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Parliamentary Meeting on the Rule of Law

Geneva, 30 July 2012

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

I am pleased to announce that a meeting on *Parliaments and the Rule of Law: toward justice for all* will take place at the United Nations in New York on the afternoon of Wednesday, 26 September.

The theme of the meeting links up to that of a High Level Meeting of the General Assembly that will be held on Monday, 24 September. That meeting is expected to conclude with a political Declaration that will outline the main principles of the rule of law and how they should apply at both national and international levels.

The idea that no person or institution should be above the law, that the law should apply equally to all, without distinction for social or economic status, and that everyone ought to be able to appeal to the law for redress, lies at the core of the rule of law. It is also a driving principle of democracy and therefore a key area of work for the IPU.

The Declaration that is in the making at the United Nations is expected to bring together many loose strands in the global debate on the rule of law. It should help elevate what has thus far been a narrowly defined legalistic discussion to a more political understanding with potentially far-reaching ramifications for the United Nations and its member States.

A first draft of the Declaration was introduced a few weeks ago but quickly met with the opposition of several members, showing once again how much remains to be done to create a shared global vision of democratic governance under the rule of law. With so much at stake, the IPU is following this debate very closely and has also invited the negotiators of the Declaration to reflect on those aspects of the matter that impinge directly on the role of parliament as the principal law-making institution.

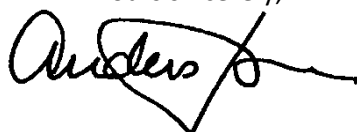
The parliamentary meeting is being organized jointly with the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) and with the sponsorship of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations. It will take place from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. in Conference Room 3, inside the North Lawn Building of United Nations headquarters. Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Spanish. The provisional programme and all background information for the meeting will be posted on the IPU website by the end of August.

In keeping with past practice, the meeting will cater exclusively to parliamentarians attending the opening of the 67th session of the General Assembly as duly accredited members of their national delegations. I hope however that, given the particular importance of this debate to the IPU and our members in general, it will be possible for you to ensure that your parliament is represented in your national delegation.

In closing, I take this opportunity also to let you know that this year's **Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations** will take place on 6 and 7 December. We are currently in discussions with the President-elect of the General Assembly, Minister Vuk Jeremic of Serbia, on the theme of the hearing. More information on this will follow in September.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anders B. Johnsson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anders B. Johnsson