



Governing Council
Item 10

CL/185/10(e)-R.1
12 October 2009

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

(e) REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF PARLIAMENT TO THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORM AGENDA

Under the capacity-building project launched in June 2008 to enable parliaments to be fully involved in the process of national reconciliation and institutional reform, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) organized a number of national seminars following the regional seminar held in Sierra Leone in June 2008. These parliamentary events provided participants with an opportunity to evaluate the main challenges they face and identify ways and means of overcoming them.

On 29 and 30 April 2009, a national seminar for parliamentarians was organized in Freetown, Sierra Leone. After taking stock of the various measures that could help restore and consolidate peace, and having recognized the crucial role of legislators in the process, the participants set themselves specific targets by way of concrete recommendations, in particular:

- Promote dialogue, tolerance and cooperation with all stakeholders, including civil society, involved in the reconciliation process;
- Encourage youth to fully shoulder responsibility;
- Combat corruption;
- Promote a culture of ethics;
- Promote human rights; and
- Develop and follow up implementation of the socioeconomic programme.

With a view to achieving these objectives, specific actions were identified and an implementation schedule drawn up. A steering committee was set up to that end.

On 13 and 14 July 2009, a regional conference was held at the premises of the Rwandan Parliament in Kigali. The meeting brought together parliamentarians from Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

At the close of the meeting, the participants made a number of recommendations to be implemented by their respective parliaments, notably:

- Send a message of tolerance to citizens;
- Undertake reforms likely to result in the parliament's effective representation of all components of society;
- Build the capacity of its members to allow them to play their role well;
- Help put in place a transitional justice system and monitor its aims, which should include building peace, respecting and promoting human rights, national reconciliation, and restoring coexistence among peoples;
- Promote the creation of a socioeconomic environment that is conducive to the realization of the reconciliation process.

A national plan of action for Rwanda was drawn up that seeks to:

- Promote legal instruments likely to serve as a basis for the creation of a legislative framework that is conducive to the promotion of unity, reconciliation and human rights;
- Conduct a parliamentary campaign to mobilize and sensitize citizens to the consequences of the genocide;
- Ensure institutional and organizational capacity-building for parliamentarians;
- Strengthen partnerships with all bodies and actors involved in the reconciliation process.

Under the implementation component, a national seminar will be organized soon on the involvement of parliamentarians in the promotion of human rights.