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12 March 2010

Madam President,  
Mr. President,

We are writing to invite members of your Parliament to attend the meeting, organized by IPU and the Parliament of Brazil, on the occasion of the Third Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 27-29 May 2010), under the theme "Bridging Cultures, Building Peace".

The parliamentary meeting will be held in the afternoon of Thursday, 27 May, at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro. Interpretation will be provided in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Arabic. Members of Parliament are also encouraged to join their national delegations to the Rio Forum, and participate actively throughout the proceedings of this major international event.

Over 2,000 participants, including political and corporate leaders, civil society activists, youth groups, faith communities, research centers, foundations and journalists, are expected to attend the Rio Forum. They will come together to discuss and identify joint actions to improve relations across cultures, combat prejudice and build lasting peace. Prominent personalities such as President Lula da Silva of Brazil, Prime Minister Zapatero of Spain, Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon have already confirmed their participation.


The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) was established in 2005 at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey. In 2007, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as High Representative for the Alliance. That same year, on the occasion of the 116<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Bali, member parliaments adopted a consensus Resolution on "*Ensuring respect for and peaceful coexistence between all religious communities and beliefs in a globalized world*".

Following the adoption of the Bali Resolution, IPU joined the AoC Group of Friends, a community of over 85 UN Member States and international organizations and bodies. It has encouraged UN member States to work closely with national parliaments in the elaboration and implementation of National Plans for Intercultural Dialogue. Over the past few years, several such Plans have already been devised, and many more are in the making. The AoC has also helped facilitate regional strategic plans for South-Eastern Europe, the Euro-Mediterranean area and the Ibero-American Region.


The Rio Forum will allow for a first evaluation of the value and impact of such national and regional strategies. It will also provide an excellent opportunity to take stock and highlight parliamentary action in implementing the findings and recommendations of the Resolution, while at the same time reflecting upon new avenues and partnerships to help build greater trust and understanding among diverse religious and cultural communities.

We invite delegations to confirm their participation with the IPU Office to the United Nations in New York, by email at [ny-office@mail.ipu.org](mailto:ny-office@mail.ipu.org) or by fax at +1212 557 3954. More information will be available shortly on the IPU website at <http://www.ipu.org>. Delegations are requested to make arrangements for accommodation in Rio either directly or through their Foreign Ministries. More information about the UN Alliance of Civilizations and the Rio Forum will be made available soon on the AoC website at <http://www.unaoc.org>.

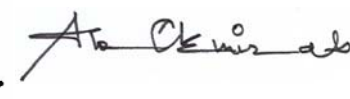
We sincerely hope that you will be able to take part in this exciting event and look forward to welcoming you in Rio.



José Sarney  
President  
Senate of Brazil



Michel Temer  
President  
Chamber of Deputies



Theo-Ben Gurirab  
President  
Inter-Parliamentary Union