



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

United Nations General Assembly

Agenda item 113: Follow up to the Outcome of the Millennium Summit

**Statement by Mr. Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General**

New York, 28 November 2012

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

When the Millennium Declaration was unveiled in 2000, it was greeted with great hope. An important highlight was of course the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals as a set of commitments that all countries could realistically achieve within the span of fifteen years.

With only three years left to go on the implementation of the MDGs, the record is mixed. Globally, some of the goals appear to be on track, but the picture gets clouded the moment we look at most countries' individual scorecards. With only a short time left before 2015, we cannot afford to waste a day and we must all collectively continue to work hard to fill important gaps.

For several years now, the IPU has helped raise awareness of the MDGs among parliamentarians. We have done so through a number of debates and resolutions that provide a consensus approach to the various goals but also by helping parliaments strengthen their capacities to oversee government action, adopt enabling legislation and make budgetary decisions that are aligned with the development priorities of each country. While recognizing that all of the goals are important, we have chosen to focus particularly on the health goals -maternal and child mortality, and HIV/AIDS – which in our view play a key role in removing a number of important stumbling blocks. In support of Goal 3 (gender quality and women empowerment), we continue to invest considerable resources in promoting the participation of women in politics. We are also working to strengthen development cooperation as a key to the realization of the MDGs and indeed of the development agenda as a whole. This can be seen, among other things, in our very active engagement within the DCF and, more recently, in the Busan Partnership.

Finally, and most critically, we have been working to evaluate some of the institutional mechanisms, such as parliamentary committees or caucuses, which may help parliaments organize their work around the MDGs through their key functions of oversight, legislation and representation. In many of these activities, we have enjoyed a good partnership with the United Nations, and particularly the UNDP and its Millennium Campaign.

While acceleration toward the MDGs must remain our primary obligation at this critical junction, it is also important to take stock of lessons learned as the international community is beginning to chart a new development framework post-2015. From the IPU perspective, the most important lesson has been that early involvement of parliaments in the shaping of development goals is critical to ensure national ownership and accountability across the board. This eventually will also help support implementation through the whole legislative process. This is why we are very pleased to see that this year's resolution of the General Assembly resolution on "*interaction between the UN, national parliaments and the IPU*" contains a clear reference encouraging parliaments to contribute to the design of the next generation of development goals.

In order to deliver on that call, the IPU has begun to work with parliaments to facilitate their involvement in the post-2015 development consultations that are now underway both globally and at the country level. We welcome the Secretary-General's High Level Panel that has already begun its work as well as the Working Group of the General Assembly that is supposed to focus specifically on a new generation of Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs). On account of both processes, we are planning a series of consultations with parliamentarians that will hopefully inject a strong parliamentary perspective into the deliberations.

Among other things, the IPU is working with the UN Millennium Campaign and other UN partners at the regional and sub-regional levels to help gather the views of parliaments with due regard to regional particularities. Consultations have already taken place in Africa and are under way in Asia. Another important building block in this process is the 128th IPU Assembly that will take place in Ecuador in March of next year and whose theme will be on rethinking the development model in terms of *well-being* rather than economic growth alone. Again in cooperation with our UN partners, we will use the Quito assembly to compile a survey of parliamentarians and to discuss specific aspects of the future development framework at various moments during the general debate as well as through a specialized workshop. Meanwhile, we are looking for practical ways to engage parliamentarians in the national consultations that are foreseen by the end of next March as well as in a number of electronic consultations that are in the pipeline of various UN facilities. All of these efforts will culminate in next year's joint Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, where parliamentarians from around the world will review the concrete proposals that are expected to emerge from the various UN processes.

Mr. President,

As with governments, the views of parliaments on the content of a post-2015 development agenda can be expected to range widely in both scope and direction. However, some issues have already arisen in our discussions, namely, the central role of democracy and of development cooperation. The problem of development is not only economic, but also political. Unequal access to and participation in decision-making, which often flows out of an unequal distribution of incomes and wealth, confrontational politics where the winner takes all, and other such imbalances, is the root cause of many development failures. Because democratic governance must underpin all areas of development policy, it must then find expression in the future SDGs with clearly defined indicators or objectives. We propose to come back to you later with some suggestions as to how this can be done.

Equally important, the post-2015 development framework will have to be accompanied by a clear commitment to financing. Just as the MDGs have been handicapped by poor financing in both quality and quantity, the success of the future SDGs will depend in part on the formulation of a successor goal to the current MDG 8. A new goal, however formulated, will of course need to reflect the current landscape of development cooperation with its multiplicity of public and private actors and corresponding flows.

To conclude, Mr. President, the next three years will be decisive not only for the implementation of the current MDGs as a key platform of the original Millennium Declaration but also for the definition of a common vision of the future. As it became most evident at the Rio conference last June, the world community is at a turning point in more than one way and strong leadership will be required as we approach some very difficult decisions. You can rest assured of the support of the IPU in the journey ahead.

Thank you.