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Geneva, 8 June 2009

Dear Madam President,  
Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to ask you for your help and personal involvement to strengthen IPU's ability to carry out one of its core missions, namely to promote democratic parliaments.

Over the last decade, a large number of parliaments have worked with the IPU to develop standards and criteria and share good practices for democratic parliaments culminating in the 2006 study *Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century* and the 2008 *Self-assessment toolkit for parliaments*. These ground breaking products are complemented by information on your parliament's composition, structures and working methods which is contained in the on-line IPU data base PARLINE ([www.ipu.org/parline](http://www.ipu.org/parline)) and reflected in analytical and comparative studies, like the 2008 study on *Tools for parliamentary oversight*.

We are increasingly being asked to help strengthen parliament's oversight role. This task is high on the political agenda in many parliaments as they seek to ensure greater accountability, probity and transparency in public affairs. It has therefore become an urgent necessity to update and complete the earlier survey on parliamentary oversight. This will enable us to track developments, identify good practices and improve IPU's capacity building and support services for parliaments.

I am therefore asking for your indulgence in making sure that the attached questionnaire is completed and returned to the IPU Secretariat by 31 July this year. I recognize all too well that many parliaments have limited staff resources. Your parliament may therefore contact the focal point for this exercise in the IPU Secretariat (Andy Richardson: [ar@mail.ipu.org](mailto:ar@mail.ipu.org)) should they require further guidance and assistance. We have also tried to make the questionnaire as simple as possible. We have tested it and believe that it should be possible to complete all the answers within an hour or two at the most.

The IPU is working in close cooperation with the World Bank Institute on this project. Both institutions are committed to ensuring the success of this exercise and will produce a full report for parliaments with recommendations for action they can take to strengthen parliamentary oversight.

Yours sincerely,

Anders B. Johnsson  
Secretary General