

Presidential Statement

*Noted by the Governing Council at its 197th session
(Geneva, 18 October 2015)*

The Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 31 August to 2 September 2015 as part of the series of high-level meetings leading up to the UN Summit on the post-2015 development agenda.

It is a matter of deep regret that the Speaker of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation could not participate in either the World Conference or the 10th Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament that preceded it, due to restrictive visa conditions imposed by the authorities of the United States of America.

I reiterate the IPU's firm belief in the value of open and unrestricted dialogue between parliamentarians from different political, economic and social systems as a means of promoting understanding and resolving differences and cannot agree with the use, by any country, of political visa sanctions aimed at MPs duly designated by their parliaments to attend IPU meetings.

The IPU reaffirms its commitment to the principle and policy of holding its statutory meetings only in those countries where all IPU Members and Observers are invited, and where their representatives are certain to be granted the entry visas required for participation.

I take this opportunity to welcome the significant progress that has been made in the cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations. Nonetheless, I am sure all Members will agree much more remains to be done. The IPU looks forward to the conclusion of a new Cooperation Agreement that would place the institutional relationship on a stronger footing and further enhance the strategic partnership between the two organizations. As welcomed by the UN General Assembly, the IPU is providing a parliamentary component to major UN processes.

As such, joint events such as the World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and the annual Parliamentary Hearings at the United Nations should be formally recognized as official UN meetings, for which all MPs duly designated by the parliaments of the UN Member States are entitled to receive visas, in accordance with UN-Host Country Agreements.

I invite the IPU Governing Council to join me in taking note of this Statement.