



**PROMOTING PARLIAMENTARY INPUT INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2001
BRUSSELS PROGRAMME OF ACTION (BPOA)
THROUGH DEVELOPING PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT GROUPS IN THE LEAST
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs)**

REPORT

The Inter-Parliamentary Union and the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS) organized a meeting to promote parliamentary input into the implementation of the 2001 Brussels Programme of Action (BPOA) from 10 – 11 December 2007 in Bagamoyo Tanzania. The meeting was hosted by the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania, who's Speaker Honourable Samuel Sitta presided over the opening session.

The meeting was attended¹ by representatives of 7 out of the 10 LDC pilot parliaments identified by the IPU and the UN-OHRLS to serve as pioneers for the promotion of the BPOA at the parliamentary level, namely, Benin, Cambodia, Malawi, Niger, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen. It was also attended by LDC national focal points from 4 countries (Cambodia, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen) as well as a representative of the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

The UN Under-Secretary General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Countries and Small Island Developing States, Ambassador Cheick Sidi Diarra, was also in attendance and presented a keynote address.

The meeting was convened in the context of an IPU/UN-OHRLS partnership intended to promote the implementation of the BPOA especially in the areas of good governance and capacity building. This partnership seeks among other things, to help LDC parliaments establish structures within their midst dedicated to the promotion of the BPOA. The meeting thus identified the role parliaments can and should play in providing greater impetus to the implementation of the BPOA, notably through so-called support groups. It also discussed in depth the terms of reference for such groups and examined ways in which the IPU and the UN-OHRLS as well as the international community at large could support the work of such groups. In addition, it examined synergies that could be created between parliaments and national LDC focal points in furtherance of the BPOA.

Following is a summary of the discussions and recommendations of the meeting.

The Brussels Programme of Action 2001-2010

¹ Agenda and final list of participants annexed to this report.

The BPOA outlines a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy tailored to the special needs of the LDCs. It is designed as a framework of partnership between LDCs and their development partners based on mutual commitments. It includes 30 internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. The programme advocates an integrated approach and is growth and results oriented taking into account country ownership and market considerations. Good governance at the national and international levels is a major area of focus in the BPOA.

The BPOA runs through to 2010. There is therefore urgency for parliamentary action to speed up its implementation. However, the 2010 deadline should not be seen as the cut-off date for any activities intended to implement the BPOA.

Role of parliaments in the implementation of the BPOA

Parliaments, as pillars of democracy, have an important role to play in the implementation of the BPOA especially in terms of promoting the rule of law and good governance upon which the BPOA is predicated.

Parliament's role can be analyzed in the context of its traditional functions of law-making, oversight and budget allocation.

Regarding parliament's law-making function, it has responsibility for ratifying or authorizing the ratification of international instruments, harmonizing them with and incorporating them in national strategies. The parliament also contributes to the design and implementation of national action plans and the preparation of reports on implementation of international commitments.

In its oversight function, parliament scrutinizes the executive's policies and actions for compliance with national instruments and international commitments and standards. It also monitors and assesses government performance for transparency and accountability to ensure that the people obtain value for money.

Parliament also has responsibility for allocating resources towards the implementation of international commitments. It also ensures the efficient and effective use of development aid. Parliaments should be more closely involved in the budget process. They need to keep tabs on the budget which should reflect the aspirations of the people. Parliaments can play a crucial role in mainstreaming BPOA principles and objectives into the national budget.

Unfortunately, LDC parliaments have played a limited role in the implementation of the BPOA in line with the above-mentioned functions.

LDC parliaments lack independence and resources and are generally perceived as mouthpieces or rubberstamps of the executive. The system of checks and balances essential for the rule of law and good governance is ineffective in many LDCs.

Many LDC parliaments and their members are not aware of the existence of the BPOA, let alone understand its provisions. Very few of them were involved in the formulation of this important instrument. As is the case with many donor-driven development strategies, these parliaments are not involved in the conceptualization and design of strategies for the implementation of the BPOA. They are often placed before a *fait accompli* whereas they should take a more proactive role in formulating national strategies that foster the implementation of the BPOA.

Generally, there is frustration among parliaments over the fact that national development strategies are driven by the priorities of the development partners and do not always reflect the real needs of the people for whom they are meant. These partners make parallel decisions, often without the involvement of parliaments. As a consequence, there is a general lack of national ownership of those strategies. Donors are increasingly aware of this shortcoming and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness seeks to redress the situation. Parliaments in the donor countries are also increasingly giving attention to this issue and demanding greater transparency and accountability from their development aid agencies as well the recipient countries.

Other challenges to a meaningful involvement of LDC parliaments in the implementation of the BPOA include lack of information, capacity and resources. These parliaments operate in an environment characterized by poor governance with the attendant mismanagement of resources and corruption, conflicts, lack of access to markets, etc. Decision-making processes in parliament are not always inclusive and there is very little dialogue between the governing and opposition parties.

Parliamentary support groups.

It is up to each parliament to decide on the type of structure it wishes to establish to promote the implementation of the BPOA. Some may wish to establish separate structures such as a committee or subcommittee dedicated to the BPOA. Given the cross-cutting nature of the BPOA, some parliaments may wish to distribute its various components among the various committees of parliament and review progress in implementation through the body in parliament that is responsible for parliament's business, such as the steering committee. Such a steering committee exists in the Tanzanian parliament and is made up of all chairs of parliamentary committees. Many participants at the meeting expressed preference for this approach as it has the advantage of avoiding the creation of new structures with the attendant need for resources. Whatever structure is put in place to promote the BPOA, it should be inclusive politically (involvement of all political parties represented in parliament) and sociologically (involvement of both men and women, the youth, minority groups, etc.).

Lastly, parliaments may wish to adopt an incremental approach, by establishing a light structure and moving on to a full-fledged committee depending on progress.

Irrespective of the decision taken by each parliament, what is important is that the parliament should ensure that its internal structures and agenda reflect the BPOA.

Recommendations:

- Parliaments need to be more supportive of the BPOA. They should do so in strict compliance with the separation of powers between the legislative and executive arms of government. Such involvement should be done in a spirit of complementarity rather than competition.
- For parliaments to be more actively involved in the BPOA, their members should know more and understand better the BPOA and what it seeks to achieve. Currently, there is a paucity of information in this respect. The IPU and the UN-OHRLLS should help to

disseminate information on the BPOA among the LDC parliaments, including in partnership with the media.

- Parliaments should also promote greater awareness within society of the BPOA. They could for instance organize Parliamentary Open Days/Information sessions on the BPOA where experts would be invited to explain the BPOA. Such efforts should extend beyond the precincts of parliament.
- There is a need to build the capacities of parliaments to further the objectives of the BPOA. The international community should extend technical and financial assistance to LDC parliaments in terms of access to information, qualified staff to provide research and analytical support and material resources including documentation. Civil society and other private sector organizations also constitute an alternative source of information on issues pertaining to the BPOA. Training for newly elected MPs should also be supported.
- Parliaments should promote inclusive processes that encourage the participation of all components of the parliament (including the opposition and women) in decision-making.
- Parliaments need to be more proactive in overseeing development assistance to make sure it is commensurate with the real needs of the country and do not reflect solely the perceived priorities of donors. They should also exercise effective oversight to ensure that such development aid is utilized effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the people. Budget oversight by parliament both upstream and downstream is crucial.
- Parliaments should ensure that their internal rules and structures reflect the priorities of the BPOA and that these priorities are mainstreamed into all areas of the parliament's work.
- LDC parliaments should work more closely with the national LDC focal points with a view to the circulation of information and the building of a partnership that is conducive to the implementation of the BPOA. They should work in a spirit of complementarity and not competition.
- Networking is important for the sharing of experiences and good practice, finding solutions to common problems and reporting on progress towards the achievement of the BPOA. The IPU and UN should facilitate such networking. They should do so by examining existing mechanisms and adapting them to the needs of LDC parliaments rather than creating separate structures that may be onerous and unsustainable.
- The IPU and UN should also consider convening regular meetings for review and follow-up purposes.
- Parliaments should participate in fora where decisions are taken at the international level to ensure that these decisions are commensurate with the needs and aspirations of the people.

Annex

Parliamentary Support Groups for Brussels Programme of Action: scope, objectives and mandate

Introduction

A BPOA parliamentary support group is intended to provide parliament with a coalition or group of committed individuals who can give impetus to the parliament's involvement in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action (BPOA). It is up to each parliament to decide on the structure and scope of such a group. This document provides guidelines as agreed during the meeting convened by the IPU and UN in Bagamoyo (Tanzania) from 10-11 December 2007.

Scope

A support group could be a caucus, forum, steering committee, standing committee or sub-committee of the parliament depending on the degree of formality the parliament wishes to extend to it.

Concerning the structure, in Bagamoyo, participants expressed preference for an approach that did not involve the creation of new structures that could turn out to be onerous and could even duplicate existing structures. It was recommended that each parliament examine how it could adapt its internal rules and structures to accommodate the BPOA to ensure that it was streamlined into the work of the parliament, given its cross-cutting nature. The Tanzanian example of a steering committee comprising all the parliamentary committee chairs with each responsible for specific sectors of the BPOA was endorsed by many participants. Some participants nevertheless expressed the wish for their parliaments to establish a committee or sub-committee on the BPOA. Whatever the case, it is important that the parliament follow a minimum set of guidelines as it seeks to provide more focus to the BPOA in its work. It is also essential that the work of such a structure should be fed into the official decision-making process of parliament.

In terms of membership, the structure should be broadly representative of the membership of parliament, both politically and sociologically. It should therefore include representatives of the political parties/factions, both men and women as well as representatives of minorities. This broad membership is important for building a strong BPOA coalition.

The structure should have access to the parliament's resources to enable it to function efficiently. It should have the possibility to forge partnerships with outside entities such as international organizations, LDC national focal points, NGOs and other private sector organizations and individuals.

Mandate

A parliamentary support group will be an essential source of support and solidarity amongst parliamentarians across party lines. Such a forum aims to bring members of parliament together to discuss those issues concerning least developed countries and the implementation of the Brussels Plan of Action (BPOA) in support of LDC's.

The overall objectives of the support group are as follows:

- To help generate collective thinking within each LDC parliament about the BPOA and help organize the work of existing specialized committees accordingly;
- To become a gateway for information from the United Nations and related agencies and programmes on development strategies and approaches for the LDCs, and to help spread such information to all relevant MPs;
- To scrutinize/exercise oversight of government policies and activities from the perspective of the BPOA and related goals.

Specifically, the group could:

- carry out inquiries into matters referred to it by the House;
- inquire into matters raised in annual reports of Government departments and authorities or in reports of the Auditor-General;
- assist the parliament in monitoring government performance in implementation of the BPOA;
- review/propose relevant legislation required for internalizing the BPOA; ensure that proposed legislation is compliant with the BPOA;
- propose budgetary allocations to those areas of focus in the BPOA;
- conduct studies, report and make recommendations to the government, through the House;
- assist parliament in the preparation of its contribution to country reports on national action plans aimed at the implementation of the BPOA;
- play an advocacy role, among the general public, in support of the BPOA;
- build partnerships with international agencies, LDC focal points, civil society organisations, the media, etc.



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Meeting organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed
Countries, Landlocked Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-
OHRLLS) at the invitation of the National Assembly of Tanzania

Bagamoyo, Tanzania, 10-11 December 2007

PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME

MONDAY, 10 DECEMBER

9.00 - 9.30 a.m.	Registration of participants and distribution of documents
9.30 - 10.00 a.m.	<p>Opening Remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ Opening statement by Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, United Nations Resident Coordinator, United Republic of Tanzania ‣ Statement by Ms. Zahra Nuru, Director/Senior Adviser to the Under-Secretary-General and the High Representative, UN-OHRLS ‣ Opening statement by Mr. Martin Chungong, Director, Division for the Promotion of Democracy, IPU ‣ Welcome address by Hon Samuel J. Sitta, Speaker, National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania
10.00 - 10.15 a.m.	Procedural matters
10.15 - 11.30 p.m.	<p>Part I: Review of the Brussels Programme of Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ <i>What is the Brussels Programme of Action</i> ‣ <i>Measuring progress in LDC countries</i> ‣ <i>2008-2010 Plan of Action</i> ‣ <i>General discussion</i>
11.30 - 11.45 a.m.	Coffee Break
11.45 - 1.00 p.m.	<p>Part II: The role of parliaments in the further development of the LDCs and in the attainment of the Brussels Programme :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ <i>What are LDC Support groups and what is their raison d'être?</i> ‣ <i>How do they interact with other parliamentary committees and the executive branch?</i> ‣ <i>Which terms of reference for maximum effectiveness/modalities of work of the proposed parliamentary groups?</i>
1.00 - 2.30 p.m.	Lunch
2.30 - 3.30 p.m.	Continuation of Part II and Exchange of views and finalisation of a draft terms of reference and modalities to be used as a guide for LDC parliaments:
3.30 to 3.45 p.m.	Coffee break
3.45 to 5.00 p.m.	General discussion
5.00 to 5.30 p.m.	Summing up of discussions

TUESDAY, 11 DECEMBER

9.30 to 11.00 a.m.	<p>Part III: Parliamentary LDC Support Groups and their relationship with the IPU and the UN</p> <p><i>How members of parliament see the role of LDC parliamentary support groups in ensuring the implementation of the Brussels Plan of Action:</i></p> <p>General discussion</p>
11.00 to 11.15 a.m.	Coffee break
11.15 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.	Continuation of general discussion
2.00 to 3.30 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ <i>The role of the UN and the IPU in supporting parliaments in their role in implementing the BPOA</i> ‣ <i>Experiences and good practices in LDC Countries</i> ‣ <i>Follow-up proposals for 2008-2010</i>
3.30 to 3.45 p.m.	Coffee break
3.45 to 5.00 p.m.	General discussion
5.00 to 5.30 p.m.	<i>Conclusions (including evaluation)</i>



List of participants

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the invitation of the National Assembly of Tanzania

Bagamoyo, Tanzania, 10-11 December 2007

Liste des participants

**PROMOUVOIR LA CONTRIBUTION DES PARLEMENTS A LA MISE EN OEUVRE DU
PROGRAMME D'ACTION DE BRUXELLES
PAR LA MISE EN PLACE DE GROUPES D'APPUI PARLEMENTAIRES DANS LES PAYS LES
MOINS AVANCÉS (PMA)**

Réunion organisée conjointement par l'UIP et le Bureau du Haut Représentant des
Nations Unies pour les pays les moins avancés, les pays en développement sans littoral
et les petits Etats insulaires en développement (UN-OHRLLS) à l'invitation du
Parlement de la République-Unie de Tanzanie

Bagamoyo, République-Unie de Tanzanie, 10-11 décembre 2007

Hon Samuel J. Sitta,
Speaker, National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania
Président de l'Assemblée nationale de la République-Unie de Tanzanie

Hon Anne Makinda
Deputy Speaker, National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania
Vice Président de l'Assemblée nationale de la République-Unie de Tanzanie

Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra
Under-Secretary-General and the High Representative, UN-OHRLLS
Secrétaire-général adjoint aux Nations Unies et Haut Représentant, UN-OHRLLS

Ms. Zahra Nuru,
Director/Senior Adviser to the Under-Secretary-General and the High Representative,
UN-OHRLLS
*Directeur/Conseiller au Secrétaire-général adjoint aux Nations Unies et Haut
Représentant, UN-OHRLLS*

Mr. Martin Chungong, Director,
Division for the Promotion of Democracy, Inter-Parliamentary Union
Directeur, Division pour la promotion de la démocratie, l'UIP

I. PARLIAMENT - PARLEMENT

COUNTRY / PAYS	NAME / NOM	TITLE / TITRE
Benin	Mr./M Wally B. Mamoudou ZOUMAROU	Member of the National Assembly / <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
Benin	Mr./M Comlan DADEGNON	Director of the Presidential Cabinet, National Assembly / <i>Directeur de Cabinet du Président de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
Cambodia / <i>Cambodge</i>	Mr./M Kim Yeat CHHIT	Senator / <i>Sénateur</i>
Cambodia / <i>Cambodge</i>	Mr./M Sothkun CHHIM	Director of Protocol and International Relations <i>Directeur du protocole et des relations internationale</i>
Malawi	Mr./M Sylvester KASAMBARA	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
Malawi	Mr./M Leonard MANGULAMA	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
Malawi	Mr./M Joseph MANZI	Adviser / <i>Conseiller</i>
Niger	Mr. /M Mahaman Habibou YERIMA BAKO	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
Senegal	Mr./M Seck MAMADOU	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
Senegal	Mr./M Abdou SANE	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique- unie de Tanzanie</i>	Mrs./ Mme Suzan A. LYIMO	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique- unie de Tanzanie</i>	Prof. Idris MTULIA	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique</i>	Mr./M William MASILINGI	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique</i>	Mr./M Mgana I. MSINDAI	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique</i>	Mr./M John CHEGO	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique</i>	Mr./M Omar S. KWAANGW'	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique</i>	Mrs./Mme Jenista J. MHAGAMA	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique</i>	Mr./Mme William J. KUSILA	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique</i>	Mr./M Dr. Abdallah O. KIGODA	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique</i>	Mr./M George LUBELGE	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre de l'Assemblée Nationale</i>

COUNTRY / PAYS	NAME / NOM	TITLE / TITRE
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique</i>	Mr./M Mohamed MISANGA	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre del'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique</i>	Dr. Christine ISHEGOMA	Member of the National Assembly <i>Membre del'Assemblée Nationale</i>
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique</i>	Mr./M Damian FOKA	Clerk of the National Assembly <i>Sécretaire general del'Assemblée Nationale</i>
Yemen	Mr./M Awadh ALSOCATRI	Member of the House of Representatives <i>Membre du Chambre des Représentants</i>
Yemen	Mr./M Tawheed GHAZI	Adviser / <i>Conseiller</i>

II. UN RESIDENT COORDINATORS - COORDINATEUR RESIDANT DES NATIONS UNIES

COUNTRY / PAYS	NAME / NOM	TITLE / TITRE
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique-unie de Tanzanie</i>	Mr. Oscar FERNANDEZ-TARANCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator,

III. LDC NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS - POINTS FOCALUX NATIONAUX PMC

COUNTRY / PAYS	NAME / NOM	TITLE / TITRE
Cambodia / <i>Cambodge</i>	H.E. Mr. Orhat OU	Secretary of State and National Focal Point
Cambodia / <i>Cambodge</i>	Mr. Pagnathun THENG	Director of Planning Investment, Ministry of Planning
Senegal	Mr. Toure AMADOU CIRE	National Focal Point, Ministry of Economy and Finance
United Republic of Tanzania / <i>Republique-unie de Tanzanie</i>	Mr. Abihudi S. BARUTI	Director, External Sector Division, Ministry of Planning, Economy and Empowerment
Yemen	Mr. Ibrahim SHARAFUDDIN	Director and LDC National Focal Point

IV OTHER

ORGANIZATION /	NAME / NOM	TITLE / TITRE
ECA /	Mr./M Kojo BUSIA	Officer in Charge APRM Support Unit, Governance and Public Administration Division (GPAD)
UN-OHRLLS	Mr./ Raul CABRAL,	Special Assistant to the High Representative



SPEECH DELIVERED HON SAMUEL J. SITTA, SPEAKER, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AT THE CONFERENCE ON PROMOTING PARLIAMENTARY INPUT INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2001 BRUSSELS PLAN OF ACTION HELD AT BAGAMOYO TANZANIA ON 10TH DECEMBER, 2007

H. E. Cheick Sidi Diarra,
Under Secretary general and
High Representative UN-OHRLLS;

H. E. Martin Chungong,
Director, Division for the Promotion of
Democracy Representative of the IPU;

Hon. Madame Zahra Nuru,
Director/Senior Adviser to the Under-Secretary-General
and the High Representative, UN-OHRLLS;

Hon. Regional Commissioner;

Hon. Members of Parliament here present;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Hon. Chairperson,

I can think of no better way to preface my remarks this morning than with the words of the founding father of the Tanzanian nation, the late Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere. At the 40th Anniversary of Ghana's independence in 1997, Mwalimu declared: ***"...of all the sins that Africa can commit, the sin of despair would be the most unforgivable... unity will not make us rich, but it can make it difficult for Africa and the African peoples to be disregarded and humiliated... my generation led Africa to political freedom. The current generation of leaders and peoples of Africa must pick up the flickering torch of African freedom, refuel it with their enthusiasm, and carry it forward"***.

Hon Chairperson,

I am reliably informed that, this conference is the first of its kind to be held ever since the United Nations adopted the Brussels Plan of Action for the Least Developed Countries in May, 2001. Most importantly for us gathered here, it is the first conference aimed at soliciting Parliamentary input into the implementation of the Brussels Plan of Action.

Hon. Chairperson,

Allow me, therefore, on behalf of the Parliament of Tanzania to extend a warm welcome to all distinguished delegates to this landmark conference. In particular, I welcome all of you to this historic coastal town of Bagamoyo – a serene place embellished with elegant coconut trees and the ever present breeze from the Indian Ocean. Once a main gathering ground for the infamous slave trade, these days Bagamoyo boasts of an excellent ambience for seminars, workshops and conferences to discuss important issues of local, regional and international dimensions or just for leisure.

I beseech those of you, who are visiting Tanzania for the first time, to join others who have been here before by exploring Bagamoyo and savouring its delights.

Hon. Chairperson,

As I said earlier, this conference is the first of its kind to be held ever since the adoption of the Brussels Plan of Action six years ago. I therefore, express my profound appreciation to the Office of the UN High Representative for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Land-locked Developing Countries (LLDs) and Small Island Developing Countries (SIDCs) for choosing Tanzania to be the venue of this momentous conference. Indeed, we feel greatly privileged and honoured by this noble gesture. It is my pleasant duty to inform all delegates that we have done everything we can to ensure the success of this conference. Feel free therefore to avail yourself of the facilities we have put at your disposal.

Hon. Chairperson,

As we speak today, Africa remains the poorest and least developed continent in the world. The underlying causes of this situation are many and varied- ranging from bad governance, political instability, civil strife, conflicts, corruption, sectarianism etc. Above all, a lack of market access and an unfair global trade regime aggravate this pernicious situation. It is pity to note that seven years before the set deadline of 2015 to the attainment of Millennium Development Goals, Africa is still by all measures and standards far from achieving those noble goals. Poverty, ignorance, HIV/AIDS, other diseases, hunger etc pose great challenges to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

Hon Chairperson,

An evaluation of implementation of the Brussels Plan of Action Phase One and Two drew the following lessons:

- There must be a stronger commitment and more concerted efforts on the part of the LDCs themselves and the international community to jointly tackle poverty.
- LDCs must quickly improve governance towards a results oriented administration that avoids waste, corruption and incompetence while International Cooperating Partners should make good on their pledges for assistance, in terms of both volume and timeliness.
- There is need for a clearly defined operational plan showing the actions and roles of stakeholders in implementing the various commitments contained in the Plan of Action

with properly sequenced priorities and coordinated actions at the national, regional/sub regional and global levels.

- Success in attaining the objectives of the Plan of Action will require effective functioning of the arrangements for the continuous follow-up and coordination as well as monitoring and review of the progress in implementation governed by the principle of full accountability for results at all levels.

Hon. Chairperson,

The Brussels Plan of Action, like other similar human development strategies has one overarching objective: to achieve in respect of LDCs, substantial progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty by 2015. Indeed, it is gratifying to note that the Brussels Plan of Action focuses on those countries that need it most, the Least Developed Countries- the majority of which are in Africa. We count the dawning of the new millennium as a turning point for Africa. We all recall that in June 2001, African leaders expressed their resolve to fight poverty by establishing the New Economic partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Like the Brussels Plan of Action, NEPAD seeks to eradicate widespread and severe poverty in Africa.

Hon. Chairperson,

In all these efforts, Parliaments as representatives of the people can make a huge difference in the success or failure of the Plan of Action.

Recent years have witnessed parliamentarians across Africa and the world at large coming to the fore in discussing ways of tackling various problems and issues relating to Africa's development. We, now have in Africa various Inter-Parliamentary Networks to address problems of HIV/AIDS, corruption, conflicts etc. For instance we have African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC), The AMANI Forum, The Great Lakes and Horn of Africa Parliamentary Group, Parliamentary Network for the World Bank etc.

Hon. Chairperson,

I would not be surprised if this conference was to resolve to establish an African Parliamentary Network on the Brussels Plan of Action as these and other similar networks of Parliamentarians not only add value to our representative role but enable Parliaments to take ownership of the development agenda upon ourselves.

Hon. Chairperson,

We Parliamentarians are at the centre stage of any Development Process. National Constitutions have entrusted upon us a very onerous responsibility-to oversee and advise Governments on the implementation of policies and programmes. In order to carry out this responsibility effectively, we ourselves need to be well informed and versed with a proper understanding of these policies and programmes both at the local and international level. I once again commend the UN – Office for the Least Developed Countries for engaging us in this important discussion. I trust that this Bagamoyo conference is a beginning of future conferences aimed at fostering exchange of ideas and information among Parliaments and Nations.

Hon. Chairperson,

The active involvement of Parliamentarians in issues of development programmes is in my view critical to success. At the continental level, we Parliamentarians under the aegis of our Continental Assembly – the Pan African Parliament and other Regional Parliaments such as the East African Legislative Assembly, SADC-PF and ECOWAS Parliaments have to ensure that Governments in Africa live up to commitments agreed upon. At the local level we have to ensure that our home grown domestic policies and programmes to address poverty are fully and efficiently implemented. Equally important, it is incumbent on us to see to it that we promote regional integration by strengthening the Regional Economic Communities (REC's). More importantly, we have to devise mechanisms for holding the government to account through commissions of inquiry, site visits, select committees and appropriation of funds.

Hon. Chairperson,

Recently, the Chairperson of the Commission of Africa H. E. Prof. Alpha Konare is quoted to have said the following: ***“Africa cannot survive, if it shuts itself from the rest of the world admittedly Africa is still in need of the continued support and assistance of the International Community, tailored to its real needs. The efforts already made by our partners should be stepped up for the sake of international solidarity.”*** In this respect, the assistance and support of our development partners is critical if we are to pull ourselves out of the vicious circle of poverty. Promotion of global partnership is one of the eight goals in the Millennium declaration. In particular we should spearhead and lobby, in collaboration with our European counterparts, for meaningful debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced Official Development Assistance, increased flows of Foreign Direct Investment as well as inward transfer of technology.

Hon. Chairperson,

In delivering these welcome remarks, mine has been a simple task. You distinguished delegates have the more challenging task of cutting through the issues and coming up with implementable recommendations. Looking at the topics for our discussion, I understand that you will have ample time to keenly reflect on all pertinent aspects of the development agenda at great length and depth.

However, let me conclude my remarks by quoting the former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Anan who in 2004 said the following regarding the attainment of Millennium Development Goals: ***“We will have time to reach the MDG's worldwide and in most, or even all individual countries but only if we break with business as usual. We can not win overnight. Success will require sustained action across the entire decade between now and the deadline. It takes time to train the teachers, nurses and engineers, to build the roads, schools and hospitals to grow the small and large businesses able to create the jobs and income needed. So, we must start now. And we must more than double global assistance over the next few years. Nothing else will help to achieve the goals.”***

Hon Chairperson and Distinguished Delegates,

With those momentous words of a famous son of Africa, I wish you fruitful deliberations and once again say welcome, and in Kiswahili **KARIBUNI SANA.**

I thank you for your kind attention.

Check against delivery



Statement by

Cheick Sidi Diarra, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States at the Meeting on Developing Parliamentary Support Groups in the LDCs

**Bagamoyo, United Republic of Tanzania
10 December 2007**

Honourable Speaker of the Tanzania National Assembly,
Hon members of Parliament,
Mr Martin Chungong, Director IPU,
Colleagues from the IPU,
Colleagues from the UN System
LDC National Focal Points,
Members of the Task Force organizing Committee,
Dear Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured to have this opportunity to speak on behalf of the High Representative Mr Cheick Sidi Diarra at the opening of this august meeting. Mr. Diarra has asked me to convey his apologies for his absence at this opening session due to circumstances beyond his control. He will be joining us later this evening. The High Representative sends his warm greetings and best wishes to you all distinguished Parliamentarians, National focal points, our UN Colleagues and distinguished participants.

Honourable Speaker,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We would like to, first and foremost express our gratitude to the Tanzania Parliament, in particular to the Speaker Hon Sam Sitta, the Deputy Speaker Hon Anne Makinda and the entire staff of the National assembly of Tanzania for their hard work in the preparation of this first meeting of its kind. May I also commend them for bringing the meeting to this historical town of Bagamoyo after the Arusha venue was not available. This meeting is also historical in that it seeks to initiate dialogue within and between distinguished Parliamentarians from the Least Developed Countries on the Implementation of the Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries 2001-2010.

We appreciate the partnership between the United Nations and the Inter Parliamentary Union, particularly at this time, when this meeting is a follow up to the High Level meeting of

September 2006 Mid Term Comprehensive Global Review of the implementation of the LDCs Programme of Action for the 2001-2010 decade. During the review process, our two organizations collaborated in hosting an event in New York that was attended by several Parliamentary delegations and which discussed “the role of LDC Parliaments in the consolidation of good governance for development; the missing link?” Our discussions served as a contribution to the High level meeting of the General Assembly and resulted in a timely acknowledgement and recognition of the oversight role of LDC Parliaments in the Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. We appreciate the role that IPU played at the time of review and in particular the presence and active participation of Hon Anne Makinda who presented the key statement in this respect at the General Assembly.

Parliamentary oversight in Least Developed Countries is crucial for sustainable development and poverty eradication. In most cases it challenges the national institutions to deliver development and overcome corruption.

As you know, the Programme of Action outlines a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy tailored to the special needs of the least developed countries. It is designed as framework of partnership between LDCs and their development partners based on their mutual commitments, and includes 30 international development goals including the Millennium Development Goals. The programme is also intended to focus on growth through an integrated approach, country ownership, market considerations and Results orientation. There are 7 Commitments that Mrs Zahra Nuru will present to you today in detail. Good governance at the national and international levels feature prominently in the BPOA. This should not come as a surprise as democratic governance expands the range of options for human development. Parliaments are revered as the most important part of the democratic process. It is within this setting that the opportunity of discussing the work and capacity of one of the most important organs of the state is unique.

Commitment 2 of the BPOA sets out in detail actions that are required by the LDCs and their development partners to establish good governance nationally and internationally as a pre-requisite for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the attainment of the goal of poverty reduction. In the early 70s, the international community recognized the existence of a category of countries whose distinctness lies in their profound poverty, structural weakness of their economies often compounded by geographical handicaps, limited capacity for growth and development and extreme vulnerability to external shocks. Currently this category classified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) includes 50 countries. These countries represent the weakest segment of humanity and need international support in order to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty.

In acknowledging this key role, the Office of the High Representative in collaboration with UNDP, recently undertook a major study called “Governance for the Future: Democracy and Development in the LDCs”. In addition to presenting a comprehensive analysis it also provides a picture the situation in all 50 LDCs. The publication will be made available to you in both English and French once we receive it. Some of the key elements which might facilitate discussion this morning include the central message of the report which is, although not sufficient in its own, is that good governance is indispensable for countries to be able to sustain progress in the long term. Power relations and national leadership have to be an integral part of all discussions on poverty reduction, growth sustainable development and economic progress. In LDCs, as in most countries, the commitment of those holding the levers of power can make

a crucial difference in terms of promoting change and progress. Equally are the quality and scope of relations among the state actors as well as non-state actors.

Despite the fact that most LDCs are multiparty democracies and have made important advances in electoral processes, effective checks and balances between the various powers of the state still need to be strengthened. We stand ready to hear from you how we can move forward in this process to support capacity of LDC Parliaments in their oversight role to assist countries overcome their vulnerability and move towards growth and sustainable development.

The upcoming dialogue on the development of the LDC Parliamentary Support groups seeks to further enhance the capacity of LDC Parliaments play their oversight role effectively. We look forward to learning more of your experiences and your input on how we can tackle the issues of the LDC's vulnerability through this partnership and in our collaboration with all organs of the state in overcoming the challenges faced by LDCs. Some LDCs have a double challenge of being Landlocked or Small Island states.

We wish this first meeting of Parliaments from 10 pilot LDCs success.

I am sure that we will hear more about this in our discussion here.



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PROMOTING PARLIAMENTARY INPUT INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2001 BRUSSELS PROGRAMME OF ACTION (BPOA)

Bagamoyo, Tanzania, 10-11 December 2007

**SPEECH BY MARTIN CHUNGONG
DIRECTOR DIVISION FOR THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Mr. Speaker,
Mr. Under-Secretary-General of the UN and High Representative for LDC's
Honourable Members of Parliament
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to take the floor today, on behalf of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The Secretary General of the IPU, Anders Johnsson, who very much regrets that other obligations prevent him from being here today, has asked me to convey to you his very best wishes for a successful meeting.

Let me at the outset thank Mr. Speaker and through you, the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania, for the efforts invested in the organization of this meeting and for the kind courtesies extended to delegates. We are proud to be able to enjoy the cooperation of a Member Parliament of the IPU.

The meeting we are inaugurating today is one more example of the partnership the IPU and the UN have forged over the years in an effort to bring parliaments to the centre of international decision-making.

The IPU has continued to advocate and work towards a stronger role for parliaments in decision-making at the international level, in the belief that international relations should be conducted in a democratic spirit and should therefore be more transparent and accountable. Indeed, it believes that States in their international relations must be imbued with the guiding principles of democracy. In this scheme of things, parliaments, as the representatives of the people, have a major role to play.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The two World Conferences of Speakers of Parliament the IPU organized in 2000 and 2005 have provided fresh impetus to co-operation with the UN. Emerging from these conferences was a strong commitment by the world parliamentary community to support the United Nations in the pursuit of sustainable development and peace. Only last week, the IPU collaborated with the UN to build capacity among Asian parliaments to promote sustainable development and organized the first Global Parliamentary Meeting on HIV/AIDS. This landmark event was designed to enlist the full force of the world's legislatures in the fight against the AIDS pandemic, in which parliaments are crucial stakeholders.

Today, this joint UN - parliamentary meeting adds yet another building block to the strong foundations of cooperation between parliaments and the United Nations. It is our hope that it will enable parliaments to provide greater political impetus and support in delivering on the major international commitments of our day as far as they pertain to the LDCs.

This meeting is a continuation of efforts by both the IPU and the UN to mobilize political support for action in favour of least developed countries. Chief among these efforts was the Havana parliamentary message of April 2001 to the Third United Nations Least Developed Countries Conference (UNLDC III), held in Brussels in 2001. In its message, the IPU called on the conference to take a close look at the key challenges facing the peoples and governments of the LDCs. The IPU also called on the Conference to take action in the interests of real, not imaginary, progress.

During the Brussels Conference itself, the IPU convened a high-level parliamentary roundtable also aimed at promoting parliamentary action on issues addressed by the Conference and parliamentary follow-up of its results. As you may know, the IPU formally endorsed the Brussels Programme of Action in Santiago de Chile in 2003 stressing, in particular, the need for the effective implementation of Commitment 2 of the Programme relating to good governance at the national and international levels.

**Mr. Speaker,
Mr. UN Under-Secretary-General
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Building on this strong bedrock of parliamentary commitment, the IPU and the UN have today developed a project that seeks a more active role for parliaments in popularizing the BPOA, in initiating debate about its various provisions, and in holding governments to account for its implementation. Such action needs to go hand in hand with a more proactive role for parliaments, especially those in the LDCs, in the formulation of national development strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, many of which are closely linked to the successful implementation of the BPOA.

In virtually all countries, the constitution and other legal provisions endow parliaments with law-making, oversight and representational powers. However, in reality, the executive holds most of the decision-making powers and is disinclined to submit to the scrutiny of parliament. This is unfortunately the case in many LDC parliaments. We feel that it is high time parliaments in these countries seized the initiative and reclaimed their rightful role in influencing government policies with a view to the attainment of welfare for all. This would help parliaments to regain some of the legitimacy they have lost as a result of their ineffectiveness in addressing the real needs of the people. The BPOA and the MDGs give

parliaments an opportunity to make a veritable impact on the lives of their peoples. We are pleased to see that the UN shares this vision.

We are here therefore to support you in your efforts to ensure parliaments' increased involvement in the implementation of the 2001 Brussels Programme of Action (BPOA) specifically through the development of support groups within each of your parliaments.

Today and tomorrow, we will together explore the feasibility of constituting such groups within your respective parliaments, taking into account the prevailing circumstances in your respective countries. We will also be looking at how such entities can best function efficiently and effectively and what type of assistance they might require from the IPU and the UN in this regard. In this context, the contribution of UN Resident Coordinators and national focal points for the BPOA will be crucial.

Before I conclude, let me offer a few thoughts about the IPU's vision for these support groups. These groups should be able to function according to the precepts of democracy. They should help to promote greater parliamentary involvement in multilateral affairs. In this regard, let me quote from the Declaration of the First Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments in 2000:

"The parliamentary dimension (to international co-operation) must be provided by parliaments themselves first of all at the national level in four distinct but interconnected ways:

- Influencing their respective countries' policy on matter dealt with in the United Nations and other international negotiating forums;
- Keeping themselves informed of progress and outcome of these negotiations;
- Deciding on ratification, where the Constitution so foresees, of texts and treaties signed by governments; and
- Contributing actively to the subsequent implementation process."

End of quote.

It seems to me that the above-mentioned Declaration provided the terms of reference for the entities whose creation we are advocating today.

On behalf of the IPU, I reiterate our commitment to pursuing cooperation with the UN in these areas for the enhancement of the capacity of national LDC parliaments to perform ever more effectively the mandate entrusted to them by their people.

I extend to you all our best wishes for fruitful deliberations.

I thank you for your kind attention.