

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION ASSEMBLY

Kampala, 31 March 2012

Delivered by Mr. Zachary Muburi-Muita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union

Your Excellency, President Museveni,
Honourable Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga, Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament
Honourable Abdelwahad Radi, President of the Inter-parliamentary Union,
Secretary-General Johnsson,
Distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to greet the Inter-parliamentary Union Assembly. You have chosen a timely topic in “Parliaments and People: Bridging the Gap.” The contexts and grievances that drove the various social protests of 2011 were varied, but they had in common the expectation that state institutions be more transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people. They reflect a deep-seated yearning for the rule of law, democratic governance and social justice.

This places a huge burden on you, the world’s parliamentarians. Your citizens expect you to translate their voice into government action, and to hold governments to account when they fall short on delivery. Tomorrow, you will launch the *Global Parliamentary Report*, produced in conjunction with the UN Development Programme. Among its messages is that, to be effective, parliaments need not only to be strong and assertive, they themselves must be more transparent and accountable.

The United Nations relies on strong, effective parliaments to meet the challenges of the 21st century. First, we need to accelerate progress on the Millennium Development Goals. I am pleased that you will emphasize stepping up efforts to implement the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. The lives of tens of millions of women, newborn infants and children depend on it, not least in Africa.

Second, we must address climate change by prioritizing key mitigation and adaptation measures. By 2015, we must secure a comprehensive agreement applicable to all parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Third, let us define and mobilize collective action around a new generation of post-2015 sustainable development goals. Our common future depends on developing sustainable ways to meet the growing and interlinked demand for energy, food and water.

Fourth, we need to give higher priority to prevention: preventing conflicts, human rights abuses and man-made and natural disasters. We need to invest in early warning; we must strengthen capacity-building on human rights, humanitarian law and democratic values and practices; and we need to build resilience, ranging from social safety nets and legal protection to national disaster risk reduction plans.

For all these challenges, the United Nations needs a strong partnership with national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We need you to remind governments of their international commitments, translate these commitments into national legislation and fund their implementation.

In recent years our relationship has become closer and stronger. The IPU has developed close working relations with the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. Parliamentary participation in major UN Conferences has improved their outcome.

But we can do more. At country level, the UN could more systematically draw on the unique expertise of the IPU in strengthening parliamentary institutions, particularly in countries emerging from conflict or undergoing other transition. This is just one recommendation that I will make when I present my report on UN-IPU cooperation to the General Assembly later this year.

I look forward to working with you and wish you a successful meeting.