



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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Address by President of IPU at the ratification of the new Tunisian Constitution, 7 February 2014

Mr. President of the Republic,
Mr. President of the National Constituent Assembly,
Mr. Prime Minister,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I should like, on behalf of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to extend my high regard and heartfelt congratulations to my brothers and colleagues within the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly on their success in adopting the new Constitution of the Tunisian Republic on 26 January 2014, and through them I congratulate and salute the Tunisian people, with all its vital forces.

I congratulate you on a Constitution which has been adopted and agreed upon, and which takes into account the positions of the various parties concerned and represents the convictions of Tunisian society. This is an outstanding achievement, and consequently, members of the National Constituent Assembly, and, in particular, the President, Mr. Mustapha Ben Jafar, allow me to congratulate you, for you know how you are responding, with vitality and ardour, to the expectations of the Tunisian people.

As you well know, a Constitution that guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms, both individual and collective, must inevitably lay the firm foundations of democracy in your noble country. The date 27 January 2014 will stand in the annals of Tunisian history as the day that marked the placement of a solid, unshakable base for the building of a new democratic State.

The safeguarding of freedom of conscience, equality between men and women, and the establishment of a State responsible for protecting the weak are among the sturdiest pillars of democracy. These principles are regarded as integral to the values, convictions and aspirations cherished by our organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, of which Tunisia is a Member.

On this occasion, in addition, I must congratulate you in particular for having been able to include in your new Constitution a provision guaranteeing equal representation for men and women in Parliament and other elective institutions.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union stands fully prepared to welcome you with all the support that you may deem necessary and useful as you proceed along the road to giving material form to the spirit and requirements of this Constitution, so that it becomes a tangible reality for all Tunisian citizens, both men and women.

The Tunisian example, both in terms of its underlying substance and at the methodological level, can be useful to others.

For that reason, I invite the President, Mr. Mustapha Ben Jafar, to present the experience of the adoption of the new Tunisian Constitution at the 130th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva next March, before the 162 Parliaments that are Members of our organization.

Once again, please accept my congratulations. I feel great gratification and pride at this accomplishment, this event, at the new Tunisia, and at the free Tunisians who are writing a new page in their history as it looks toward the future.

The course of the democratic transition is difficult and momentous. Perhaps the most striking lesson that history teaches us is that the will of peoples cannot be thwarted. Tunisia has taught us that "Should the people one day determine to live, then fate needs must respond". The present occasion, at which we all have the honour to be present, is the surest indication of that. The Tunisian people are determined to live, and the adoption of the Constitution is the first fruit of that determination. Accordingly, I offer, once again, my sincere hope for the completion of this process, the establishment of institutions, and the holding of elections to represent the people and their will, so that the foundations of democracy, to which the great Tunisian people aspire, may be firmly laid.

I salute you, and I thank you.