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COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

**DRAFT PARLIAMENTARY MESSAGE TO BE DELIVERED TO THE FOURTH UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDC IV)**

On 8 May 2011, the IPU will hold a Parliamentary Forum on the occasion of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC IV).

The draft statement below has been prepared in cooperation with the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, co-organizers of the Parliamentary Forum. The Executive Committee has reviewed the text and recommends that the Governing Council endorse it.

We parliamentarians, gathered at the 124th IPU Assembly,* welcome the fact that once again, the special needs of the least developed countries (LDCs) are placed at the centre of the global development agenda. Indeed, human welfare - the very goal of development - depends directly on substantial progress in these countries, where implementation of past commitments leaves much to be desired. Well over half of the 880 million people living in the LDCs continue to do so in absolute poverty, amidst environmental degradation and lack of access to decent work, basic health care, education, energy and infrastructure. Many of these countries are overrun by conflict or instability, or are unable to cope with the impacts of climate change, spikes in commodity prices, and natural disasters. Graduation out of the LDC category is proceeding far too slowly.

A new agenda is needed that builds on the lessons learned over the past decade and galvanizes the international community around more resolute action. We expect the new Istanbul Programme of Action to carry forward that agenda in a spirit of partnership between the LDCs and the rest of the world, as well as among all stakeholders. Since there is no single formula for success in development, the LDCs will need to adapt their own course to the basic tenets set forth in the new Programme of Action. This process should be guided by the principles of national ownership, mutual accountability, and results-based management, as well as by an overriding concern for sustainability across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development.

The LDCs need to become more self-sufficient, less dependent on commodities, and develop more diversified value-added economic sectors in addition to agriculture. Employment generation with basic protections must be at the core of this effort, in both the formal and informal economy, alongside the expansion of productive capacities across all sectors. As in many other countries, the future development of the LDCs will depend critically on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the economy, in society and in politics through proactive initiatives. It will also depend on the fulfilment of long-standing commitments by the international community on aid, trade, debt relief, and foreign direct investments, and on giving a greater voice and representation to the LDCs in global economic governance. We reaffirm the

* High-level and multi-party delegations from 120 national parliaments participated in the 124th IPU Assembly (Panama City, April 2011) and endorsed this message.

need for LDCs to receive specific treatment when it comes to aid. This implies that donations should be concentrated on those countries and aid allocated on the basis of needs.

Expanding and securing the policy space of the LDCs is essential for them to truly take ownership of their own development. Ultimately, a better life for people is only possible when their own resources and talents are fully utilized and built upon. The LDCs will need to work harder at raising their own resources, through improved taxation and other means, and at giving free reign to entrepreneurship, including through policy reforms for the legal empowerment of the poor. South-South cooperation as well as subregional and regional cooperation have an important role to play in the human and economic development of the LDCs. Therefore, such cooperation, including inter alia triangular approaches, should be supported by the international community.

As parliamentarians, we consider good governance to be a prerequisite of development everywhere, and particularly in the LDCs. There can be no thriving private sector and civil society under a dysfunctional government. Corruption is a scourge that must be expunged so that all citizens can feel equal before the law and in the marketplace. In many countries, good governance will also require more prudent regulation of the economy and a better balance between the private and public sectors. This must go hand-in-hand with vigorous action to address economic and social inequalities and to assert fundamental human rights.

A crucial component of good governance reform involves strengthening the oversight, legislative and representative role of parliaments. It is through parliaments that all constituencies are represented, that government can be held to account for the development commitments it has undertaken, and that genuine political support and national ownership can take form. In many LDCs, parliaments still have a long way to go in terms of building their capacities and serving as effective and accountable institutions of democratic governance. For this to be achieved, strong international support, including from parliaments in donor countries, will need to be garnered.

In all countries, a stricter national review mechanism of commitments and policies must be put in place, with parliaments playing a pivotal role. In particular, parliaments will need to review and scrutinize regular progress reports on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and must be in a position to translate the findings of those reports into further legislative action. Parliamentary scrutiny of aid, which remains crucial to the LDCs, should also be enhanced in both donor and recipient countries. Partner country parliaments will need to do more to hold their own governments to account for their pledges to the LDCs, while facilitating relevant legislation as well as existing and innovative financial flows.

Recognizing the work carried out by the IPU in recent years in support of parliaments in the LDCs, including through the facilitation of parliamentary focal points, we further encourage our organization to develop closer cooperation with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) as the central coordinator of the global drive to implement the new Programme of Action. In this regard, we look forward to the IPU and UN-OHRLLS working together to help mainstream the Programme of Action into the work of parliaments, helping to identify or strengthen appropriate institutional mechanisms and processes, and to mobilize relevant international support for the LDC parliaments. We also call on the IPU to better monitor implementation of the Programme of Action at the global level in close association with the relevant UN bodies.

We commend the IPU and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for organizing the Parliamentary Forum in the wings of LDC IV and express our deep gratitude and sincere appreciation to the people of Turkey for their hospitality and generosity.