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Geneva, 11 September 2013

Dear Madam Speaker,

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to the Eighth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on 12 and 13 November 2013, in New York.

The Meeting will be held in conjunction with IPU's Annual Parliamentary Hearing, scheduled for 14 and 15 November 2013 in New York (see attached letter).

As you will see, the Hearing will focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – the new development framework that is to emerge in 2015, when the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expire. I am sure you will agree that it is important that gender equality figures prominently in the discussion on SDGs and that the views of women Speakers of Parliament are heard. We therefore suggest that the Meeting of Women Speakers contribute to the debates of the parliamentary hearing on SDGs by highlighting gender dimensions and stressing the important role of speakers of parliaments in taking forward the SDGs.

The Annual Parliamentary Hearing, organized under the joint sponsorship of the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Economic and Social Council, will bring together members of parliament for an interactive discussion with high-ranking UN officials, representatives of Member States and experts drawn from think tanks and civil society organizations.

I therefore sincerely hope that you will be able to join us both for the Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament and the Annual Parliamentary Hearing and look forward to welcoming you in New York.

Please note that the opening of the Meeting of Women Speakers will be held during a working dinner hosted by the IPU in honour of the participants, on 12 November. Participants will work throughout the following day to discuss the various agenda items.

A detailed provisional programme for the Meeting of Women's Speakers will be issued in late September as soon as the President of the 68th Session of the General Assembly has taken office and the provisional programme of the Annual Parliamentary Hearing is finalized. However, registration for the Eighth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament is already open (form attached).

I am confident that this Meeting will prove to be invaluable for including the perspective of women leaders of parliament in the crucial international debate on the new SDGs.

Please accept, Madam Speaker, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(signed)
Abdelwahad Radi
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union