the ecosystem and its sustainability.

Mr. Civili added that if the Summit were to be successful, it could not neglect the issue of the technical and financial means at the disposal of developing countries wishing to implement agreements on sustainable development. That pointed up the importance of making the Monterrey and Johannesburg conferences mutually reinforcing.

Alongside those major events, the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations was making an ongoing contribution to strengthening multilateralism and deserved the support of parliamentarians. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the body that oversaw the Organization's development work, was coordinating and integrating the follow-up to the first round of global conferences in the mid-1990s.

ECOSOC was also at the forefront of innovation in the United Nations. To begin with, it had opened its doors more broadly to the private sector, notably in its ministerial discussions (information technology, 2000; Africa, 2001). The most recent example of innovation was the new United Nations Task Force on Information and Communication Technology launched a few weeks earlier with the aim of generating a new impetus and mobilizing new efforts and policies for bridging the digital divide. The Task Force was unique among United Nations bodies in that its representatives were on an equal footing, whether they came from Governments, the private sector, NGOs, the scientific community or foundations, signaling the recognition that new partnerships were key to harnessing the information revolution to the achievement of international goals.

His main message, Mr. Civili said, was that the Organization hoped to count on the support of parliamentarians in sustaining the renewed and vital commitment to multilateralism. Through their interaction with Governments and their work on legislation, parliaments could underpin the commitments made for development and ensure that they were translated into legislation and action where it counted the most – at the national level.

Parliamentarians were also key to informing people at the grassroots level about the development agenda. In developed countries, parliaments had a vital role in motivating people and Governments to allocate the necessary resources to debt relief and ODA and to open their markets to the products of the developing world, in a spirit of solidarity and, equally, in their long-term self-interest. Indeed, one of the major weaknesses in implementing the conferences of the 1990s had been inadequate commitment at the grassroots and national levels, on which parliamentarians could have such a positive influence.

Last but certainly not least, he stressed that parliamentarians had been making an increasingly important collective contribution through their Inter-Parliamentary Union. The IPU had brought not just political but also substantive inputs to United Nations meetings, including the Millennium Summit. He noted that the topics chosen for the next IPU

conference (Marrakech, March 2002) could not be more central to the concerns of the United Nations: the role of parliaments in an era of globalization, multilateral institutions and international trade agreements; and global environmental degradation and parliamentary support for the Kyoto Protocol. The Secretary General of the IPU had brought unprecedented intellectual, moral and political energy to the relationship with the United Nations, and that energy was having a growing impact.

Mr. Oscar de Rojas, Executive Secretary of the Financing for Development Secretariat, Executive Coordinator of the Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, March 2002, began by thanking Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, for his early interest in the Monterrey conference and his offers of assistance. The IPU had already made important contributions to the conference.

The speaker said that the Monterrey Conference represented important departures from earlier conferences. There were three major innovations. First, at Monterrey, the United Nations would work closely with the Bretton Woods institutions, which were already key players. Secondly, the Conference would be open to civil society, including the business community. In fact, the Conference would focus on the issue of private capital for development. Finally, a holistic approach would be taken at the national level too so that country delegations would include representatives of the ministry of finance, not just of the ministry for foreign affairs, and perhaps also heads of government.

As for the IPU, it could also contribute by holding a special gathering prior to the Monterrey Conference, as the NGO and business communities planned to do. Such a gathering would help to feed the views of parliamentarians into the official Conference.

Up to the present, the accreditation of the IPU at such conferences had been akin to that of NGOs. Ambassador de Rojas said he was happy that the IPU might soon be recognized as an intergovernmental organization (IGO) and given the same status at Monterrey as the European Community and the OECD.

Mr. Soda (Italy) noted from Mr. Civili's presentation that there was a need to finalize measures to protect the economies of the developing countries and ensure they had the benefits rather than the fall-out of globalization. He asked for further details concerning such measures, which could either be initiated by individual Governments or form part of reform regulations and guidelines for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Such measures were indispensable; in their absence, competition among unequal partners would merely aggravate existing imbalances.

Mr. Tarolli (Italy) extended greetings to his compatriot Mr. Civili and asked whether his reference to "greater opening of markets" covered capital flows or market rules and regulations. The speaker described the Italian approach to debt relief, which made debt cancellation conditional on the renunciation of armed conflicts, respect for human rights and similar commitments. An important innovation in that approach was recourse to the International Court of Justice in the Hague for monitoring the recipient country's adherence to the commitments it had made. More generally, the speaker wondered whether there would not be some advantage in having international accountability to ensure that open markets went hand in hand with progress in other spheres, such as respect for the rule of law and financial transparency, to ensure aid effectiveness. On another matter, he considered that people in both developing and developed countries had the right and obligation to have access to information on debt and development. Just as for counter-terrorism, it would be useful to set

up a contact point or observatory in every country where ordinary citizens, NGOs and others could seek detailed information. That would give civil society the instruments it needed to fulfil its obligations. On a final point, he believed that individuals, NGOs and businesses should receive tax incentives for investing in development abroad.

Mr. Bindea (Romania) said that his country had hosted various regional meetings related to the forthcoming conference on sustainable development. Sustainable development was based on democracy, transparency and the involvement of public opinion in decision-making and thus was heavily dependent on parliaments. That made it crucial for the United Nations to increase its cooperation with the IPU. The speaker asked Mr. Civili how he saw the content of that cooperation evolving. He also asked what policy the United Nations had for integrating human rights and social and environmental concerns into the work of the international financial institutions.

Mr. Guajardo Villarreal (Mexico) said that, analysing the issue of financing for development from the Mexican point of view, he had observed that most of the problems of public and private financing stemmed from a generally inadequate legal structure in so far as banking guarantees were concerned. The lack of a law specifically defining such guarantees had been the main culprit in most of the private financing problems encountered. As for financing by public institutions, the Mexican Congress was working on a law to redefine it.

He stressed that parliamentary participation at Monterrey should be organized by the IPU and proposed that the agenda should include an inter-parliamentary exchange of experience with the definition of a legal framework for banking regulations, for both private banks and public development institutions. On behalf of the Mexican Congress, he offered his help in organizing the session with the IPU.

Mr. Mannan (Bangladesh) thanked Mr. Civili and Ambassador de Rojas for their presentations. The developing countries were finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the decisions of the World Trade Organization, for example, on trade-related matters with regard to child labour, trade unions and environmental issues. He asked whether Mr. Civili's Department could use its good offices with the WTO to help them overcome such difficulties.

Mr. Belhaj (Morocco) wished to congratulate Mr. Civili once again on an excellent report. Conflicting forces were at work, including in Morocco, but his country was not against free trade; quite the contrary. Coming to the economic dimension of fighting terrorism, he said there was one precondition: debt relief. If trade were to be effective in combating poverty and terrorism, then it was crucial for the industrialized countries to grant debt relief. He urged his fellow parliamentarians to work to that end at home.

Mr. Oliver (Canada) said he had been encouraged to learn that both the Monterrey and the Johannesburg conferences would be open to civil society, including the business sector. He hoped that the business sector would not be limited to banks. With Western countries going into recession, governments lacked money for development. In countries such as Canada, large pools of capital were, however, available in pension funds and mutual funds, which had the right to make foreign investments. Along with the IPU, those groups should be invited to participate so they could learn about investment opportunities outside Canada.

Mr. Patrizio Civili said that Mr. Soda had rightly perceived his desire for a balance between measures for spreading the benefits of globalization and measures for protecting vulnerable economies. As for the solution, he thought it lay in a combination of individual

countries' policy choices and reform of international financial institutions; both those issues were on the agenda of the Monterrey Conference. He stressed that reform had to include not only giving a greater voice to developing countries in individual Bretton Woods institutions, but also gradually ensuring that the various parts of the whole system worked better together so as to be mutually reinforcing and ensure greater overall policy coherence through ECOSOC's meetings with the heads of those institutions.

He agreed with Mr. Tarolli's distinction between the opening of markets and oversight of the movement of capital. He also agreed with the various speakers who had pointed to durable solutions to the debt problem as a key condition for progress. The United Nations' role in debt relief was to stimulate initiatives; it had had some influence on the handling of the debt problem but much more needed to be done. The Italian Government's initiative was exemplary and deserved to be replicated.

He welcomed the emphasis placed on information and transparency. The reform of public administrations had been a recent focus of his Department's Division for Public Administration which had held a number of meetings on this topic, along with the Department of Public Administration, much of the work being done in close collaboration with the Italian Government.

Concerning what the United Nations called "aid effectiveness", that too was on the Monterrey agenda. An exemplary compact had come out of the OAU summit at Lusaka with regard to African development goals and commitments concerning the most effective use of aid; the Secretariat hoped that the compact would prompt increased flows of assistance.

He welcomed Mr. Bindea's remarks about what parliamentarians could do for sustainable development and the Johannesburg Summit. Mr. Bindea had also asked about the integration of social concerns in the activities of the Bretton Woods institutions. Speaking as Secretary of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), which brought the Secretary-General together with the heads of the United Nations agencies including the Bretton Woods institutions, he said that the social impact of macroeconomic policy had been the central issue debated in that body for the past two or three years. In fact, it had dominated discussion of the implications of globalization and how the system as a whole could best respond to it. He personally had detected an increasing sensitivity to those concerns that was beginning to engender a common vision and approach.

Mr. Mannan had asked about trade and human rights issues and the possible mediating role of the United Nations. The speaker preferred to describe the Organization's role as one of political persuasion and advocacy, as in relation to debt relief. In its discussions, the ACC had noted that it was unproductive to overload trade negotiations with human rights and environmental concerns; the latter had to be given the same importance and enforcement mechanisms as for trade by strengthening the relevant organizations in parallel with the WTO.

Ambassador de Rojas assured Mr. Oliver that any business entity wishing to participate in the preparatory process or the Monterrey Conference itself was welcome to do so either individually or as part of a business association. The business community was itself organizing an International Business Forum on Financing for Development, on 18 March in Monterrey, in parallel to the official Conference. Not only banks but pension funds and mutual funds would be participating. The steering committee included the International Chamber of Commerce, the World Economic Forum and a US organization, the Business Council for the UN.

At Monterrey, the debt problem would be dealt with in two categories: that of the low-income countries and that of middle-income countries. In the former, the problem was mainly public debt owed to governmental creditors or multilateral banks, while the latter were basically struggling with commercial debt. The two categories required different approaches and solutions. Thus far, in multilateral discussions, governments had shown more willingness to deal with the debt problems of the low-income countries, for example, by enhancing the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) initiative or replicating the approach of Italy. As for the middle-income countries, some ideas had been put forward – e.g. using mediation mechanisms, or setting up international bankruptcy mechanisms that countries might invoke – but there was no consensus so far on solutions. He stressed that there were major differences in that area between the views of governments and those of parliaments. For example, the Latin American parliamentary group had long attempted to bring the issue of debt before the International Court of Justice in the Hague but so far not a single Latin American Government would support that move and so risk their creditworthiness, as they saw it. He urged parliamentarians to try to influence their own Governments and regional groupings such as the European Union.

The Chairman said that he was grateful to the speakers for their informative and enriching presentations. It had become clear to all that globalization was a process, not a panacea for social and economic problems, and that it was bound to affect peoples and nations in different ways since it was taking place on an uneven playing field.

He extended his sincere thanks to Mrs. Sorensen for her pivotal role in all IPU gatherings, and through her to the Secretary-General, who had issued a clarion call to parliaments and encouraged participation in the debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. He had been moved by the supportive words of the Secretary-General and touched by his determination to ensure that the Organization had a parliamentary dimension.

The gathering of 2001 was taking place in a new and changed world in which there could be only one side – that of humanity. He congratulated Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the IPU, and his staff, who had continued to make the IPU meetings a reality, and wished the participants a happy holiday and a safe journey home.

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Legislative Assistant

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Mr. Alessandro Motter
Liaison Officer, IPU Liaison Office with the United Nations