



# SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENTS

New York, 7-9 September 2005





## ABOUT THE IPU

Established in 1889, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the international organization that brings together the parliaments of sovereign States. In December 2005, the parliaments of 143 countries were represented in the IPU.

The IPU works to consolidate democracies. To that end, it provides support to members of parliaments and runs programmes to reinforce parliaments. In particular, it defends the human rights of members of parliament, considering complaints relating to abuse of such rights, assists women parliamentarians, particularly those who are new to politics, and works to bolster the practical functioning of parliaments. It is particularly active in countries emerging from conflicts seeking to rebuild their

institutions. The IPU work to help parliamentarians bring their influence to bear on multilateral negotiations is also crucial to its mandate.

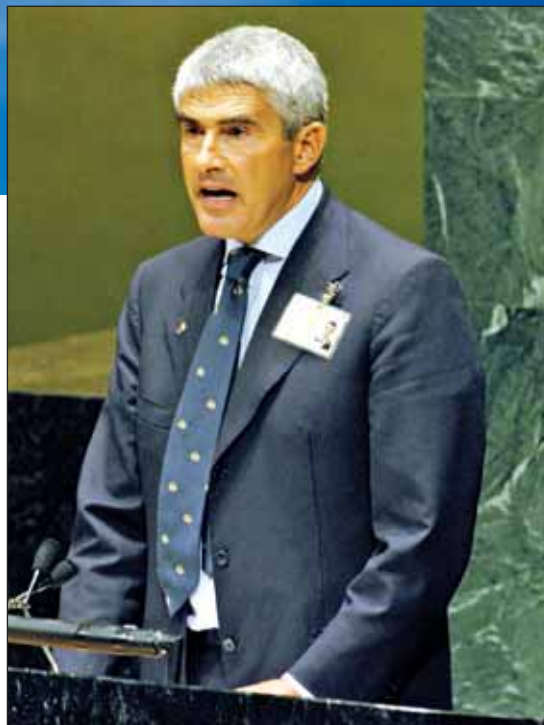
The organisation holds bi-annual assemblies which serve to foster contacts and exchanges of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries and consider questions of international interest.

The IPU shares the objectives of the United Nations and works closely with UN agencies. It also works with regional inter-parliamentary organizations and with international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that are motivated by the same ideals.

**O**ver the last decade, spurred on by globalization, we have developed the instruments of parliamentary diplomacy. Now, if we want to provide an effective response to the challenges of the modern world, we must take a leap forward.

Our fellow-citizens' needs extend beyond national borders. Nowadays, any day-to-day occurrence has global consequences. International politics therefore represents the new frontier of parliamentarianism. We must make sure we are equipped to tackle it.

Forty thousand parliamentarians - the total number of MPs sitting in the legislative assemblies belonging to the Inter-Parliamentary Union - represent an army devoted to the promotion of peace, solidarity and development. We who are gathered here today are the direct representatives of that peaceful and active force. As such, it is our duty to mobilize and disseminate its vitality and resources.



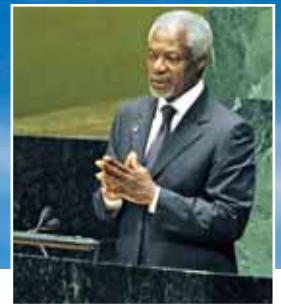
Pier Ferdinando Casini, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

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*The voice of the people must be heard at the United Nations.  
And few render that voice more authentically than elected parliamentarians.*

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General, United Nations



# INTRODUCTION

**T**he Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments took place in New York at the United Nations Headquarters in September 2005, under the chairmanship of the then President of the IPU, Mr. Sergio Paéz Verdugo. Over 150 leaders of parliaments gathered in New York for three days of debate. Their purpose was to see how parliaments could help to bridge the democracy gap in international relations.

I hope that this brief publication will afford some insights into the events as they played out over the course of the Conference.

The Speakers of Parliaments adopted a declaration in which they set out their vision of how the force of parliamentary legitimacy could be brought to bear on the United Nations. The task that lies ahead is a daunting one, and nobody claims that it can be accomplished overnight. Much will have to change, both in the way the legislative branch of State reaches ever further and deeper into the multilateral arena, and in the way the executive branch, gathered under the wing of its world organisation, comes to accept parliaments and their members as their ally in the fight to realize their ambitions, particularly as they are set down in the Millennium Development Goals. At a time when the United Nations is in the throes of reform and change, I believe the declaration could not have come at a more appropriate time. ■

Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General, Inter-Parliamentary Union



*The IPU has an extremely important role to play to support the activities of the United Nations and strengthen democracy.*

Chikage Oogi, President of the Japanese House of Councillors



*We cannot realistically hope to pursue a genuine global development and security agenda without a strong, reformed United Nations providing the leadership, let alone promote a culture of democracy and human rights if we cannot democratise the United Nations itself.*

Patrick K. Balopi, Speaker of the Parliament of Botswana

## REFORM OF THE UNITED NATIONS

**T**he question of reform headed the United Nations agenda at the time of the Speakers' Conference. Enlarging the Security Council, overhauling the human rights machinery, establishing a body to administer peace-building, reaching an agreed definition of terrorism: these and numerous other topics were set out in the United Nations Secretary General's reform package entitled "In Larger Freedom" and put before the Heads of State and Government who met in New York in the week following the Speakers' Conference.

The Speakers of Parliament spoke out in favour of the proposed reforms. Their declaration expressed firm support for the changes under way at the United Nations. Its contents were geared to the firm conviction, shared by all the world's parliaments, that the United Nations must remain the cornerstone of global cooperation. The Speakers urged all parliaments to engage with their respective governments to create the momentum for action on the clear understanding that democracy, security, development and human rights were intrinsically linked.

The Speakers said that global security issues should be tackled more vigorously at the United Nations. Nuclear-weapon States must meet their obligations in nuclear disarmament, and States

must make new efforts in all areas of non-proliferation and arms control. There should also be a comprehensive convention on terrorism with an internationally accepted definition of terrorism.

Development, they stated, was within the reach of many nations. Development must remain high on the United Nations agenda. They expressed their determination to build the necessary political support for change and action. States must live up to commitments already made to provide development assistance, in line with the Monterrey Consensus and the Millennium Declaration.

They also reaffirmed that the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental

freedoms for all, in particular for women and children, were essential to development, peace and security, and emphasized that good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels were key to sustainable development and world peace. ■

Our work in the months ahead should focus on transforming the IPU into the parliamentary arm of the United Nations, thus providing the United Nations with a true parliamentary dimension.

**Anton Tabone, Speaker, House of Representatives, Malta.**



*The cornerstone of global cooperation: United Nations mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. - UN Photo by Christophe Bouliercac.*

*National parliaments should develop close partnerships to prevent pernicious attempts to link violent acts of isolated individuals with any specific religion, region or culture.*

Mohammedmian Soomro, Chairman, Senate of Pakistan



## TERRORISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

**T**he term "democracy" rings hollow if it does not imply the full enjoyment of human rights. Many of the Speakers present in New York remarked on the delicate balancing act that legislators are required to perform in a world that has become preoccupied with its own security. Parliamentarians are called upon to legislate effective counter-terrorism measures while remaining vigilant in defending the basic tenets of human rights.

Peace, said the Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, is not just the absence of war but a product of

concerted efforts on multiple fronts. The strategy in dealing with terror should address the root causes of the problem, particularly political and economic injustices and regional asymmetries in weaponry. Others agreed that the deeper causes of terrorism had to be tackled. Anna Benaki, President of the Hellenic Parliament, said that the 11 September attacks and subsequent terrorist outrages sounded alarm bells for parliaments, which had to look into the causes of the phenomenon and try to alleviate it through democratic

procedures, without jeopardizing what had been achieved in the protection of human rights.

Many speakers emphasised the need for greater parliamentary coordination in the field. The President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia called for greater cooperation among parliaments in countering the daily escalation of terrorism around the globe. The Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta alluded to the unprecedented rise in terrorist activity which threatened the values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. He too called for parliaments to join forces in appealing to their governments to ratify and abide by international conventions on terrorism.

President Casini of the Italian Chamber of Deputies appealed for unhesitating and unconditional rejection of the logic of the clash of civilisations. Such sentiments were echoed by many others. Instead, there should be an unsparing search for dialogue between the world's cultures and religions. Many Speakers voiced applause for the Spanish initiative in the United Nations for an alliance of nations intended to overcome mutual misunderstandings. ■



*The skewed logic of terror:  
UN Headquarters in Baghdad, destroyed by a truck bomb in August 2003 - UN Photo.*



*As it stands today, the state of the world is deplorable, to say the least. While others debate stem cell research, we agonize to feed empty stomachs.*

Theo-Ben Gurirab, Speaker, National Assembly of Namibia

## DEVELOPMENT

**A**t the time of the Speakers' Conference, the southern shores of the United States of America had just been hit by hurricane Katrina, a tropical storm that left dozens of fatal casualties in its wake, inundated entire cities and caused tens of millions of dollars worth of damage. Speakers asked the US Congressmen present to convey their sincerest condolences to the families of the victims. The question of recent natural disasters was also taken up in a broader manner, with particular reference to their devastating effects on nations' development.

The Millennium Development Goals were broadly endorsed by the participants. At the start of its proceedings the meeting heard a vibrant appeal from the UNDP Administrator, Mr. Kemal Dervis, for parliaments to debate the Goals and legislate where appropriate. Gabriel Ascencio Mansilla, President of the Chilean Chamber of Deputies, went on to propose the establishment of a standing committee within the IPU, and in each parliament, to follow up the Millennium Development Goals and monitor the governments' commitments to each one. Of course, the Goals

already underpin much of the work carried out in parliaments. Many legislatures have included the MDGs on their agendas and adopted development strategies and policies that relate to them. In the developing countries the parliaments have been involved to varying degrees in setting national development strategies and have worked to meet some of the goals, those

relating to HIV/AIDS and gender being the most frequently quoted. Other aspects of development came up for discussion. The subject of migration was one of these. In keeping with recent IPU resolutions, it was emphasised that migration should be seen not as an impediment but as a positive force for development. ■



*Empty stomachs: Operation Lifeline Sudan feeding centre in Ajiep - UN/DPI Photo.*

*We pledge to continue working to ensure that our parliaments are more involved in the activities of the multilateral institutions and their decision-making on subjects such as free and fair trade and the protection of the most vulnerable groups of the world's population.*

Sergio Páez Verdugo, former President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union



## TWO KEY REPORTS

### 1. PARLIAMENTARY INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

**W**hen Speakers of the world's parliaments met for the first time in September 2000, they adopted a declaration that called for greater involvement of parliaments in international affairs. Gone were they days, they stated, when politics was a purely domestic business, if ever it had been. Whether they wanted to or not, legislatures everywhere were under mounting pressure to debate an

increasingly transnational agenda. Parliaments simply had no choice but to engage in multilateral negotiations, if only because the responsibility fell squarely on their shoulders when it came to enacting the results into domestic law.

If their place in international affairs was no longer open to dispute, the procedures whereby parliaments brought their influence to bear in the

international arena continued to vary widely. The Inter-Parliamentary Union was keen to discover whether behind the intricate strands there was a single pattern. In 2004, the organization put a number of questions to Speakers of parliaments throughout the world in order to find the answer.

The report on parliamentary involvement in international affairs, presented by Ibrahim Boubakar Keita, Speaker of the National Assembly of Mali, showed that almost all parliaments - in developed and developing countries alike - had unique experiences to share in respect of their involvement in international affairs. Parliaments, he said, had reached different stages in moulding their procedures to the globalized agenda of the twenty-first century. But throughout the world, almost all were grappling with this question. The report, a treasure chest of parliamentary initiatives in the international arena, finally lays to rest any lingering suspicion that parliaments' place is exclusively at home. ■



*Ibrahim Boubakar Keita, Speaker of the National Assembly of Mali, presents the report.*





Senator Dulce María Sauri of Mexico presents the report

## 2. PARLIAMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Parliament is widely acknowledged as the pivotal institution of democracy. In broad terms, everybody agrees on what the functions of a parliament are. Exactly how parliaments perform their role - or should perform it - is a subject that has not been sufficiently explored.

In her presentation of the report, Senator Dulce María Sauri of Mexico pointed out that there have been many attempts to measure the state or quality of democracy. Generally, indicators have been set down that translate qualitative judgments into quantitative measurements. Such measurements are typically carried out by outsiders passing judgement on a country from

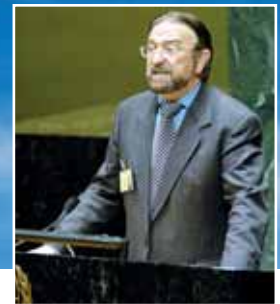
abroad, and they leave considerable room for subjectivity.

*Parliament and Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* has taken a new approach: whereas democratic principles cannot be realised without appropriate political institutions and practices, the latter in turn can only be judged to be democratic insofar as they embody or serve to realise these principles. When completed, the guide will do two important things: firstly, it will offer a framework that links a set of specific democratic principles to the institutional means by which they are realised. Secondly, it will provide a compilation of practices whereby parliaments seek to put these principles into effect. ■

The report proposes criteria that parliaments should ideally meet. A parliament should be representative: socially and politically representative of the diversity of the people. It should also be accessible, involving the public, including civil society, in its work. Being representative also means ensuring the accessibility of members to their constituents, with different modes of public participation in pre-legislative scrutiny and a right of open consultation for interested parties. It should be accountable, through means such as effective electoral sanction and monitoring processes, which allow the electorate to recall parliamentarians or not return them to office in the event of poor performance. The parliament should be transparent: open to the nation, with prior information to the public on the business before parliament. There should be freedom of information legislation which allows citizens to seek, obtain and provide information relevant to parliament's business. The parliament should also be effective. Parliament's effectiveness is realised through mechanisms and resources to ensure its independence and autonomy; the availability of non-partisan professional staff; adequate and unbiased research and information facilities for members; and control of its own budget. At the national level this objective entails the proper performance of the parliament's legislative and scrutiny functions. At the international level, it entails active monitoring of the activities of international organisations, and implementing national policies with respect to them.

*The distinction between the national and the international has become increasingly blurred as the globalisation process has amplified. Consequently democracy must become, to some extent, global. It is up to national parliaments to promote the democratic regulation of globalisation.*

Herman De Croo, Speaker of the Belgian House of Representatives



## PARLIAMENTS AND THE UNITED

**D**emocracy was the central theme of the three days of debate. As Secretary General Kofi Annan said at the opening of his address to the Speakers, parliaments embody democracy. Without parliaments there is no democracy, and without a new injection of democratic vigour, the United Nations will not succeed in its reforms.

What does this signify in practical terms? For some, it means that the United Nations reforms should include the establishment of a parliamentary assembly for the world body. However, the vast majority of parliamentary leaders spoke out against this idea, stating that it would not be practical to build yet more apparatus around the United Nations, and that the Inter-Parliamentary Union is already ideally positioned to channel parliamentary support to the United Nations.

They mentioned two basic requisites. For their part, parliaments must be vigilant in making sure that they enlist the highest level of expertise that is available in parliamentary committees and bring it to bear on each of the issues under discussion. The United Nations, meanwhile, should continue to ensure that there is a steady flow of information on its

activities being channelled towards the world's legislatures though the IPU. Indeed, the pace must be stepped up, and more such activities should be held in the future for parliaments within the United

Nations headquarters in New York.

In recognition of the outcome of the IPU Speakers' Conference, the Heads of State and Government meeting in New



*Group photo of Speakers of Parliaments, New York, September 2005.*

# NATIONS

York the following week adopted a paragraph in their outcome document entitled *Cooperation between the United Nations and Parliaments*, which called for strengthened cooperation between the United

Nations and national and regional parliaments, in particular through the Inter-Parliamentary Union, with a view to ensuring the effective implementation of United Nations reform. ■

The debate on this topic focused on the role the IPU could be called upon to play, but it was more than a series of consensual statements. The Speaker of the Parliament of the Netherlands said that the IPU in its current form was not yet equipped to be the one and only body to exercise democratic control of the United Nations. He also emphasised his non-political role as Speaker of the House, a point echoed by the Speaker of the British House of Commons.



*The representation of more and more women in parliaments and politics generally is a sign of the deepening of democracy. Women form more than fifty per cent of any society. More women's involvement in politics can only add value to and improve the delivery of services to our societies.*

Baleka Mbete, Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa



## MEETING OF WOMEN SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENTS

**A**t the initiative of Ingrida Udre, Speaker of the Parliament of Latvia, the women Speakers of Parliaments attending the Conference met to debate the role of women Speakers in achieving gender equality.

Ms. Udre alluded to the Millennium Development Goals, saying how important it was for women Speakers to look at ways in which the parliamentary

community can best contribute to their fulfilment by strengthening partnerships with the United Nations.

Louise Frechette, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, described how gender equality and the empowerment of women were promoted through the United Nations, emphasizing the central role of that dimension in the achievement of the Goals. She broached the question of women's representation in parliament, singling out some of the more successful measures such as quota systems, voluntary agreements, training programs for women's leadership, and the repeal of laws and practices that restrict women's participation in politics. She commended the IPU for its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women and called for greater UN-IPU cooperation in the future.

Two other United Nations representatives – Carolyn Hannan, Director of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, and Marijke Velzeboer-Salcedo, Chief of the Latin America and Caribbean Section of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, explained work underway at the United Nations for the promotion of gender

When it comes to democracy, we cannot say that we have achieved our goals unless equal opportunities for men and women are realised.

**Björn Von Sydow,  
Speaker,  
Parliament of Sweden**

equality, focusing on the ten-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the linkages with the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, gender mainstreaming, and the broader question of women's participation in politics. They said that strong and outspoken leadership on gender equality would be needed in the decade to come, and that Speakers of Parliament should galvanise legislatures in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.

A common thread in the ensuing discussion was the reference to the specific mechanisms, primarily quota systems, which have proven useful in determining more participation by women in politics – both within political parties, and in parliament. Many of the women Speakers expressed the wish to continue meeting on a regular and systematic basis. The President of the Senate of Jamaica went on to propose that a future meeting of women Speakers of Parliaments be held in her country. The Caribbean is one of the most advanced regions in terms of women's place in politics. ■



*A couple cast their ballots at a polling station in Nonsan as South Korea holds parliamentary elections, 15 April 2004. Photo Won Dai-Yeon for AFP.*



Legislators from the Japanese Diet inspect US helicopters before deployment to Okinawa. Photo by Matt Hevezi.

Good national governance must be accompanied by good global governance. We don't have it when international organizations dole out piecemeal, fragmented, parallel, and sometimes conflicting policy advice or conditionalities today. You parliamentarians can raise the political demand for international organizations to come together within their mandates to promote quality global growth, higher job creation and an enabling environment for investment and entrepreneurship.

**Juan Somavía, Director General, International Labour Organisation**

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARLIAMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

**T**he Conference included a panel discussion on the role and responsibilities of parliaments in respect of the work of the United Nations.

Panel moderator Juan Somavía, the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, opened the discussion by stating that the time had come for more robust checks and balances in the international sphere. As things stood, most governments were accountable to their parliaments nationally; internationally, governments were only accountable to themselves. The Speaker of the Swedish Riksdag, Björn von Sydow, agreed. The IPU should act as an early warning system to alert parliaments to what was happening on the international scene.

Mr. Alexander Lambsdorff, a Member of the European Parliament, also saw a role for the IPU in communicating United Nations policies to the people. There was no doubt that the legislative component needed a more assertive place in the business of the United Nations. The European Parliament had

mooted the idea of a parliamentary assembly for the United Nations. To put it into effect, two options were open: that of transforming the IPU into a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly under Article 22 of the United Nations Charter, or - preferably - using a reformed IPU. The Union had the necessary experience, and further bureaucracy should be avoided.

Mr. Lambsdorff and Mr. von Sydow both insisted that whatever solution was chosen, there should be an active role for the parliamentary opposition. People's interests could only be defended in the multilateral sphere if the uncomfortable presence of an effective opposition were part of the policy-making equation.

Turning to development issues, Ann Veneman, the Executive Director of UNICEF, spoke of the power of lawmakers to effect critical change. Good laws meant the difference between the success and failure of development policy, and parliamentarians had the moral authority to change opinions. The Speaker of the National Assembly

of Mali, Ibrahim Boubakar Keita, cautioned about the continuing mistrust of parliament on the African continent. Increasingly, however, it was coming to be understood that many development objectives could not be achieved without parliament. For the first two years, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was little more than a myth for the people of Africa. After a parliamentary forum for NEPAD had been set up, people had become much more involved, especially in the financing aspects.

Speaking from the government side, Jan Eliasson of Sweden, the incoming President of the United Nations General Assembly, added that parliamentarians brought the hard realities of the world into the halls of multilateralism. If the United Nations was to set the direction for practical international solidarity, it needed to take on new partners, and parliamentary pressure in many areas, particularly those on the social agenda, would continue to be sought in the future. ■

*Parliaments must be the exclusive law makers in the country. If this function is given to the executive bodies in government, it will only serve to weaken the representation of the people.*

Hachim Al-Hassani, Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly of Iraq



## PARLIAMENTS' CONTRIBUTION TO DEMOCRACY

**A** second panel met to assess how parliament exercises or should exercise its role as a key institution of democracy. This panel was moderated by the Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, Baleka Mbete. Other panel members included Nino Burjanadze, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia; Hajim al-Hassani, Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly of Iraq; Rodolfo Nin Novoa, President of the Senate

and Vice President of Uruguay; and Oyun Sanjaasuren, Member of the State Great Hural of Mongolia.

Participants stressed the important role parliament plays in bridging the gap between the people and government. It can only play such a role if it effectively holds government to account, passes laws that are commensurate with the interests and aspirations of the people and practices democracy internally. Parliament's representative function thus

came in for a lot of discussion. Parliamentary effectiveness and a properly functioning system for remaining in close contact with the electorate would help to improve the less than flattering image that parliaments have in some countries. Several participants underscored the importance of involving all segments of society in the work of parliament. It was noted in particular that women and youth should have a greater say than is currently the case.

The meeting also stressed the need for parliaments to contribute more vigorously to decision-making at the international level, especially in those areas where power has shifted beyond the individual State. In this way, they can help to bridge the current democracy deficit in international cooperation.

In general, participants recognized democracy as an ongoing process. They nevertheless emphasized that while it had taken the more advanced democracies several decades to build strong parliaments that now stood as bulwarks against dictatorship, the emerging democracies needed to accelerate the pace of democratic reforms domestically ■.



*Women vote in Minangkabau, Indonesia. Photo UNDP*



*The text, which is barely more than a dozen paragraphs long, is built around a single focussed message: our parliaments have an essential role to play to bridge the democracy gap in international relations.*

Ingrida Udre, Speaker of the Parliament of Latvia

# FINAL DECLARATION OF THE CONFERENCE

## *Bridging the democracy gap in international relations: A stronger role for parliaments*

Declaration adopted by consensus

**P**arliament embodies democracy. Parliament is the central institution through which the will of the people is expressed, laws are passed and government is held to account. On the eve of the High-Level Meeting of Heads of State and Government, we, the Speakers of the world's parliaments, have met at United Nations Headquarters in New York. We have convened to express the views of peoples' representatives in parliament, take stock of action effected by parliaments since our first Conference in 2000, examine how we can provide more support for international cooperation and the United Nations, and thus help bridge the democracy gap in international relations.

As we adopt the present Declaration, we are mindful of the urgent need for the world community to work in concert in tackling the daunting challenges that face it. We believe that the world has reached a fork in the road, and that the global community must not miss this opportunity to take drastic action. While

perceptions of the gravest threats may differ, they will be tackled effectively only if they are addressed concurrently and within the United Nations system. We reaffirm the will of national parliaments to engage wholeheartedly in this effort.

### *International cooperation*

We are convinced that the United Nations must remain the cornerstone of global cooperation. The United Nations Secretary-General should therefore be encouraged to pursue the current reform process vigorously. We commend him for his comprehensive package of valuable reform proposals set out in his report *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all* (A/59/2005). We urge all parliaments to debate these proposals and engage with their respective governments to create the momentum for action on the clear understanding that democracy, security, development and human rights are intrinsically linked.

There is indeed an urgent need for Member States, including

their parliaments, to demonstrate leadership and political will to provide the Organization with more

While I am relatively optimistic about the changes we are effecting in our own parliament on a national level, I am less so about the control we have over international developments. More and more economic, social, environmental, defence and countless other issues are being discussed in international organisations. This is a necessary and irreversible development. But it worries me that the parliamentary dimension of this development is lagging years and years behind the steps that are being taken on a governmental or ministerial level. For parliaments to remain credible on a national level and regain or retain the trust of their citizens, it is crucial that they increase their influence on decision-making in WTO, NATO; EU or other associations.

**Frans W. Weisglas,  
President, House of  
Representatives of the  
Netherlands**

efficient mechanisms and appropriate human and financial resources in all areas, and with a sound basis for effective management reform. Equipping the United Nations to address economic and social development problems more adequately is one such task. In order to reduce poverty and ensure sustainable development, countries need forums in which they can simultaneously negotiate across different sectors, including foreign aid, technology, trade, environmental protection, financial stability and

development policy. The report *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* argues that development is within the reach of many nations, and gives extensive examples of action countries can take, individually and collectively, to come closer to the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals. Development must remain high on the agenda. We are determined to build the necessary political support for change and action. States must

live up to the commitments they have already made to provide development assistance, in line with the Monterrey Consensus and the Millennium Declaration. We welcome the discussion on new and innovative forms of financing for development, which we hope will provide much needed additional resources. Global security issues should also be tackled more vigorously at the United Nations. Nuclear-weapon States should meet their obligations in nuclear disarmament, and States must



Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments meeting in the United Nations General Assembly Hall.



We should secure everybody's unconditional agreement that henceforth parliaments must be ranked among the prime movers of international relations. The old idea of parliamentary diplomacy, conceived as a particular kind of debate in diplomatic conferences, is outmoded. We must now determine the role and specific methods that pertain to parliamentary institutions when they take action in the international sphere.

**Marc Christian Kaboré,  
President,  
National Assembly  
of Burkina Faso**

make new efforts in all areas of non-proliferation and arms control. Action already taken by the United Nations and its Member States to fight international terrorism is encouraging, but much more can be done, including by concluding a comprehensive convention on terrorism and agreeing upon an internationally accepted definition of terrorism that includes any action which is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, for whatever purpose.

We reaffirm that the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in particular for women and children, are essential to development, peace and

security. We also emphasize that good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels are key to sustainable development and world peace. We call upon the United Nations to integrate more fully all three dimensions into its work, and we urge member States to take resolute action to that end.

#### *Parliaments and the United Nations*

We reaffirm the Declaration of the first Conference of Speakers of Parliaments (2000) in which we called on all parliaments and their world organization – the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) – to provide a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation. We welcome the progress that has been made by many parliaments to achieve this objective, as evidenced by the IPU *Report on parliamentary involvement in international affairs*. At the same time, we recognize that much remains to be done.

We welcome the United Nations decision to grant observer status to the IPU. This is a first step that opens channels for the Organization to convey the views of the parliamentary community to the United Nations. The time has come for a strategic partnership between the two institutions. We would greatly welcome more substantive interaction and coordination with the

United Nations, and call upon the world body to resort more frequently to the political and technical expertise which the IPU together with its Member Parliaments can provide, particularly in areas relating to post-conflict institution building.

We emphasize that parliaments must be active in international affairs not only through inter-parliamentary cooperation and parliamentary diplomacy, but also by contributing to and monitoring international negotiations, overseeing the enforcement of what is adopted by governments, and ensuring national compliance with international norms and the rule of law. Similarly, parliament must be more vigilant in scrutinizing the activities of international organizations and providing input into their deliberations.

We therefore welcome the current debate on how best to establish more meaningful and structured interaction between the United Nations and national parliaments. We reaffirm the recommendations relating to this subject that were contained in our Declaration of the year 2000, and assert that much of this interaction must be firmly rooted in the daily work of our national parliaments. At the international level, we propose to work ever more closely with the IPU, which we consider to

be a unique global parliamentary counterpart of the United Nations. To this end, we encourage the IPU to ensure that national parliaments are better informed on the activities of the United Nations. Moreover, we invite the IPU to avail itself more frequently of the expertise of members of standing and select committees of national parliaments in dealing with specific issues requiring international cooperation. We also encourage the IPU to develop further parliamentary hearings and specialized meetings at the United Nations, and to cooperate more closely with official regional parliamentary assemblies and organizations,

with a view to enhancing coherence and efficiency in global and inter-regional parliamentary cooperation.

The IPU is the primary vehicle for strengthening parliaments worldwide, and thus promoting democracy, and we pledge to further consolidate it. We welcome the IPU's report on *Parliaments' contribution to democracy*. We intend to reinforce the IPU human rights machinery so that the world's 40,000 parliamentarians can do the job they were elected to do in greater freedom and safety. We will also continue to support IPU efforts to see that both genders are represented within the ranks of parliamentarians in a more

equitable way, and to take action where necessary. In all of these ways, we will increase the capacity of our parliaments to bring their influence to bear on the work of the United Nations, enhance the transparency and accountability of that world Organization and thus provide an impetus to the reforms under way at the United Nations.

#### *Follow-up and implementation*

We resolve to convey this Declaration to our parliaments and urge them to do everything within their powers to ensure that it is followed up in an effective manner. We encourage every parliament to organize, at around the same time each year, "an International Day of Parliaments" and to hold a parliamentary debate on one of the recommendations included in this Declaration. We invite the IPU to forward this Declaration to the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the United Nations General Assembly with a request that it be circulated as an official document of the United Nations. We also decide to convene future meetings of Speakers of Parliaments to review progress in implementing this Declaration, and invite the IPU to make the necessary preparations, in close cooperation with the United Nations. ■



*In the polling station. Photo Marie Frechon/UNDP.*

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