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**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE IPU ON HIS ACTIVITIES
SINCE THE 190th SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

In the past six months, I have carried out a number of activities to steer and represent the Inter-Parliamentary Union, both in facing its institutional and political challenges and in keeping with the duties deriving from the office of IPU President.

Throughout this period I have been in close contact with the Secretary General and provided guidance on a number of political issues facing our organization. Together we have closely monitored the evolving situation in several countries undergoing dramatic changes.

Regarding specific activities, just a few weeks after the 126th IPU Assembly concluded its work in Kampala, I was very pleased to deliver an address during the high-level segment of UNCTAD XIII that took place in Doha, Qatar. I expressed support for UNCTAD'S vital role as a distinctive knowledge-based UN institution promoting development-led globalization. The meeting was also an opportunity for me to meet with many of my parliamentary colleagues, including the Speaker of the Advisory Council of Qatar.

Towards the end of May I travelled to New York to take part in the UN General Assembly debate on the interaction between the United Nations, parliaments and the IPU. In my address, I stressed that the two-way relationship between the UN and the IPU was one that was mutually beneficial and reinforcing. There is still work to do, but I believe this relationship is on firm ground, indeed advancing from strength to strength.

The UNGA debate on 29 May culminated in the adoption of a resolution which was sponsored by 86 Member States. The resolution marks an important step forward in rendering global decision-making more transparent and accountable. It builds on previous commitments and calls for even greater engagement between the United Nations, the IPU and national parliaments on key global issues relating to peace, democracy, human rights and development.

Whilst in New York, I also had an opportunity to meet with the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and a number of high-ranking officials, including the chairs of the geopolitical groups and the heads of various UN agencies.

In parallel, I had the privilege of opening with Ms. Bachelet the parliamentary event on *Empowering rural women: What role for parliaments*, held in the wings of the session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

At the end of August, I convened an extraordinary session of the Executive Committee at Geneva headquarters. The Committee's primary task was to examine the draft programme and budget for 2013 and the funding situation of the IPU. Its work in that respect was greatly assisted by the Sub-Committee on Finance which met on the eve of its session and undertook a thorough review of the draft programme and budget, as well as other financial matters.

In mid-September I travelled to Rome to attend the World e-Parliament Conference. This biennial forum looks at how the use of information and communication technology can help improve representation, transparency, accountability, openness and effectiveness in the complex parliamentary environment.

The last day of the Conference, 15 September, was International Day of Democracy. I took the opportunity to mark the Day by addressing the parliamentarians attending the event. I stressed the need to ensure that democracy and its institutions are truly inclusive and able to solve today's problems through dialogue. I strongly believe that we parliamentarians must talk and engage with our voters in order to bring democracy alive and humanize it. That is how problems are solved – the democratic way.

Later in the month of September, I attended the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament in Strasbourg. I delivered a speech in which I addressed the question: Is representative democracy in crisis? I expressed the view that as long as parliaments adapt continuously to the ever-changing political landscape, forge closer ties with the public and uphold the highest standards of probity in office, representative democracy will not be in crisis.

This Conference was also an ideal opportunity to draw the delegates' attention to the far-reaching global survey which culminated in the publication earlier this year of the Global Parliamentary Report.

The Seventh Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliaments took place in early October in New Delhi. I had the pleasure of opening this meeting which was hosted most graciously by the Parliament of India. My participation in the meeting reinforced my conviction of the intrinsic value of these annual events which bring together women Speakers from all over the world to discuss issues that are vital to their national and international agendas. The Meeting in New Delhi focused on making parliaments more gender-sensitive.

On my return home from New Delhi, I stopped off in Azerbaijan and spent two days in Baku, where I held a number of meetings with members of parliaments who were present and other eminent figures in the cultural, scientific and political fields.