



**INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**  
**OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT OBSERVER TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

General Assembly

Agenda item 10:  
Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

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United Nations  
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Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to have been given this opportunity to address the General Assembly on agenda item [10] as it relates to the first annual Report of the Peacebuilding Commission. As you all know, peace will never be fully achieved without good governance, and parliament, as one of the institutions at the heart of governance, plays a key role in the peace building process.

During the PBC's first year of operations, the Country-Specific Meetings (CSM) on Burundi identified a number of critical priorities for peace consolidation and for reducing the country's risk of relapse into conflict. We are pleased to see that action to improve governance and democracy was at the core of these priorities. The PBC Report recommends, among other things, promoting the capacity of parliament to enact and revise national legislation and to ensure its compliance with international human rights standards.

We have striven to support the efforts of the PBC in Burundi and Sierra Leone. In Burundi, we have worked with the parliament to build its lawmaking and oversight capacities. With UNDEF funding, we have begun implementing activities aimed at enhancing the capacities of women parliamentarians, including initiatives aimed at bringing women parliamentarians from all political parties to work together for the promotion of women's rights. Above all, we have engaged the leadership of the parliament in an initiative to promote dialogue in a bid to ensure that decision-making is as inclusive as possible. Indeed, we can not over-emphasize the importance of parliament as the crucible of national reconciliation by mediating between the divergent interests of society, especially against the immediate post-conflict background of Burundi.

What I have just said regarding Burundi holds true for Sierra Leone. We are anxious to see that parliament there figures high on the peace-building agenda of the PBC and the international community at large. We owe it to the people of Sierra Leone to ensure that the fragile peace process does not come unravelled. We should ensure that the

representatives of the people rise above parochial interests in favour of the general interest.

The IPU, as the world organization of national parliaments, stands ready to continue to support efforts to develop parliaments that are representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective.

In light of the above, the IPU is sending a mission to Sierra Leone to review the functioning of parliament and assist parliamentary authorities to identify specific needs with a view to developing a comprehensive project of assistance to strengthen the capacity of the parliament to perform its law-making, oversight and representational roles more efficiently. We are doing this, I am pleased to add, in co-operation with the United Nations.

It is our fervent hope that the PBC will extend its arm to other post-conflict countries. In this regard, we are pleased with the recent decision to include Liberia among countries eligible for support under the Peace-Building Fund.

During the PBC's first year of work, the Commission has covered many areas aimed at bringing more coherence to the peacebuilding efforts where democratically elected parliaments have been placed high among the priorities of the UN PBC.

Thank you.