



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

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**Statement
by Senator Sergio Páez Verdugo
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

United Nations General Assembly

Agenda items 45 and 55:
Implementation and follow-up to the outcomes of UN conferences and
summits; Follow-up to the outcomes of the Millennium Summit

November 22, 2004

Mr. President,

The Millennium Declaration is a genuine milestone in the development of the international system to which everyone is committed, including parliamentarians. Signed by the Heads of State and Government in 2000, the Declaration *inter alia* clearly calls for stronger cooperation with parliaments through the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). It was adopted just two days after the closure of the first World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, which the IPU had held in this Assembly hall. At that event, the Speakers decided that parliaments would seek a greater role in international negotiations, and undertook to work for a stronger international system with the United Nations at its core.

Since then, parliaments have made great strides in gradually achieving the Millennium Goals. The IPU recently assessed the scope and nature of this participation through a broad survey of all the world's representative institutions.

Most parliaments – in developed and developing countries alike - have interesting and unique experiences to share in respect of their involvement in international cooperation.

As President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I believe that Parliaments and parliamentarians have a crucial role in the pursuit of these Goals; they must focus attention on them, educate their constituents about them, and work to build consensus amongst fellow parliamentarians on their vital importance for the future of the world.

The Millennium Development Goals now underpin much of the work carried out in parliaments. Many parliaments in developed countries have integrated them explicitly into their work and have adopted development strategies and policies that relate directly to them. Parliaments in the developing countries have been involved to varying degrees in setting national development strategies. They have worked to achieve some of the goals, those relating to HIV/AIDS and gender generally figuring at the top of their legislative agendas. However, there is considerable room for progress in terms of direct interaction with the international organisations concerned and also in terms of a more dynamic and coordinated method of work.

All the Millennium Development Goals are relevant to parliaments and to the IPU. In our ongoing consultations with parliaments, we are informed of the measures that they have taken to increase citizens' awareness of and involvement in the Millennium Development Goals, and the responses are rich in concrete examples. More

systematic use is being made of outreach activities for constituents and public hearings by committees, social and labour leaders are being consulted, and legislation is being adopted to implement the relevant public policies.

The IPU is very involved in some of the vital areas, such as gender equity and especially the development of a global partnership for development.

Permit me to briefly mention a few crucial examples. In France, the parliamentary report for the 2005 budget refers extensively to the Millennium Development Goals in citing its basis and proposals. The Swedish parliament, for its part, has adopted a comprehensive new world development policy that is in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals in the fields of trade, agriculture, the environment, security and migration. Both the Japanese and Czech parliaments are playing active roles in the formulation and monitoring of their countries' international development assistance.

Such examples can be found not only in the donor community. For the parliaments of South Africa, Indonesia, Mali, Bhutan, the Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka oversight of national development policies and monitoring of external aid from multilateral bodies are a basic parliamentary function.

Lastly, international trade negotiations are perhaps in a class of their own, as they receive almost universal attention from parliaments. Many representative institutions make special efforts to follow and influence the implementation of free trade treaties. This is a specific area, where the IPU has carried out a concerted WTO trade negotiation follow-up programme over the last six years. It has been of significant use to national parliaments.

Legislators are politicians, and as such are people of action. That is why, rather than fine speeches or expressions of good will, we wished to present to this General Assembly the actions that have actually been taken and the real progress that has been made. We know that we must increase and perfect our work in order to honour our commitments to future generations.

At the Millennium Summit, the Speakers of Parliament pledged to work for a stronger international system. In 2005, the IPU will be holding the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliament here at United Nations Headquarters. The Conference will study the overall progress made by parliaments in helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It will make it possible to evaluate in a more comprehensive manner the growing role of parliaments in the international sphere. Today, in this

world forum, we reiterate our strong commitment to the Millennium Development Goals in respect of concrete action and practical implementation.

The Millennium Development Goals are indivisibly linked with a stable and lasting world peace, which is the strategic priority of the IPU and its Member Parliaments. To that end, we shall continue with greater force in pursuing these goals, which are so bound to humanism and solidarity with future generations.

Thank you.