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Geneva, 20 March 2009

PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Advance Information Note

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

As you may know, the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will take place in Copenhagen, from 7 to 18 December 2009. This event, commonly known as COP15, is expected to adopt a new international agreement to replace the **Kyoto Protocol**, set to expire in 2012. The Conference in Copenhagen is therefore very important and deserves special attention by the IPU and its Member Parliaments.

At its 253rd session held in Geneva in January 2009, the IPU Executive Committee welcomed the proposal by the Danish Folketing to hold a parliamentary meeting in connection with COP15. A formal decision to this end will be taken by the Governing Council at its forthcoming session in Addis Ababa. In anticipation of the Council decision, I am pleased to inform you that the Danish Folketing has offered to host the **Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of COP15** at its premises in Copenhagen on **16 December 2009**.

The choice of the meeting date is not arbitrary. Most parliamentarians will travel to Copenhagen only towards the end of the main Conference, together with their ministers and other VIPs, and will not attend the first segment of COP15, intended for technical experts. In this way, parliamentary delegates will be able to limit the duration of their stay in Copenhagen to just three to four days as opposed to nearly two weeks.

The Meeting on 16 December will be held with a view to providing parliamentarians with an opportunity to obtain first-hand information on the main issues and orientations of COP15, to interact with government negotiators directly involved in the Conference decision-making process, gain better knowledge of the recommendations adopted by the IPU with regard to parliamentary action on climate change, and exchange views on parliamentary follow-up to COP15, in particular as regards the ratification process.

You may wish to see to it that members of your parliament who follow environmental and climate-change questions as part of their day-to-day responsibilities are duly informed of the holding of the parliamentary event in Copenhagen and pencil it in their calendars. Please note that, due to the limited seating capacity of the meeting room at the Folketing, the number of parliamentarians per delegation should not exceed two. The provisional programme of the Parliamentary Meeting and relevant practical information will be circulated to all parliaments and posted on the IPU website in June 2009.

The UNFCCC is an intergovernmental negotiation process in which the Parties to the Convention are represented by governments. While fully respecting this principle, parliaments should keep themselves informed of the ongoing UNFCCC talks and exercise their oversight role vis-à-vis government negotiators in the months leading up to COP15. Such a proactive attitude will prove its worth in particular when the time comes for the ratification of the new UNFCCC agreement by parliaments.

In view of the foregoing, I wish to draw your attention to the existence of a so-called "focus document" that serves as a basis for the on-going UNFCCC negotiations, which should be concluded at COP15 in Copenhagen. The document contains two parts, both of which have been recently published on the UNFCCC website. The first part (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/awglca5/eng/04p01.pdf>) provides an overview and is a recommended reading for anyone who wants to get a sense of where things stand at present. The second part (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/awglca5/eng/04p02.pdf>) covers in some detail the state of consideration by the Parties of the ideas and proposals relating to the Bali Action Plan.

Although COP15 is still months away, we nevertheless urge your parliament to ensure at this relatively early stage that parliamentarians are included in your country's official delegation to the Climate Change Conference. Please note that only persons duly accredited to COP15 through their national delegations or as observers will be able to enter the Bella Centre where the intergovernmental Conference will be held. It should be pointed out in this regard that the **IPU and the Danish Folketing are not in a position to facilitate accreditation to COP15 and cannot provide Schengen visa support** for entry into Denmark. These matters should be dealt with by each delegation individually, as part of the overall COP15 accreditation procedure.

Likewise, hotel accommodation in Copenhagen at the time of COP15 will be subject to severe restrictions and will be practically unavailable to persons who are not accredited to the intergovernmental Conference as delegates or observers. As many as 8,000 persons are expected to attend. To lodge all these guests in Copenhagen, the hosts have pre-booked the quasi-totality of hotel rooms within a radius of 60 km of the Conference Centre. For this reason, the **organizers of the Parliamentary Meeting cannot provide hotel accommodation in Copenhagen**. We would expect all parliamentary delegates to use the official COP15 hotel booking service instead.

The Parliamentary Meeting, to be held on 16 December, will be open to all members of parliament who are present in Copenhagen at the time of COP15, are duly accredited to the intergovernmental Conference, and have a valid COP15 identity badge (see <http://en.cop15.dk/about+cop15/practical+information/participation> for details). This badge will allow entry to the premises of the Folketing and to the meeting room.

If, for one reason or another, a parliamentary delegate does not have a COP15 badge, a special one-day "Parliamentary Meeting" badge will be issued on the spot. This badge will be valid for the meeting at the Folketing but will not allow access to the Bella Centre. Delegates requiring a "Parliamentary Meeting" badge should inform the IPU Secretariat in advance, using the meeting registration form that will be distributed together with the invitation letter. More detailed information in this regard will be posted on the IPU website at: <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/cop15.htm>.

I sincerely hope that members of your parliament will take part in COP15 in Copenhagen and will also attend the Parliamentary Meeting on 16 December. We look forward to receiving their names in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anders B. Johansson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anders B. Johansson
Secretary General