

# The World of Parliaments

Quarterly Review of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

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## NEW WTO DIRECTOR GENERAL, PASCAL LAMY, ADDRESSES PARLIAMENTARIANS



Photo: IPU/H. Salgado

In one of his first public speaking engagements, on 22 September 2005 the new Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Mr. Pascal Lamy, met with members of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO at the House of Parliaments, the Headquarters of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Mr. Lamy briefed them on the most salient issues in international trade, placing particular emphasis on what remains to be done for the completion of the Doha Round. He stressed the need for frequent and technically solid discussions between parliamentarians and WTO negotiators in order to enhance the transparency and accountability of the WTO. The Steering Committee finalized arrangements for the Hong Kong session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, which will take place on 12 and 15 December 2005, in conjunction with the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference.

Interview on page 8.

## Latest news THE NEW IPU PRESIDENT IS MR. PIER FERDINANDO CASINI

On 19 October 2005, the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), gathered in Geneva for the 113th Assembly, elected Mr. Pier Ferdinando Casini, the President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, as President of the IPU. The final tally was 230 votes for Mr. Casini and 107 for the other candidate, Mr. Geert Versnick, a member of the Chamber of Deputies of Belgium. The new IPU President will succeed Chilean Senator Sergio Pérez for a three-year mandate.

Mr. Pier Ferdinando Casini was born in Bologna, Italy, on 3 December 1955. He has served as President of the Christian Democratic Party. Since his election in 2001 as President of the Chamber of Deputies - the third highest political office in the country - he has no longer been involved in the activities of his party. Mr. Casini has served on the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, and was Vice-President of the Commission of Inquiry on Terrorism in Italy. He was also a Member of the European Parliament, from 1994 to 2001.



New IPU President, Pier Ferdinando Casini.

Photo: IPU/Christel Goley

## Summit of Speakers of parliaments adopts Declaration "Bridging the democracy gap in international relations: A stronger role for parliaments"

From 7 to 9 September 2005, over 140 Speakers of parliament gathered in New York on the eve of the United Nations High-level Meeting of Heads of State and Government for the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, which was presided by the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Senator Sergio Pérez. The Speakers adopted a Declaration reviewing of the action taken by parliaments since their first Conference was held in 2000, examining how they could provide more support for international cooperation and the United Nations, and helping to bridge the democracy gap in international relations. (The Declaration is posted on the IPU web site [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)).



At the invitation of the IPU, over 140 Speakers of parliament met in the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters in New York, in the presence of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

Photo: IPU/Evan Schneider

## UNITED NATIONS REFORM: A PLACE FOR PARLIAMENTS?

**By Mrs. Nino Burdjanadze, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia**  
**Mrs. Baleka Mbete, Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa**  
**Mr. Renan Calheiros, President of the Senate of Brazil**  
**Mr. Franklin M. Drilon, President of the Senate of the Philippines**  
**Mr. Björn von Sydow, Speaker of the Swedish Riksdag**

**R**eform of the United Nations was on the top of the agenda for the Heads of State who converged on New York in September to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the global body. Secretary-General Kofi Annan tabled a package of proposals which met with some lively debate. The purpose of the reforms is to make the United Nations a stronger organization, better equipped to respond to the people it is meant to serve. Ultimately, the United Nations has to become more democratic. Clearly, within the equation, there is a role for parliaments.

The legislature is one of the three fundamental components of any democratic State. Parliamentarians are elected by the people to represent their concerns both at the national level

and - although this is less widely acknowledged - in the international sphere as well. Commitments that government delegates sign up to at the multilateral negotiating table also have to go to the parliament before they can be ratified and enforced. The role of the parliament is to exercise scrutiny over the process, from the initial drafting stage to final ratification and implementation. After many decades during which parliaments have been markedly absent from the United Nations, the Organization is now beginning to acknowledge the role of parliaments and their elected members as key guardians of democracy.

The leaders of the world's parliaments held their own summit in the week preceding the United Nations High-level Meeting of Heads of State and Government. Speakers and presidents of more than 140 parliamentary chambers came to the United Nations in New York to bring their vision of multilateral cooperation to the hub of international politics and say how parliaments can fill the democracy gap in international relations.

Indeed how? Does this mean, for example, setting up a separate parliamentary assembly in the United Nations alongside the existing governmental General Assembly? Views diverge, but the broad opinion expressed in New York was that creating new institutions makes little practical or political sense. The real priority is to ensure that there is better – closer, deeper, more systematic and sustained – cooperation between national parliaments and the United Nations in all its diversity.

For this to happen, two changes need to take place. On the one hand, the United Nations should define a set of priorities within its vast agenda on which it can routinely seek the opinion of parliaments. On the other, the parliaments themselves must make sure they select the most qualified people to work on those issues. In other words, they must select those members of parliament whose experience both in parliamentary committees and their constituencies has given them real expertise.

(Follow up on page 3)

### IN THIS ISSUE

#### ● Pages 4-5

Meeting of women Speakers discusses cooperation between parliaments and the United Nations for the promotion of gender equality

#### ● Page 9

IPU President visits Knesset and PLC

In Israel, the IPU President was received by the Speaker of the Knesset, Mr. Reuven Rivlin and in Ramallah he met with the Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Mr. Rawhi Fattouh



#### ● Page 11

Parliamentary oversight of the security sector in Latin America

### Casini elected as new president of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Rome (Reuters) - Pier Ferdinando Casini is the new president of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an international organization that brings together the representatives of the parliaments of 141 States, for the three-year period from 2005 to 2008. Reuters was informed of this by a spokesperson for the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, who added that the candidate received 230 of the 337 votes cast during the Assembly held in Geneva. The presidency of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is one of the highest profile political posts held by an Italian in an international organization following the departure of Romano Prodi from the leadership of the European Commission. Italy has returned to the leadership of the IPU for the first time in nearly fifty years.

Yahoo - Italy - 19 October 2005

### She thinks a woman's place is in the Elysée

Ségolène Royal is popular. Experienced, a tireless campaigner and, at a time when a disenchanted French electorate is searching for novelty, among the youngest of the top politicians in her embattled Socialist Party. But when Royal, 52, said last week that she was considering running for president in 2007, she unleashed an onslaught of attacks and ridicule from her own camp...France's only woman prime minister to date, Edith Cresson, left office in 1992 under a cloud. There has never been a woman president - not surprisingly since the mainstream parties have never fielded a woman candidate. Less than 13 per cent of lawmakers are women, leaving France ranked 74th internationally in gender-equality, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

International Herald Tribune - 30 September 2004

### A call for an International Day of Parliaments

The Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, Mrs. Nino Burjanadze, put it very clearly: "The Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments was a capital event, and we should really strengthen the role of parliaments and democratic institutions all over the world in order to make them more fair, more democratic and more peaceful".

The time has come for parliaments and governments to step up the dialogue so as to establish a new dynamic, it being understood that democracy, security, development and human rights are intrinsically linked.

But are governments ready to accept that parliaments play an active role in international affairs? "It depends on the parliaments and the parliamentarians" replies the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, while acknowledging that "it is not very comfortable for governments to have strong parliaments, because parliaments naturally should criticize governments". While Mrs. Burjanadze points out that constructive criticism can help governments to be more efficient and to avoid errors, she adds that if a government is afraid of a strong and fair parliament, "the country is in serious trouble".

In New York, the Speakers of parliament who attended the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments adopted a Declaration that sets out to remedy the democracy gap in international relations by bringing the force of parliamentary scrutiny into play on the international political scene. The declaration called for the best possible expertise available in parliamentary committees to be marshalled for this objective.

It also means providing greater visibility for parliaments, both nationally and internationally. One way of doing this would be to institute, at the IPU's initiative, an International Day of Parliaments, as set out in the Declaration adopted by the Speakers' Conference in New York. This annual event would allow legislators, citizens and the media throughout the world to concentrate their attention for a day on the activities of their respective parliaments, the second pillar of the State after the executive branch. Just as International Women's Day and World Press Freedom Day are high on the media agenda, an International Parliaments Day could do much to further democracy in our world.

L.B.

(Coming from page 2)

The issues are all central to the Millennium Development Goals that the United Nations is struggling to meet. They encompass worldwide poverty and the related questions of financing for development and the rules of multilateral trade. They include the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other health issues. They are often directly related to the painful process of rebuilding institutions destroyed by violent strife. They affect all of our countries. All are underpinned by the need to reinforce the rule of law and human rights.

The Speakers of parliament have called for a new strategic partnership between the United Nations and

the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the world organization of parliaments. We note that the role of the IPU as the body representing the world's parliaments for this purpose was specifically recognized in the summit outcome document that the Heads of State and Government adopted in September.

At this time of self-appraisal and change, we believe that national parliaments working with the IPU represent the most credible option for serious parliamentary scrutiny of global institutions, and that we, the national parliaments, can turn this vision into reality.



## **AT THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF THE SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENTS WHAT THEY SAID:**

### ***Senator Sergio Páez, IPU President***

"This extraordinary meeting testifies to the interest in parliamentary diplomacy within representative institutions and to the increasing role of legislators in the international system.... The main objectives of the Conference are to air the views of the true representatives of popular sovereignty from all regions of the world, to take stock of parliamentary action in foreign affairs in the past five years, and to examine how we can provide more support for international cooperation and for the United Nations. Last but not least, we want to help bridge the democracy gap in decision-making in international relations."

### ***Mr. Jean Ping, President of the United Nations General Assembly***

"The IPU is attached to the objectives and principles of the United Nations. The theme of the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments is particularly significant at a time when the General Assembly is engaged in difficult negotiations in order to agree on a document for our heads of State and Government which will hopefully garner the broadest consensus possible so as to adapt the United Nations to the multiple challenges of the twenty-first century".

### ***Message from the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Mr. Dennis Hastert, delivered by United States Congressman David Dreier***

"We have been working together on a new initiative through which the United States House of Representatives will offer assistance to strengthen parliaments in emerging democracies worldwide. Working with other parliaments is an important part of your work too. I applaud this Conference's central focus on how parliaments can contribute to democracy.... As parliamentarians, we are uniquely positioned to contribute to the advancement of democracy, human rights and the rule of law simply by representing the best interests of the voters that elected us."

### ***Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations***

"Being here again may give...a sense of déjà vu, as once again we look to the World Summit for important decisions on the full range of issues before the United Nations. ...I thank you for your broad outlook, your awareness of the interconnected nature of today's problems, and your belief in multilateral solutions. Let us make sure that, should you come together again in another five years, we have made measurable progress in modernizing our institutions and in building a world that is freer, fairer and safer for all its inhabitants."

## **PARLIAMENTS AND THE UNITED NATIONS: COOPERATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY**



Mrs. Ingrida Udre

**A**t the initiative of Ms. Ingrida Udre, Speaker of the Latvian Saeima and Rapporteur for the Declaration of the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, a meeting of women Speakers was convened, with the assistance of the IPU, on 9 September 2005.

Ms. Udre highlighted the importance of this opportunity for women Speakers to meet and discuss the ways and means by which the parliamentary community could best contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including through a strengthened partnership with the United Nations. She also referred to the forthcoming fiftieth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) that would address the issue of women's participation in decision-making and the preparations under way at the IPU and the United Nations to convene a new meeting of parliamentarians on that occasion to discuss the question of women's participation in political life.

The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Louise Fréchette, was invited to attend the meeting. She presented an evaluation of how gender equality and the empowerment of women were promoted through the work of the United Nations, emphasizing their central role in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Ms. Fréchette also addressed the question of women's representation in parliament, identifying some of the measures that led to concrete results, including quota systems, voluntary agreements, training programmes for

women's leadership and the elimination of laws and practices preventing or restricting women's participation in the political process. Lastly, the Deputy Secretary-General commended the IPU - and particularly the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians - for its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, and called for greater cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations in the future.

**"We must encourage our sisters to run for office and to prepare to serve"**



Mrs. Thérèse Meyer

The Speaker of the Swiss National Council, Mrs. Thérèse Meyer, who served as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Conference, said that the main message of the meeting was that women Speakers all shared the same objective: "to increase the well-being of our citizens through our work as women, by being complementary in our work to men". Women Speakers "believe in their strength, and we know that we must also encourage our sisters to run for office and to prepare to serve. It is by being complementary that we can do great things for our citizens".

Speaker Meyer believes that parliaments are gender-sensitive, "but they respond differently. Some believe binding laws should ensure parity, or at least a mandatory percentage of women in their parliaments; others believe that this should be done through democracy, i.e., that women must be elected using the same means as men".

Are quotas a necessary evil? "In my country, according to the voting system, there is no electoral list; the people vote for a person. Elections through quotas are more problematic, because a candidate may be elected while receiving fewer votes than an unelected contender. We should encourage parties to at least ensure that there are mandatory quotas for electoral lists. The rest is a matter of work at the

grass roots, but also of spirit and conviction; this work must be done so that women enter politics and run for office. Above all, they must have confidence. They have every ability to do this work."

*As of 31 August 2005, in the world's 186 national parliaments, only 26 presiding officers' posts were occupied by women. Women thus accounted for just over 10 per cent of the 257 posts of Speakers of parliaments or parliamentary chambers.*

## THE IMAGE OF PARLIAMENTS

Mrs. Maleka Mbete, the Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, was also present at the meeting. She also moderated a panel on democracy. In her view, it is important that parliaments restore their image. "Parliaments have negative images, partly because the way they are seen by societies is in competition with governments. Parliaments, even though they do a lot of good work, cannot make that work known, because the media tends to focus on government action."

It is up to legislators to change the way parliaments are perceived. "Parliaments should work more and more together with civil society, and bodies of the different sectors of society, and even interact directly with them" said Mrs. Mbete. She quoted the case of "the women's parliament which we have started in South Africa. We bring together ordinary women, we do workshops and we engage directly with them. They tell us their experiences. We get information directly from them instead of waiting for a committee to reach out to them with public hearings and that sort of thing. We can change things by the way we work as parliaments, vis-à-vis our people".



Mrs. Maleka Mbete

## **INTERVIEW WITH MRS. NINO BURDJANADZE, SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA, AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SPEAKERS CONFERENCE :**

***"If a government is afraid of a strong and fair parliament, it means that the country is in serious trouble"***

**Q.: Madam Speaker, what are your views on the Second Speakers' Conference?**

**Nino Burdjanadze:** This Speakers' Conference was very important and successful. I particularly appreciate the theme concerning democracy and the role of parliaments, because we should really strengthen the role of parliament and democratic institutions all over the world, in order to make them more fair, more democratic and more peaceful. Such meetings are useful because we have the possibility to discuss important issues and to share experiences. We can also have bilateral meetings and discuss important topics for our countries. The IPU should be more effective and more active. It should not only adopt declarations or discuss issues, even though this may be important, but also follow them up to ensure that all the decisions and principles which are and will be adopted in the framework of the IPU are implemented by parliaments and by the representatives of our countries.

**Q.: Do you think that governments will let parliaments play such an important role?**

**N.B.:** It depends on the parliaments; it depends on the leadership and the members of parliaments. Perhaps for governments it is not very comfortable to have strong parliaments, because parliaments naturally should criticize governments. But it should be constructive criticism, which allows governments to avoid mistakes and to be more effective. Constructive criticism is very useful and if a government is afraid



Mrs. Nino Burdjanadze

Photo United Nations

of a strong and fair parliament, it means that the country is in serious trouble. I hope parliaments will be stronger. It will help.

**Q.: You have provided proof that a Speaker can be strong and can play a decisive role in the history of a country. Do you think that Speakers are today aware of the role that they can play in decisive moments?**

**N.B.:** If you are a Speaker of parliament, you should play the role necessary for your country. I hope that all people and all countries will have such Speakers in their parliaments. It is necessary if we want to build normal, democratic and prosperous countries.

**Q.: Was it difficult for you?**

**N.B.:** Any work is difficult if you do it with heart and if you give your all to your job. But it is a pleasure when you have the feeling that you are doing the right thing for your people and your country.

**Q.: Are parliaments gender sensitive, or is there still much more to do in order to have parity between men and women in politics?**

**N.B.:** We have a lot to do. There are some countries which have no women in parliament. I think we should create better conditions for women so that they can express their possibilities, because everybody knows the important role women can play in politics and in other fields.

### **... READ IN THE PRESS ...**

#### **Foreign Secretary pays tribute to the IPU**

Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has praised the British Group IPU for "strengthening" Britain's international links and helping countries which are struggling to become democracies. "In areas of tension, the Group's work in building parliamentary links makes a very valuable contribution to

our objectives on entrenching stability and supporting new, sometimes fragile, democratic institutions", he said. "...I want to assure you that the Foreign Office and the British Group IPU continue to work very closely together".

**IPU Review (British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union) – January 2005**



## **Responsibilities of parliaments in international affairs**

The Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments included a panel discussion on the role and responsibilities of parliaments in respect of the work of the United Nations.

Panel moderator Juan Somavia, the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, opened the discussion by stating that the time had come for more robust checks and balances in the international sphere. As things stood, most governments were accountable to their parliaments nationally; internationally, governments were only accountable to themselves. "The job of parliaments, institutionally, is to bring global considerations to the local level", he said. The Speaker of the Swedish Riksdag, Mr. Björn von Sydow, agreed. The IPU should act as an early warning system to alert parliaments to what was going on the international scene.

Mr. Alexander Lambsdorff, a Member of the European Parliament, also saw a role for the IPU in communicating United Nations policies to the people. There was no doubt that the legislative component needed a more assertive place in the business of the United Nations. The European Parliament had mooted the idea of a parliamentary assembly for the United Nations. To put it into effect, two options were open: that of transforming the IPU into a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly under Article 22 of the United Nations Charter, or - preferably - using a reformed IPU. The Union had the necessary experience, and further bureaucracy should be avoided.

Mr. Lambsdorff and Mr. von Sydow both insisted that whatever solution was chosen, there should be an active role for the parliamentary opposition. People's interests could only be defended in the multilateral sphere if the uncomfortable presence of an effective opposition were part of the policy-making equation.

Turning to development issues, Ms. Ann Veneman, the Executive Director of UNICEF, spoke of the power of lawmakers to effect critical change. Good laws meant the difference between the success and failure of development policy, and parliamentarians had the moral authority to change opinions, and were able to amplify the voice of the humanitarian agencies. The Speaker of the National Assembly of Mali, Mr. Ibrahim Boubakar Keita, cautioned about the continuing mistrust of parliament on the African continent. Increasingly, however, it was coming to be understood that many development objectives could not be achieved without parliament. For the first two years, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was little more than a myth for the people of Africa. After a parliamentary forum for NEPAD had been set up, people had become much more involved, especially in the financing aspects.

Speaking from the government side, Mr. Jan Eliasson of Sweden, the incoming President of the United Nations General Assembly, added that parliamentarians brought the hard realities of the world into the halls of multilateralism. If the United Nations was to set the direction for practical international solidarity, it needed to take on new partners, and parliamentary pressure in many areas, particularly those on the social agenda, was highly appreciated and would continue to be sought in the future.

The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Louise Fréchette, was invited to attend the meeting. She presented an evaluation of how gender equality and the empowerment of women were promoted through the work of the United Nations, emphasizing

their central role in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Ms. Fréchette also addressed the question of women's representation in parliament, identifying some of the measures that led to concrete results, including quota systems, voluntary agreements, training programmes for women's leadership and the elimination of laws and practices preventing or restricting women's participation in the political process. Lastly, the Deputy Secretary-General commended the IPU - and particularly the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians - for its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, and called for greater cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations in the future.

### **High-level panel on parliaments' contribution to democracy**

One of the highlights of the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments was a high-level panel that met to assess how parliament exercises or should exercise its role as a key institution of democracy. This panel was ably moderated by the Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, Ms. Baleka Mbete. Other panel members included Ms. Nino Burjanadze, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia; Dr. Hajim al-Hassani, Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly of Iraq; Mr. Rodolfo Nin Novoa, President of the Senate and Vice President of Uruguay; Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren, Member of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia; Professor David Beetham, rapporteur of the IPU's panel on the Project on Parliaments' Contribution to Democracy; and Dr. James Paul, Executive Director of the Global Policy Forum, a United States-based think-tank.

Participants stressed the important role parliament plays in bridging the gap between the people and government. It can only play such a role if, inter alia, it effectively holds government to account, passes laws that are commensurate with the interests and aspirations of the people and practices democracy internally. Parliament's representative function thus came in for a lot of discussion. Parliamentary effectiveness and a streamlined system for remaining in close contact with and informing the electorate and the public in general would help to improve the negative public image that parliaments have in several countries. Several participants underscored the importance of involving all segments of society in the work of parliament. It was noted in particular that women and youth should have a greater say than is currently the case.

#### **In a true democracy, the voice of all should be heard**

Participants also stressed the need for parliaments to contribute more vigorously to decision-making at the international level, especially in those areas where power has shifted beyond the individual State. In this way, they can help to bridge the current democracy deficit in international cooperation.

#### **Strong parliaments are a bulwark against despotic dictatorship**

In general, participants recognized democracy as an ongoing process. They nevertheless emphasized that while it had taken the more advanced democracies several decades to build strong parliaments that now stood as bulwarks against dictatorship, the emerging democracies needed to accelerate the pace of democratic reforms domestically.

## **INTERVIEW**

### **PASCAL LAMY**

***"It is indeed parliamentarians who will ratify any agreement produced by the Doha Round"***

**Q.: When you were European Trade Commissioner, you began a dialogue with parliamentarians, and you are continuing it now as Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO). What do you expect to obtain from this cooperation?**

**Pascal Lamy:** Cooperation with parliaments is essential for all international organizations. That was true for the European Commission, and it is certainly true for the WTO. It is often forgotten that parliaments must ratify WTO agreements if they are to be applied by the WTO's membership. This is extremely important. Yet the work of the WTO is often misunderstood by parliaments. The round of trade talks related to the Doha Development Agenda is going to reach a critical stage in the coming months. I am doing everything I can to meet parliamentarians and to explain to them the importance of these talks for the world economy. For example, in the last week of September I spent half my time in Washington with the Bush Administration, and the other half with the Congress. I will schedule my agenda in such a way so that I will regularly visit parliamentarians during my missions throughout the world. I will also encourage members of parliament to come to Geneva and to the WTO so that they can realize first hand what the Organization is and what it does. I support the active participation of parliamentarians in our Ministerial Conference that will be held in Hong Kong in December. This event will be very important for the Doha Round. We must make it a catalyst that will allow us to agree on two thirds of our programme of work. If we succeed, we have a good chance of completing the round by the end of 2006, which is the objective set by governments. The participation of parliamentarians in this meeting can broaden political support for the negotiations.

**Q.: During your visit to the House of Parliaments in September 2005, you said that the WTO negotiators were "in the kitchen" and that parliamentarians were "sitting at the table". As Director-General of the WTO, do you think that the people's elected representatives have a say in what is in preparation to balance the new international system of trade?**

**P.L.:** As I said, the decision is ultimately for parliamentarians to make, as it is they who ratify our

agreements; it is indeed parliamentarians who will ratify any agreement produced by the Doha Round. Government structures vary, so the exact form of parliamentary participation sometimes differs from one country to another. In many countries, the Minister of Trade is a member of parliament. In most, the negotiators answer to their parliaments, as they must appear before legislators to inform them of progress made in the talks and to take note of the expectations and concerns of elected representatives. In the United States of America, for example, not only does the Congress ratify trade agreements; it also in fact has the power to negotiate them, and it transfers this power to the President through special legislation. Yes, parliamentarians are sitting at the table, and they are also part of the process.

**Q.: You are known to be a marathon runner, and there is no lack of hurdles facing the WTO. What is your strategy for ensuring that the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong does not fail?**

**P.L.:** As WTO Director-General, I have absolutely no direct executive power over our membership. As everyone knows, the WTO is an organization which takes its direction from its members. There is no question that it is for them to reach an agreement. My role is to try to facilitate their efforts. I can do this in several ways, making use of my experience to suggest paths to move ahead. I can try to structure the negotiations so as to transform an incredibly complex process into something more manageable and accessible. I can make sure that the negotiators' attention remains targeted on key issues, and try to show them the way forward to a solution. I can also work with other international organizations to try to bring them to support our cause. In this spirit, I have tried to reconcile the views of our members on agriculture, which is a key element in the current round. I have said clearly that the United States and Europe must make the first step, but that the others must follow suit quickly with their own contributions. Also, last week I met with ministers of finance and development during the World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings, to offer them support and advice as they worked to draw up assistance programmes for the developing countries. I have also begun a dialogue with the civil society movements that I will meet at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, so that we can together address subjects of concern to them. I will continue these efforts, and will indeed step them up in the coming weeks and months, all the while aware that in the ultimate analysis, it is for governments to make the final decisions.



## IPU PRESIDENT VISITS KNESSET AND PLC

From 11 to 14 July 2005, IPU President Sergio Pérez paid an official visit to Israel. He also visited Ramallah, where his delegation was received at the highest level by the Palestinian authorities.

The visit took place in an atmosphere of heightened tension, both in Israel, due to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's decision to disengage from Gaza, and in the Palestinian Territories, where the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmud Abbas, was trying to avoid a direct confrontation between his Fatah party and armed groups, including Hamas, in the run-up to the next legislative elections, in January 2006.

The IPU President was welcomed at the Knesset by the Speaker, Mr. Reuven Rivlin. Senator Pérez met with the members of the Israeli IPU Group and other high ranking officials. At the end of the meeting, Speaker Rivlin gave *The World of Parliaments* his views on the possibility of renewing dialogue with the Palestinians.

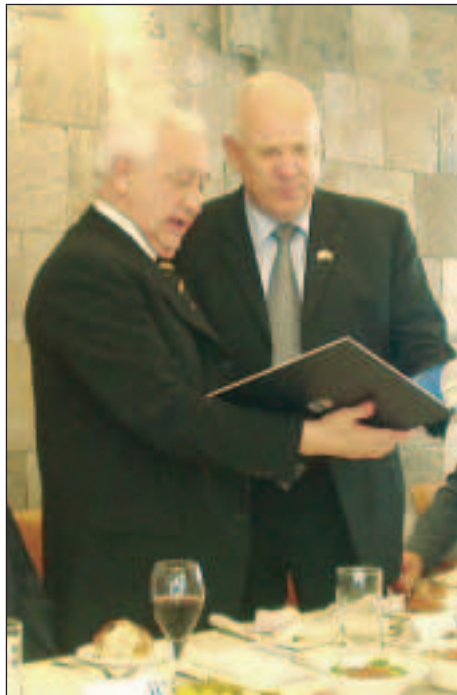
**"We have a lot of hope, but we do not have any kind of illusion"**

**Q.: Mr. Speaker, what can the IPU do to strengthen the dialogue between the members of the Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)?**

**Reuven Rivlin:** We need to have a direct dialogue between us and them. I am not so sure that international intervention can help, because it is up to us and the Palestinians to decide. Every time that international groups are involved, the Palestinians have the feeling that they can press Israel, and it is not very good for the

negotiations. Because you cannot press Israel. Israel is ready to make peace from the right to the left, but unfortunately, on the other side the strategy of terror gives them the impression that they can bring Israel to its knees. The European Union, the United Nations and the IPU are trying to bring us to sit down with the Palestinians. We are meeting them. We are living in the same cities, and we can manage to meet. Every effort to bring peace is welcomed by the Israelis. In principle, I believe it would not help, but if it would indeed help, we are ready to participate.

**Q.: Do you think that this is the moment for dialogue?**



The Speaker of the Knesset, Mr. Reuven Rivlin and the IPU President.

**R.R.:** In the last one hundred years we thought every morning that the next day we would see peace. And we had Oslo. Now we have a lot of hope, but we are not having any kind of illusions. Illusion is not the name of the game for the Israelis. We had an illusion, the illusion of peace. Peace that comes immediately. Unfortunately, we see that it will take time. Going into any negotiation without illusions brings much more results than going with dreams. I believe that we have to live together. It is our destiny. Less than one kilometre from here, my neighbours are Arabs. Less than one kilometre from here, my neighbours are Palestinians; less than one hundred kilometres away they are

Jordanians, less than two hundreds kilometres from here they are Egyptians. We are living together. There is no other way but to live together. But they have to accept Israel. They have to know that we are not seeking peace for now, but peace forever.

**"The IPU can be one of the good referees"**

The IPU President was also received by the Head of the Opposition, Mr. Tomy Lapid, leader of the Shinui party. For Mr. Lapid, "there is now a glimmer of hope which may lead to a successful way to peace" between Israelis and Palestinians. He said that the two leaders, Ariel Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas, "are taking very great political risks against the extremists in their own ranks, in order to maintain the dialogue. We can only hope that the good people will prevail against the people who are trying to upset and destroy this process".

The Shinui party and the Labour party, both members of the opposition, are supporting the disengagement and further steps towards peace "because my party is moderate, centrist and we want peace", explained Mr. Lapid. Asked if there was a new political will for peace, he replied that "the Palestinians are tired of their intifada and they understand that it will lead them nowhere". And the Israelis "do not want to have more bloodshed. Psychologically, the time is right to find a solution. When in a boxing match both opponents are near the end of their tether, then you can call for some peace". In response to the remark that in a boxing match there is a referee, he said that "the IPU can be one of the good referees" between Israelis and Palestinians.

### ***"With Abu Mazen, we will certainly find a partner"***

The IPU President also had talks with the Israeli Interior Minister, Mr. Ophir Pines, who has attended several IPU conferences in the past. The Minister saw considerable hope for the dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. "I think that it is progressive and much better than it used to be. With Abu Mazen, we will certainly find a partner for negotiations and for peace. There has been a great change since the death of Mr. Arafat. It was impossible to negotiate with him. There is progress, still not as good as we want to have, but it is much better than before".

The Israeli Interior Minister confirmed that he was still very supportive of the IPU's role of facilitator between members of the Knesset and the PLC. "I miss the IPU and I would like to come again. It is a great organization, because it has the flexibility to talk about all things, without all the formalities. When you are a minister serving a government you have to be very formal. You cannot do and say whatever you want. When you are a member of parliament, it is much easier to create new relations. This is why I miss the IPU and I want to be there again. And I am sure we will find an opportunity".

Does he still have contacts with his Palestinian colleagues? "Yes, of course, with the ones who were at the IPU. I meet them here and I keep contact with them. Some of them are doing good politics. Political life is very cruel and dangerous. But we survive".



Israel Interior Minister, Mr. Ophir Pines received the IPU President, Senator Sergio Pérez

Photo IPU/Elain

### ***"Today, we are ready for dialogue"***

#### ***INTERVIEW WITH RAWHI FATTOUH, SPEAKER OF THE PLC***

**Q.: Mr. Speaker, what do you think of the dialogue that the IPU is trying to promote between the members of the Knesset and the members of the PLC?**

**Rawhi Fattouh:** I welcome it; I am one of those who support this dialogue. In the past there have been several attempts which unfortunately failed. But now we are ready. All we have to do is agree on a mechanism, a date and venue.

**Q.: So if we invite you and the members of the PLC, you will be willing to come?**

**R.F.:** Yes, we are absolutely ready to organize such a meeting.

**Q.: Are you yourself in contact with your colleagues in the Israeli parliament?**

**R.F.:** With the Arab parliamentarians. But I have no problem with the idea of meeting any of my colleagues, provided they are willing to meet me. I encourage dialogue among parliamentarians, whatever their faction or political stripe. I have no limitations or problems in that sense.

### ***"The IPU must impose support for international law"***

In Ramallah, the IPU President met with the Palestinian Prime Minister, Mr. Ahmad Qurei, the former Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council. For Mr. Qurei, "the IPU, which is an important international parliamentary organization, must impose support for international law". The world organization of parliaments has "the possibility to play an important role between Palestinian and Israeli parliamentarians, on a very clear basis, in order to build the foundation for peace".

When asked if he had contact with the Israelis, the Palestinian Prime Minister, who is still a member of the PLC; replied "with some of them, yes".



Photo IPU/Elain

The IPU President, Senator Sergio Pérez was received by the Speaker of the PLC, Mr Rawith Fattouh.

## PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT OF THE SECURITY SECTOR IN LATIN AMERICA

In the 1970s and 1980s, the response to political crisis in Latin America all too often was a military coup d'état. Since then, there has been a shift towards the integration of the armed forces into a democratic structure under civilian authority, though such control often remains erratic. This was one of the main points raised by the participants in the Seminar on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in Latin America, which was held in Montevideo on 1 and 2 July 2005 and was organized by the IPU, the parliaments of Argentina and Uruguay and the Geneva-based Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).



The President of the Uruguayan Senate, Senator Rodolfo Nin Novoa (middle), introducing his counterpart from the Chamber of Representatives, Ms Nora Castro (right), to IPU President Senator Sergio Paez Verdugo (left).

The seminar, which was attended by some 70 parliamentarians from 13 national and regional parliaments, paid special attention to the role of parliament in addressing the legacy of human rights abuse in the aftermath of authoritarianism. The event took place at a time when the host countries, Argentina and Uruguay, were both in a crucial phase in re-examining the scars of their past. Only two weeks before, the Supreme Court of Argentina had scrapped an amnesty law protecting former military officers suspected of human rights abuses under the Argentine military government, a ruling triggered by an earlier decision by the Argentine Congress. At the same time, in an unprecedented move, criminal charges were filed against a former Uruguayan president and his Minister for Foreign Affairs for killings committed under military rule.

In a very personal account to seminar participants, General Martín Antonio Balza of Argentina noted that "violence and guerrillas could be found all over Latin America at the time. But in Argentina, we responded with horrible crimes...theft, transfer of property and thousands of forced disappearances. I feel a strong attachment to my army, in which I have served for 45 years, and it is with immense sorrow that I say these things." While acknowledging that each country had to find its own way to overcome the past, General Antonio Balza highlighted that "an unresolved past becomes eternal" and that, in reference to his country's experience, "the truth had become the first victim".

On a more general note, the seminar's discussions pointed to the increase of subregional and regional initiatives to tackle security concerns, in which

cooperation, not domination, was the defining characteristic. However, advances within a number of Latin American countries were much less clear-cut, and were very dependent on the success of their democratization processes. According to the Rapporteur of the seminar, Professor Gerardo Caetano of Uruguay, the weakness of democratic oversight of the military in many countries could only be countered by a continuous process of democracy-building, part of which required parliaments to demonstrate a genuine capacity for self-reform.

Suggestions for better parliamentary oversight included the following:

- Modernization and streamlining of parliamentary procedures, methods of communication and relations with other branches of government and other actors in society;
- Training of parliamentarians and the establishment of a permanent cadre of advisers on security matters;
- The establishment, where appropriate, of parliamentary investigative committees on security matters, with a mandate to issue binding rulings;
- The adoption of legislation on states of emergency ensuring the protection of citizens and duly referring to the existence of non-derogable rights;
- The adoption of legislation on the training of the security and military forces and the police, so as to ensure knowledge of and full respect for human rights and to provide for sound personnel management in today's security environment.



## ***Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians - Call for action***

### ***Four years of incommunicado detention***

**O**n 18 September 2001, eleven members of Eritrea's National Assembly, all of them leading political figures, were arrested by the Eritrean security authorities. They have been held in detention ever since. They have no contact with their families or their lawyers. No independent information is available as to the conditions in which they are being held and their state of health. Moreover, no formal charges have been laid against them, and they have never been brought before a judge. The authorities affirm that these parliamentarians committed treason during the Eritrea-Ethiopia war. However, it is widely believed that their arrest and detention is instead linked to an Open Letter which they addressed in May 2001 to President Afwerki calling for democratic reforms.

In November 2003, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights found the situation of these parliamentarians to be in violation of their fundamental rights to liberty and security, to a fair trial and to freedom of expression, as guaranteed under the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, and it called for their release. Likewise, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and the IPU Governing Council consider their continuing detention to be a gross violation of their human rights, which no argument whatsoever can justify. They have consistently called for their release. The Governing Council has also expressed the wish to carry out an on-site mission, but the Eritrean authorities have so far not agreed to allow such a mission. The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians believes that energetic representation and action by parliaments everywhere would greatly help to bring about an end to the violation of the human rights of these members of parliament. (Detailed information on this case can be obtained from the IPU Secretariat.)

### ***IPU Publication***

#### ***Making reconciliation work: the role of parliaments (2005)***

**T**he Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) have published a handbook for parliamentarians to provide some insights into the particular role played by parliaments in countries which have recently experienced conflict or are going through transition after a conflict, and to highlight the pitfalls to be avoided on the road to reconciliation. An effective parliament is vital to the success of any transition from conflict to peace.

"A parliament which is truly representative of all components of society and which offers a national platform for a free and open exchange of views, is in itself an important sign that reconciliation is under way. It is also an important factor in consolidating the reconciliation process" said the IPU Secretary General, Anders B. Johnsson.

According to the Secretary-General of International IDEA, Ms. Karen Fogg, "while periods of transition are often characterized by a wide array of economic, social and political challenges, one challenge in particular appears to have an unrivalled impact on the success or failure of reconciliation: How does a nation deal with a legacy of extensive human rights abuse? The handbook seeks to provide some responses to this question". (The publication is available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic, free of charge, from the IPU Secretariat; it may also be downloaded from the IPU website, [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)).



Photo: House of People's Representatives of Equatorial Guinea



Opening ceremony of the first semester's parliamentary session in Bata, Equatorial Guinea.

### **Equatorial Guinea:** ***Sensitization and capacity-building***

The second in a series of sensitization seminars for members of the House of People's Representatives of Equatorial Guinea (CRP) took place in Bata from 16 to 18 March 2005, as part of a project designed to help modernize the parliament of Equatorial Guinea. The seminar focused on the legislative function of the parliament. With support from international and national resource persons, participants examined in detail the mechanisms and processes involved in law-making and the resources required. The seminar was held in conjunction with a technical assistance mission to Malabo carried out by Mr. Pierre Hontebeyrie, former Secretary General of the French National Assembly. The mission assisted the parliamentary authorities in reviewing the various rules of the House, including those governing staff, and in proposing a realistic organizational staff structure. In June 2005, the French and the Spanish parliaments hosted a study visit for the Secretary General of the CRP Mr. Bienvenido-Ekua Esono Abe. On 29 and 30 September, during the second parliamentary session of the year, the IPU organized the third in a series of capacity-building seminars for members of parliament and parliamentary staff. This seminar, which took place in Bata, focused on parliament's budgetary function and included presentations on the budgetary process and gender budgeting.

### **Nigeria:** ***Bringing parliament closer to the people***

This project was launched with the signing of an agreement between the Federal Government of Nigeria, the European Commission and the IPU in August 2004. The project aims to build the capacity of the National and six state assemblies of Nigeria, and to ensure that

legislative decisions are informed by inputs from society. Project activities got under way in earnest in May 2005. Since then, a number of workshops have been held, including an orientation seminar in Bauchi, Gombe State in June 2005. A workshop on the budgetary process took place in Jos, Plateau State in July 2005 and a national conference on human rights was organized in Oshogbo, Osun State in August 2005. All three workshops brought together members and key staff of the National Assembly and of the state assemblies concerned. A series of staff attachments are scheduled between October and November 2005 in the parliaments of Belgium, France, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia.

### **Afghanistan:** ***Preparing the future National Assembly***

Since late 2004, the IPU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have worked together to prepare for the establishment of a new parliament in Afghanistan. Following an IPU-led assessment mission in November 2004, the SEAL programme (Support to the Establishment of the Afghan Legislature) has been implemented under UNDP auspices. On 19 July 2005 the IPU signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNDP for the implementation of this programme. The IPU is providing the UNDP/SEAL project team with advice *inter alia* on standards for assistance provided to members in respect of allowances, equipment and staff. In collaboration with UNDP and the Secretariat that will serve the future parliament, the IPU organized study visits for Afghan staff in the parliaments of Indonesia and Morocco in August and September 2005, respectively. A national seminar on parliamentary processes and best practices for the staff and a mock parliament are scheduled for October 2005.

### **Viet Nam:**

The IPU, in collaboration with UNDP, is assisting the Committee on Economic and Budgetary Affairs (CEBA) of the National Assembly of Viet Nam in organizing a high-level policy forum entitled *The role of legislatures in public finance oversight*. This event is scheduled to take place on 14 and 15 October 2005 in Nha Trang City, Khanh Hoa province, central Viet Nam. The forum is intended to facilitate exchanges of opinions and the sharing of practical experiences between parliamentarians on the role of legislatures in public finance oversight and the use of forms and tools to support parliamentarians as they enhance the actual power of the legislature in the budget process. The IPU is providing resource persons and documentation, and is mobilizing support from other parliaments for this event.

<sup>1</sup> The Union's Technical Cooperation Programme provides assistance to parliaments worldwide, strengthening their capacity to perform their functions more efficiently.

## **Parliamentary developments**

### **KENYA**

Amid protests in the capital, Nairobi, the Kenyan Parliament approved amendments to the draft Constitution on 22 July 2005, by 102 votes to 61. Known as the "Kilifi draft", this latest text had been prepared by certain MPs of the ruling National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) in early July 2005. Neither representatives from the main opposition group, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), nor the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), a member of the NARC, were invited to contribute. Under the previous "Bomas draft", presented by the National Constitutional Conference (NCC) in March 2005, a powerful Prime Minister would have been charged with chairing cabinet meetings, coordinating the work of government ministries and preparing legislation. All these functions were dropped in the Kilifi draft, which establishes that the President has the power to select and dismiss the Prime Minister without consulting Parliament. Following the parliamentary vote, Kenyans will vote to approve or reject the new Constitution in November 2005. If approved, it will be promulgated on 12 December 2005, and will represent the first constitutional reform since Kenya's independence from the United Kingdom in 1963.

### **MAURITANIA**

On 3 August 2005, the "Military Council for Justice and Democracy", led by Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall, seized power in a bloodless coup while President Maaouya Ould Taya, who himself came to power in a coup in 1984, was out of the country. Mr. Taya, who had been confirmed as President in elections held in 1997 and 2003, had reportedly angered many Mauritians by establishing diplomatic ties with Israel and launching a crackdown on Islamic fundamentalist groups in the country. On 4 August, the leaders of the coup announced that the Government would remain in place but that the parliament would be dissolved. Parliamentary elections were promised within two years, preceded by a referendum on an amended Constitution within one year.

On 5 August, the African Union (AU) suspended Mauritania "until the restoration of constitutional order in the country". On 6 August, the Military Council adopted a Constitutional Charter giving Mr. Vall executive power, including the right to nominate a Prime Minister and members of the transitional Government. On 7 August, Prime Minister Sghair Ould M'Bareck resigned. By decree, Mr. Vall replaced him with Mr. Sidy Mohamed Ould Boubacar, a leader of the Social Democratic Republican Party (PRDS) which had previously ruled the country. AU envoys met Mr. Vall on 10 August and urged him to hold democratic elections in less than two years, a key condition for Mauritania's reaffiliation with the AU. Mr. Vall pledged that none of the 17-member Military Council would stand for election.

### **SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO**

On 7 April 2005, an agreement creating the conditions for the amendment of the Constitutional Charter of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro was signed by the President of Serbia and Montenegro, Svetozar Marovic, Serbian President Boris Tadic, Montenegrin President Filip Vujanovic and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union (EU), Javier Solana. It was adopted by the Serbian and the Montenegrin parliaments, respectively, on 2 and 23 June 2005, before being sent to the national parliament of Serbia and Montenegro. On 29 June 2005, the national parliament adopted amendments to the Constitutional Charter, along with the Law on Implementation of the Amendments to the Charter. The decision extended the mandate of the parliament until new elections would be held separately in Serbia and Montenegro. The national parliament of Serbia and Montenegro had been in a crisis since 3 March 2005, when the mandate of the parliament had officially expired, as the two republics had been unable to agree on the organization of direct elections. Montenegro had refused to organize elections before a referendum on its independence, which is due to be held in 2006.



## SUDAN

On 6 July 2005, a new transitional Constitution was ratified by the Sudan's National Assembly, which paved the way for the inauguration of a new Government. Mr. Umar Al Bashir retained the post of President of Sudan, and on 9 July 2005, Mr. John Garang, the chairman of the former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), was sworn in as First Vice-President and President of the semi-autonomous southern region.

On 31 July Mr. Garang was killed, together with six of his associates and the seven-member crew, when the Ugandan presidential helicopter he was traveling in crashed. Mr. Garang's death triggered three days of rioting in which more than 130 people were killed. Both the Government and the SPLM pledged to continue the peace process. Mr. Garang's deputy in the SPLM, Mr. Salva Kiir Mayardit, assumed his posts on 11 August 2005.

## SWAZILAND

On 26 July 2005, King Mswati III signed into law the kingdom's new Constitution, which he had commissioned in 1996. Although the Swazi Parliament had unanimously approved a Constitution Bill on 13 June 2005, King Mswati III had sent the document back to it on 5 July 2005. He had ordered lawmakers to reconsider several provisions concerning religion, taxation of the royal family and women's rights. After Parliament made the requested amendments, King Mswati III agreed to accept the Constitution and announced that it would come into force six months later.

Swaziland has been ruled by royal decree since 1973, when King Mswati's father, King Sobhuza II, banned political parties. The new Constitution accords more rights to citizens, but consolidates royal power in Africa's last absolute monarchy. It allows freedom of speech, assembly and religion, although political parties are still banned. Women are given the same rights as men in "political, economic and social activities", with a third of parliamentary seats reserved for them. The King retains power to dissolve Parliament and the cabinet, dismiss and appoint judges, and

act as head of the police, the correctional services and the army. The King also has the right to veto any measure that he deems to be against the public interest. King Mswati III has not announced whether the 1973 royal decree will coexist with the new Constitution. In the meantime, he has ordered Swazi customs to be codified. Women's rights groups in the country fear that the codified traditional law will take precedence over the rights guaranteed to them by the new Constitution, which stipulates that "a woman shall not be compelled to undergo or uphold any custom to which she is in conscience opposed".

## TUNISIA

In accordance with constitutional amendments enacted in 2002, the new upper chamber of the Tunisian parliament, the Chamber of Councillors, held its inaugural session on 16 August 2005. Of the current statutory number of 126 members, 85 are indirectly elected by members of the Chamber of Deputies and city councils, while the remainder are appointed by the President. The number of members of the Chamber of Councillors will be determined every six years by the law on elections, and is not to exceed two thirds of that of the Chamber of Deputies.

The first indirect elections were held on 3 July 2005 for 71 of the 85 indirectly elected members. The General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT), which is entitled to 14 seats, did not participate. Whether the 14 seats will be filled or not has not been decided yet. The list of 41 appointed members, including seven women, was published on 1 August 2005, bringing the total number of women to 15. Mr. Adballah Kallel is the first Speaker of the Chamber of Councillors.

## UGANDA

A constitutional amendment to lift the two-term limit for the post of President was approved by the Ugandan Parliament on 28 June 2005, and passed its second reading on 12 July 2005. After the third reading, due to be completed by the end of August 2005, President Museveni is expected to give his assent, thus opening the way for him to stand again in the presidential election scheduled for 12 February 2006.

In a referendum held on 28 July 2005, 92.5 per cent of voters approved the re-establishment of the multiparty system. Turnout was 42.1 per cent of the 8.5 million registered voters. President Museveni had been under internal and international pressure to re-establish the multiparty system, which had been banned under Article 269 of the Constitution.

In the run-up to the referendum, the President had campaigned strongly in support of the multiparty system, unlike five years earlier, when in a similar referendum he had argued that such a system would divide people along ethnic lines. The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), a political entity widely opposed to President Museveni, had called for a boycott of the referendum, arguing that the President was trying to appease those opposed to lifting presidential term limits by offering his support to the multiparty system.

## ZIMBABWE

On 15 July 2005, the Government gazetted the Constitution of

Zimbabwe Amendment (Number 17) Bill, known as the "Senate Bill", for public debate before it was to go through the legislative process. The Bill aims to reintroduce an upper house of parliament. In its current form, it provides for a new Senate of 66 members, with a five-year term. Five members will be elected from each of 10 administrative provinces. In addition, there will be 10 chiefs from the Council of Chiefs, including its President and Vice-President. The remaining six members will be appointed by the President. The Bill is due to be presented to the House of Assembly by the end of August 2005.

Between 1980 and 1989, Zimbabwe had a bicameral parliament consisting of a 120-seat House of Assembly and a 40-seat Senate. The Senate was disbanded following constitutional amendments in 1987 and 1990, which also provided for direct election of the President. Since 1990, the country has had a unicameral parliament of 150 members.

## ...READ IN THE PRESS...

### China, South Korea agree to deepen parliamentary cooperation

Parliament speaker of China and South Korea agreed Wednesday in New York to boost cooperation between the two legislatures and facilitate the development of bilateral ties as a whole. Wu Bangguo, chairman of the Standing Committee of the Chinese National People's Congress (NPC), and Kim One-ki,

speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea (ROK), stressed the role of parliaments in state-to-state relations. The two held a meeting on the sidelines of the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, a three-day gathering that started Wednesday at the Headquarters of the United Nations.

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