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COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

This document provides a checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system from 11 April to 18 October 2009.

United Nations

- The IPU held a Parliamentary Conference on the Global Economic Crisis at the United Nations in Geneva on 7 and 8 May to assemble the parliamentary community in the response to the crisis and help develop a parliamentary submission to the United Nations' own conference the following month. The Conference was informed of the work of a special commission of the President of the General Assembly chaired by Prof. J. Stiglitz.
- The IPU participated in the United Nations Conference on the Financial Crisis and its impact on Development on 20-26 June and in its preparatory process. The Outcome Document of the UN conference encouraged the IPU "to continue to contribute to the development of global responses to the crisis".
- A preparatory committee for the third World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in July 2010 met at IPU headquarters on 17-18 July. The 25 Speakers on the committee decided inter alia that the parliamentary Summit would look at ways of further strengthening the UN-IPU partnership and that its outcome would be presented to the United Nations 2010 Summit in September of the same year.
- On 24 September, the IPU held a briefing in New York for members of parliament attending the General Debate at the opening of the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The office of the incoming President of the General Assembly, Mr. A. Abdussalam Treki (Libya), assisted in outlining the most important issues on the agenda of the General Assembly in the coming months. The briefing also highlighted recent developments in the relationship between the IPU and the UN.
- The IPU worked with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to help design the preparatory process for the 2010 Development Cooperation Forum. This will consist of three multi-stakeholder symposia (on mutual accountability, aid policy coherence, and South-South cooperation respectively) preceded by substantive studies on the same topics. Earlier, the IPU finalized two case studies on parliament and aid effectiveness concerning Zambia and Tanzania which were intended in part as input to the DCF process. It will participate in all events planned with the help of a specialized group of MPs.

- A thematic debate on energy efficiency, energy conservation and new and renewable sources of energy, one of several meetings to help maintain the political momentum for a new climate change agreement at the end of December (COP15), took place at the United Nations in New York on 18 June. The IPU contributed to the organization and arranged for the Chair of the Environment Committee of the Danish Parliament to join the panel. The IPU is working on the parliamentary meeting that will take place at the COP15 in Copenhagen on 16 December.
- Preparations got under way for the 2009 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations (19-20 November) entitled "*The Way Forward - Building political support and implementing effective responses to the global economic crisis*". The hearing proposes to build on the outcome of the June conference of the United Nations on the global crisis.
- The results of the IPU survey on parliaments' involvement in United Nations affairs was compiled into a report, based on some 50 responses received (representing about one-third of the IPU membership). The report will help inform decisions on the relationship between the two organizations.
- On 15 September, designated by the United Nations as International Day of Democracy (IDD), the IPU commemorated the second annual day with a variety of activities centred around the theme of Political Tolerance.
- The IPU held a Parliamentary Conference on Democracy in Africa (Gaborone, 14-16 September) to discuss the state of democracy on the African continent and how best to strengthen parliaments in African countries. The IPU released a global public opinion survey on political tolerance, the central theme of the conference. The survey was also launched at a press conference at United Nations headquarters in New York. All parliaments were invited to celebrate the international day and to work to remedy the shortcomings revealed in the global survey.
- In support of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the IPU continued its engagement in Burundi and Sierra Leone. In Burundi, the IPU organized a second retreat with the parliamentary leadership that focused on the electoral law and ensuring that parties can play an effective part in the work of parliament. In Sierra Leone, the IPU held a seminar in April which led to the adoption of a parliamentary action plan for national reconciliation. The parliamentary side of the peacebuilding process in these two countries was reflected in the report of the UN Secretary-General.
- In September, the resolutions of the 120th IPU Assembly were distributed in the UN General Assembly. The IPU addressed the United Nations in several significant debates, such as the annual plenary meeting on HIV/AIDS.
- A two-year project in support of women MPs in Burundi was completed in June 2009. The project was led by the IPU and the Parliament of Burundi and funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund. Its purpose was to support parliamentary action on women's rights and gender equality. Activities were held to inform parliamentarians about regional and international conventions, pinpoint discriminatory laws and devise parliamentary action. A survey was conducted on the legislative priorities of women MPs and its results discussed with civil society organizations. The project ended with the discussion of a plan of action for the Burundian Parliament.

OHRLLS

- Preparations began for the 4th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2011. As a member of the inter-agency team headed by the Office of the High Representatives for the Least Developed Countries (OHRLLS), the IPU worked to ensure that the parliaments of the 49 LDCs would be actively involved in the national consultations that are the first building block for the 2011 conference.

UNDP

- In order to better reflect the level of cooperation between the IPU and UNDP, the Secretary General and the UNDP Administrator began talks on reviewing and updating the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two organizations in 2007.
- The IPU began a new field engagement with UNDP and other partners through the Capacity Development for Development Effectiveness facility (CDDE) in the Asia-Pacific region. The CDDE is part of a global plan by UNDP to help countries implement the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness and its successor Accra Agenda for Action. The IPU has developed a joint work plan with the UNDP-hosted CDDE Secretariat in Bangkok, Thailand, which starts with the development of a practical *Guidance Note for Parliamentarians on Aid Effectiveness* that should be finalized in November of this year.
- The IPU and UNDP Jordan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding aiming to support the House of Representatives of Jordan to promote women in parliament and respect for women's rights. As part of the activities included in the joint programme of cooperation, a seminar on budget and equality was held in July. It discussed the objectives set by the budget, the measures taken recently in Jordan to develop a results-based budget and the road to a gender-sensitive budget. The programme also helped establish a working group to review and eliminate discriminatory provisions in Jordanian laws to comply with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) - in particular the Social Security Act, the Criminal Code and the Taxation Act. The working group will also be involved in drawing up Jordan's fifth country report on the status of implementation of the Convention.

UNICEF

- A joint IPU-UNICEF regional seminar was held in San José on 26-28 August, at the invitation of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica. The fourth in a series of joint regional seminars, the event for parliaments of Latin America and regional inter-parliamentary organizations focused on the role of parliaments in preventing and responding to violence against children and adolescents. Special attention was paid to the specific mechanisms at the disposal of parliaments to help develop a protective framework for children.

UNAIDS

- The IPU Secretary General and UNAIDS Executive Director agreed to consolidate the relationship between the two organizations and in the form of a strategic partnership around the priority areas that are critical to parliamentary involvement in AIDS response. The aim of the partnership is to change punitive discriminatory laws, strengthen leadership on HIV and AIDS and maintain the funding for HIV and AIDS at the necessary levels.

UN CEDAW Committee

- The IPU contributed to the session of the CEDAW Committee meeting in July in New York. It presented a report on parliaments' involvement in the CEDAW reporting process and data on women in politics in the different States under consideration by the Committee.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

- The IPU and the European Parliament held a Parliamentary Panel at the WTO Public Forum 2009 in Geneva from 28 and 30 September, under the overall theme *Global Problems, Global Solutions: Towards Better Global Governance*. Entitled "*Can protectionism protect trade? The legislator's perspective*", the parliamentary panel examined the protectionist measures that countries are taking to buttress their national economies as a result of the global crisis and how these measures may contravene current multilateral trade rules.
- On 1 October, the IPU hosted the 19th session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO. Members of the Committee were briefed by the current Chairman of the WTO General Council, Ambassador Mario Matus (Chile), on the state of preparations for the 7th WTO Ministerial Conference, to be held in Geneva from 30 November to 2 December 2009.