



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

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**S T A T E M E N T**

by Ambassador Anda Filip, IPU Permanent Observer

General Assembly Agenda item 123 :  
Strengthening of the United Nations system

*New York, 26 November 2007*

Mr. President,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to address the General Assembly on agenda item [123] as it relates to the strengthening of the United Nations system. As we have done on the occasion of past sessions of the General Assembly, I would like to refer to this theme from the perspective of the developing parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations, and the benefits that it can entail.

I would recall that we are referring here to a dimension that needs to be forged by parliaments and their members, and which has to be firmly rooted in the activities that parliaments carry out at the national level, at home. It includes action by parliaments to contribute to and monitor international negotiations and debates at the UN, and to ensure national compliance with international norms and the rule of law. It also involves scrutinizing the activities of the United Nations and providing input into their deliberations.

As we've stressed before, the IPU is convinced that members of parliament can play an extremely important role in building national political support for international action. In IPU's view, which is shared by many UN member States, the United Nations stands to gain considerably by making sure that parliaments and their members have a full and undistorted understanding of major processes and activities under way at the United Nations.

It was with this understanding that, one year ago, the General Assembly adopted consensus Resolution 61/6 on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Since then, we have been focusing on the effective implementation of this bold and forward-looking Resolution.

As a general recommendation, the Resolution encourages the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to continue to cooperate closely in various fields, in particular peace and security, economic and social development, international law, human rights, and democracy and gender issues, bearing in mind the significant benefits of cooperation between the two organizations, to which the report of the Secretary-General attests.

It is precisely because of the importance IPU attaches to this growing cooperation that we are devoting time and resources in order to ensure careful consideration and political guidance to this process. One of the measures IPU has already taken, therefore, has been the establishment of a dedicated parliamentary Committee on United Nations Affairs, in which all parliaments can participate and bring their contribution to the development of this parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations, and monitor its implementation.

Please allow me to tell you a little bit about IPU activities over this past year, in support of strengthening the United Nations system, in particular by following up on and implementing the provisions of General Assembly Resolution 61/6. As a first point, the Resolution encouraged the IPU to strengthen further its contribution to the work of the General Assembly, including its revitalization, as envisaged in the relevant 2006 and 2007 GA Resolutions, and in relation to the newly established UN bodies such as the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

As regards the revitalization of the General Assembly, IPU has had the opportunity to consult and engage with UN member States on this very important topic. In light of the relevant experience residing within national parliaments in the area of reforming and modernizing legislative bodies, we have shared with the General Assembly a series of ideas, proposals and good practices, and we look forward to finding the most adequate ways of further contributing to this process.

Moreover, last month in Geneva, the new parliamentary Committee on UN Affairs heard from and engaged in a discussion with the President of the Human Rights Council, and will be seeking to define modalities whereby parliaments can best act in support of the Council, particularly in the context of the universal periodic review process, so as to ensure accurate reporting on the implementation of international human rights instruments and helping to identify those areas where additional efforts are required. When it comes to the Peacebuilding Commission, IPU has been closely following deliberations and action as they concern Burundi and Sierra Leone, and has been working with parliaments and authorities in both countries, with a view to building strong international support for the new legislative bodies as key components for sustainable peace and development.

As recommended by GA Resolution 61/6, the IPU is also assuming a more active role in support of the Economic and Social Council, particularly in the implementation of the new functions devolved to the Council by the 2005 World Summit. In this regard, IPU has taken the lead in shaping a parliamentary dimension to the new Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) and, after voicing its commitment on the occasion of the launch of the DCF earlier this year, is now actively preparing for the first substantive session of the Forum next year. Development cooperation will gradually be mainstreamed into IPU's own regular program of work. At the same time, IPU will be convening a representative group of members of parliament from both developed and developing countries, well versed in development cooperation issues, to participate in and contribute to the first DCF Stakeholders Forum next spring, thus providing direct input to the DCF. As a member of the DCF advisory board, IPU will be consulting closely with the United Nations on the agenda and expected outcome of this meeting.

In another operative paragraph of Resolution 61/6, the General Assembly welcomed the partnership agreement concluded between the United Nations Democracy Fund and the IPU, and looked forward to growing cooperation in the realm of democracy and good governance. Indeed, with UNDEF funding, IPU is currently implementing two projects: a first one designed to enhance the capacity of parliaments in Africa to enact and revise national legislation so as to ensure compliance with international human rights standards; a second project in support of women parliamentarians in Burundi, which includes initiatives aimed at bringing women MPs from all political parties to work together for the promotion of women's rights in Burundi. In a much broader context, last week IPU and UNDP signed a new Memorandum of Understanding, designed to expand their cooperation in support of democratic governance around the world, in key areas such as national budget processes, action by parliaments in advancing the MDGs, poverty reduction strategies, and greater parliamentary involvement in development cooperation.

Last but not least, and as we had the opportunity to express very recently in this hall, the IPU is proud to be part of the joint effort to promote an International Day of Democracy, on a date which has been chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Democracy. The precepts and principles enshrined in this important political document, endorsed ten years ago by national parliaments from around the globe, are as valid today as ever before. We look forward to working closely with the United Nations with a view to systematically integrating these core values into efforts to strengthen democracy worldwide.

A further recommendation of Resolution 61/6 calls for the development of the annual parliamentary hearing at the United Nations and other specialized parliamentary meetings at the UN as joint UN-IPU events. Last week the IPU and the United Nations, through the Office of the President of the General Assembly, joined forces in convening a very successful parliamentary Hearing on the theme of reinforcing the rule of law in international relations. The meeting enjoyed tremendous interest from the national parliaments, which were well represented. It also drew in many

representatives from the Permanent Missions, as well as senior UN officials and academia, for a substantive, interactive, and politically-charged debate.

It succeeded in raising awareness among politicians around issues that are or should be high on the UN agenda – meeting commitments in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, strengthening the international criminal justice regime, implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The Hearing resulted in a number of recommendations for the United Nations and proposals for action by parliaments in support of UN efforts. We expect the results of this Hearing will be circulated at the United Nations soon, as an official document of the General Assembly.

Finally, GA Resolution 61/6 calls for closer involvement, as appropriate, of the IPU in the elaboration of system-wide strategies for consideration by the United Nations system and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, with a view to ensuring greater and more coherent support by parliaments to the work of the United Nations. We have yet to determine the best ways to make this recommendation operational, however it is evident that there are a number of areas that can allow for meaningful and mutually beneficial exchanges: delivering on the MDGs, mobilizing political action in combating climate change, institutional gender mainstreaming, to name but a few.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the IPU remains committed to further developing a strategic partnership with the United Nations. In so doing, we are guided by the considerations and proposals set forth in the IPU Policy Paper on the nature of the relationship between the United Nations and the world of parliaments, submitted for consideration in the parliamentary Committee on United Nations Affairs and endorsed by IPU member parliaments on the occasion of the 117<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in early October. This document has been submitted to the United Nations and should be circulated in the General Assembly soon, as our contribution under this agenda item.

Thank you for your attention.