



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Second Committee

Agenda item 56 (a): Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

United Nations, 20 October 2009

STATEMENT by Alessandro Motter, Liaison Officer

Mr. Chairperson,

Throughout the 2001 - 2010 decade of the Brussels Programme of Action (BPOA), the IPU has been working closely with the UN Office of High Representative to encourage parliaments to become actively involved in the promotion and implementation of the BPOA.

Parliaments have an important role to play in the implementation of the BPOA especially in terms of promoting the rule of law and good governance. The institution of parliament is central to good governance and by extension ensuring sustainable development and the implementation of the BPOA. Through its law-making function, parliament contributes to the establishment of legal frameworks that govern society. Proper implementation of its oversight role leads to greater transparency and accountability in government activities. As representatives of the people, parliaments are in good stead to articulate the people's concerns and interests into policies and programmes that deliver service.

Weak parliaments bring about weak democracies; and weak democracies in turn make for poor development outcomes. Today more than ever parliament's involvement is critical to ensure governments are held to account for the implementation of international commitments such as the BPOA.

Regrettably weak institutional and administrative capacities continue to limit parliaments' effective input into and promotion of the BPOA. They did not have a role in preparing the BPOA, nor have many of them had an active role in its implementation. In sum there has been a palpable lack of legislative ownership of the BPOA process.

I am pleased to note that the IPU, in co-operation with the Office of the UN High Representative, is striving to remedy this shortcoming.

Today's series of crises including the economic downturn, the energy crunch, climate change and recurring food shortages and high food prices are reversing the trend of strong growth in Least Developed Countries in the years immediately following the adoption of the BPOA. These crises drive home the urgent need to step up efforts to turn the BPOA into everyday reality. Preparations for the Fourth UN Conference on Least Developed countries (LDC IV) offer a golden opportunity for parliaments to contribute to these efforts.

Our expectation is that the role of parliament in preparations for this conference will be fully realized. Indeed, we are particularly gratified that this role has been explicitly recognised by the UN Secretary General and in the general guidelines issued by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, which invite parliaments to be involved at all levels of the preparatory process.

We have called for direct parliamentary involvement in national and regional preparations; and we have asked our members to exercise more oversight and to demand more government accountability with respect to the activities undertaken to implement the BPOA. At the national level the IPU is encouraging national focal points to submit work programmes on the preparatory process to parliaments. At the Global level the IPU will organize a parliamentary forum to provide direct parliamentary input to LDC IV.

This involvement, in all preparatory stages, will greatly enhance national ownership of the consultation process while furthering the role of parliaments in supporting the BPOA and providing a parliamentary contribution to the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is clear that the many recent crises pose a major threat to the development of LDCs. The recent UN Secretary General's report in May of this year concluded that LDC IV *will be critical to restoring momentum of development to the world's most vulnerable countries and to providing hope for many of the world's poorest people.* We share this view and very much encourage all stakeholders to undertake an efficient and full review of the implementation of the BPOA. Not only is it crucial to the creation of a successful plan for the next decade, but we owe it to the peoples of the LDC countries to ensure that the BPOA and its successor reflect the priorities and the needs of these people. Parliaments, as representatives of the people should be at the forefront of this endeavour.

Thank you.