



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

*Resolution adopted by consensus by the 115th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 18 October 2006)*

**THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN OVERSEEING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, IN PARTICULAR WITH REGARD TO THE
PROBLEM OF DEBT AND THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY AND CORRUPTION**

The 115th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Recalling the Declaration of Presiding Officers of Parliaments entitled "The Parliamentary Vision of International Cooperation at the Dawn of the Third Millennium", adopted on 1 September 2000, and the declaration entitled "Bridging the Democracy Gap in International Relations: a Stronger Role for Parliaments", adopted on 9 September 2005, which call upon all parliaments and their organizations, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to provide a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation,

Further recalling the Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000, which established eight goals with specific deadlines and target figures, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and representing a commitment to the elimination of poverty established by common agreement within the international community, and the World Summit Outcome adopted by Heads of State and Government on 15 September 2005,

Recalling the final declarations of United Nations special conferences, in particular the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey (Mexico) in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg (South Africa) in 2002, and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels (Belgium) in 2001,

Recalling the resolutions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in particular those adopted by the 73rd Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Lomé, 1985) on the role of parliaments and their contribution to the elimination of poverty through alleviation of the international debt burden; by the 74th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Ottawa, 1985) on the contribution of parliaments to the determination of measures and actions to eliminate the external debt burden borne by developing countries; by the 88th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Stockholm, 1992) on the need for a radical solution to the problem of debt in the developing world; and the final document of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference, "North-South dialogue for global prosperity", held by the Inter-Parliamentary Union at Ottawa in 1993; as well as the resolutions adopted by the 101st Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Brussels, 1999) on writing off the government debt of heavily indebted

poor countries (HIPCs); by the 102nd Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Berlin, 1999) on the need to revise the current global financial and economic model; by the 107th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Marrakech, 2002) on the role of parliaments in developing public policy in an era of globalization, multilateral institutions and international trade agreements; by the parliamentary meeting held in connection with the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002); by the 108th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Santiago de Chile, 2003) on parliaments' role in strengthening democratic institutions and human development in a fragmented world; by the 109th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Geneva, 2003) on global public goods: a new challenge for parliaments; and by the 112th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Manila 2005) on the role of parliaments in establishing innovative international financing and trading mechanisms to address the problem of debt and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Recalling the information document issued by the IPU for the Second Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity (The Hague (Netherlands), 28-31 May 2001), entitled "The role of parliaments in fighting corruption",

Greatly concerned by the fact that over 1.2 billion people - one out of every five of the world's inhabitants, the majority of whom are women and children - survive on less than the purchasing power equivalent of one US dollar per day, below the international poverty line set at one dollar a day, and that in over 50 countries - 35 of which are in Africa - poverty indicators have worsened over the past decade,

Mindful that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) calls for the participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields for the full development of countries, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace,

Recalling the Beijing Declaration, which recognizes that women's empowerment and their full and equal participation in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for development and peace,

Recalling that peace is the primary prerequisite for development and therefore for poverty elimination,

Recognizing that peace and security, on the one hand, and development, on the other, are interlinked and mutually reinforcing,

Aware that parliaments have a crucial role to play in promoting the eight MDGs and that it is essential for them to adopt the necessary legislation, participate in formulating general policies and follow up their implementation, exercise oversight of executive action in this regard, request government reports on progress made in achieving the MDGs, and approve the appropriate budget allocations and their disbursement,

Concerned by the fact that, given the current state of affairs, and in spite of some progress made, financing for the MDGs, and thus their achievement by 2015, may not be guaranteed,

Recalling the alarming fact that, according to reports from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Africa, the richest continent on earth in terms of natural resources, is paradoxically also the poorest,

Stressing the urgent need for honouring the commitment to allocate 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) to official development assistance (ODA), as a fundamental prerequisite for the attainment of the MDGs,

Noting lack of progress with regard to commitments on gender equality, women's empowerment, the improvement of maternal health, and a reduction in the spread HIV/AIDS and other diseases,

Noting that even after the considerable progress made bilaterally, and especially multilaterally, within the framework of the Bretton Woods Institutions, for many developing countries it remains a challenge to significantly reduce the debt burden and unblock resources to achieve the MDGs, or to maintain indebtedness at a sustainable level,

Recognizing in this regard that debt cancellation for the poorest countries is all the more necessary since economic globalization has created wealth in some regions of the world, but has unfortunately been of little benefit to the poorest nations,

Deeply cognizant that as a result of debt-servicing, most debtor countries are deprived of their scarce resources and hard-earned savings and must sacrifice their budget allocations for education, health care, housing and other development projects,

Convinced that increased assistance for sustainable development and debt cancellation will bear fruit if beneficiary countries promote democracy, apply principles of good governance, and eradicate corruption within each country and at the international level,

Stressing the need to make the fight against corruption a priority at all levels and to adopt policies that promote accountable and transparent public sector management and corporate responsibility and accountability, including efforts to return assets misappropriated through corruption, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption,

Convinced that globalization, with its positive and negative repercussions, is a source of both challenges and opportunities for all countries and affects people's daily existence,

Noting that many developing countries are increasingly excluded from international trade and capital flows, with direct consequences in terms of poverty,

Welcoming the fact that the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize has brought to the fore the concept of micro credits and highlighted the fact that micro credits are key to poverty eradication, and help in particular to empower women financially,

Noting the hopes that the developing countries place in the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations and the importance of a successful round for their development prospects, and *also noting* the usefulness of external "aid-for-trade" programmes and financing to help these countries boost their capacity to participate more actively in global trade,

Observing that the current international trade and investment system is biased toward developed countries and that the imbalances in the international financial, monetary and trading systems have an adverse impact on the development prospects of developing countries,

1. *Urgently requests* IPU Member Parliaments of countries that have adopted the Millennium Declaration to promote the achievement of the MDGs in their countries by

helping to formulate general policies and monitor their implementation, by allocating adequate national budget resources, and through parliamentary oversight to monitor progress on MDG commitments;

2. *Encourages* the parliaments of developing countries to allocate sufficient funds for "safety nets" to cushion the impact of globalization on aggrieved sectors of the economy;
3. *Urges* developed country parliaments to require their governments to honour their commitment to allocate 0.7% of GNI to ODA, as required by the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development;
4. *Encourages* developing country parliaments to ensure that their governments mobilize the resources necessary for development, adopt economic and social policies to stimulate sustainable growth, establish national strategies for adapting policies to achieve the MDGs, continue reforming their institutions and promoting democracy and human rights, apply the principles of good governance and combat corruption;
5. *Calls on* States to strengthen their national statistics capacities, and institutionalize and improve a uniform and accurate evaluation system to measure results and achievements in relation to development and poverty eradication;
6. *Proposes* that national governments and regional integration mechanisms define complementary country- or region-specific MDGs;
7. *Urges* parliaments to facilitate and monitor, in their respective countries, the implementation of the internationally agreed goals and objectives on gender equality and the advancement of women, *further urges* parliaments to influence policy on the protection of the fundamental rights of women and ongoing efforts to eliminate discrimination against women, *encourages* governments to enact laws on the use of affirmative action measures in the distribution of representative and executive positions, and to that end *recommends* that specialized parliamentary bodies be established on gender issues where necessary;
8. *Calls on* the parliaments of developed countries to support an increase in direct investment aimed at promoting innovative and additional sources of financing for sustainable development;
9. *Encourages* governments to submit regular country and regional reports to their parliaments on progress made in achieving the MDGs and *urges* national parliaments to play a more active role in following up their implementation;
10. *Encourages* parliaments to participate in the formulation of poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) and gender equality and women's advancement policies within ad hoc working groups;
11. *Proposes* the establishment of special committees, or working groups within committees, to monitor executive branch activities within the poverty reduction strategic framework and *encourages* parliaments to consistently promote gender-responsive analysis and budgeting with the aim of addressing gender inequalities;
12. *Recommends* that governments, parliaments and the relevant international organizations:

- Harmonize the aid efforts of donors in order to avoid duplication and administrative overload and to bring ODA in line with the receiving country's national strategies;
 - In the interest of fairer trade, promote exports of the least developed countries and provide direct aid for crossborder equipment projects;
 - Work towards reforming the ODA system by better targeting and managing investments and providing institutional support for good governance;
 - Revitalize regional coordination to tackle environmental problems, fund major projects, and encourage research and development;
13. *Recommends* that policies and budget documents be presented in such a way as to highlight the achievement of the MDGs;
 14. *Proposes* that public debates be organized on PRSPs and missions be fielded to monitor their implementation by national parliaments;
 15. *Encourages* developed country parliaments to organize the monitoring of national aid policies, and *also encourages* them to widely disseminate the results to parliamentarians and the public;
 16. *Encourages* donor countries, and in particular members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to issue reports on progress made towards achieving the seventh and eighth MDGs;
 17. *Encourages* donor countries to continue and strengthen collaboration with United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, other donor countries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector in a manner that will genuinely empower developing countries;
 18. *Emphasizes* that debt has become unbearable for many developing countries, and *calls* for the accelerated establishment of effective procedures for debt forgiveness or viable rescheduling and the adoption of the necessary legal instruments to ensure that developing countries do not become over-indebted, and *encourages* parliaments to support international debt reduction initiatives;
 19. *Encourages* States to allocate the resources freed up by debt reduction and cancellation to MDG-related expenditures, particularly in the areas of health, education, and gender equality and women's empowerment, consistent with each country's poverty reduction strategy;
 20. *Encourages* parliaments, governments and United Nations agencies to support the concept and provision of micro credits;
 21. *Encourages* all donor countries to reinvest in the economies of debtor countries 50% of the agreed portion of the debt service payment due to them in the form of foreign direct investment or other kinds of financial assets and technical assistance for MDG programmes;
 22. *Encourages* parliaments to consider reducing military expenditure in favour of expenditure on basic human needs;

23. *Recommends* the adoption of other mechanisms to help countries burdened with heavy indebtedness, but whose income per capita is too high to allow them to receive assistance under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and the promotion of bilateral and regional initiatives to this end;
24. *Recommends* moving beyond the logic of macro-economic ratios to deal with debt, and mainstreaming a human development and social criteria component;
25. *Encourages* parliaments to implement the IPU recommendations for the fight against corruption, in particular the adoption of codes of ethics designed to prevent conflicts of interest by regulating political party financing and ensuring transparent election campaigns;
26. *Recommends* the adoption of effective anti-corruption laws to act as a deterrent, in particular in order to clearly and transparently regulate public procurement;
27. *Recommends* drawing up a national integrity charter with appropriate implementation mechanisms in accordance with internationally accepted norms;
28. *Invites* States to consolidate and improve their laws on freedom of information and communication in the interests of achieving transparency in public life and denouncing corruption in the public and private sectors;
29. *Encourages* parliaments to adopt measures to effectively combat corruption and provide protection to witnesses in corruption cases;
30. *Recommends* that parliaments ensure that the right of civil society to transparent and objective information is respected;
31. *Encourages* the use of control measures to verify the conformity and veracity of public accounts;
32. *Encourages* the establishment or consolidation of independent anti-corruption committees, working in partnership with the judiciary and civil society, and equipped with the financial and human resources required to function properly;
33. *Encourages* the adoption of transparent mechanisms for the appointment of senior public officials, taking into account quotas for women, and *invites* governments and parliaments to conduct a systematic gender audit of leadership positions;
34. *Recommends* the adoption and ratification of the international conventions against corruption, in particular the OECD and United Nations conventions;
35. *Proposes* the introduction of legislation to implement the provisions of these international conventions at the national and, where applicable, regional levels;
36. *Encourages* the development of parliamentary cooperation in the fight against corruption;
37. *Invites* members of parliament to demonstrate personal accountability by adopting codes of conduct and strengthening the rules against conflicts of interest and on financial disclosure;

38. *Calls urgently on* countries participating in the current multilateral trade negotiations at the World Trade Organization to resume the suspended Doha Round of negotiations at an early date in a manner that significantly improves the multilateral trading system and the development prospects of developing countries;
39. *Calls* for the provision of training programmes for members of parliament to equip them with the necessary capacity to discharge their constitutional duties and to strengthen their capacity to analyse the national budget as it pertains to poverty reduction and the MDGs.