



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

ADR. TELEGR. INTERPARLEMENT GENEVE

Geneva, January 2009

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to enlist your support for a new democracy project by the Inter-Parliamentary Union that addresses the representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in national parliaments.

The Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the IPU membership in 1997 notes that democracy is founded on the fundamental human right of everyone to take part in the management of public affairs. Democracy therefore requires a Parliament in which all components of society are represented.

Protecting minority rights and ensuring that national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples are included in parliament are difficult issues everywhere and solutions will always depend on the particular circumstances of a given country. However, experience demonstrates that inclusive parliaments help to strengthen democracy, greatly improve the quality of political life, facilitate integration and participation within society and prevent conflict.

As part of its activities to promote democracy and democratic parliaments, the IPU is seeking to gain a better understand of the nature of the representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliament. In doing so, we are able to draw on the lessons learned from more than thirty years of promoting the participation of women in political life.

This new project, done in partnership with United Nations Development Program (UNDP), begins with a questionnaire to enable parliaments to describe the situation in their country. I would be very grateful if you could pay close attention to this exercise and to ensure that your parliament completes the questionnaire.

I thank you in advance for your action to ensure the success of this new flagship project of the IPU.

Yours sincerely,

Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General