



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION  
122<sup>nd</sup> Assembly and related meetings  
Bangkok (Thailand), 27<sup>th</sup> March - 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010



Governing Council  
Item 7

CL/186/7(c)-R.1  
26 February 2010

**REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS**

**(c) PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE WORLD SUMMIT ON FOOD SECURITY**

***Parliaments addressing agriculture, hunger and food insecurity in times of global crisis***

(Rome, 13 November 2009)

1. The IPU and the Italian Parliament jointly organized a parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the World Summit on Food Security. The meeting brought together more than 160 parliamentarians from 45 countries.
2. The IPU President, Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, delivered the opening address, reminding the participants of the riots that had broken out in cities around the world due to soaring food prices. The parliamentarians agreed that in order to guarantee social stability and peace, the issue of food insecurity needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Because agricultural policies are interconnected, the food insecurity problem cannot be resolved without addressing the politics of agriculture. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen many technological and scientific achievements, yet there are still citizens who do not enjoy one of the most basic human rights: the right to food. Moreover, in times of crisis - the financial crisis and the environmental crisis caused by climate change - additional challenges are posed to combating food insecurity.
3. Prof. Olivier de Schutter, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, led an intense and lively debate with the parliamentarians, urging them to become active participants in the fight for food security. Dr. Cecilia Rocha, Director of the Centre for Studies on Food Security at Ryerson University in Canada, referred to the successful efforts undertaken by Brazil to combat hunger. Strong political will, active involvement of civil society, a comprehensive approach and the robust support provided by the Brazilian Parliament were key ingredients that led to real progress and measurable results.
4. The participants underscored the fact that the world would continue to face a serious food crisis. They agreed that several challenges had to be addressed, not just the problem of food production, but also problems relating to food distribution, from the small farmer to the markets, the affordability of food, quality and nutritional diversity, social inequalities and poverty, marginalization of women and gender inequality, insecurity and conflict, ineffective programmes and corruption. To address these challenges, parliamentarians identified a clear set of recommendations, taking responsibility into their own hands and adopting legal frameworks and national strategies to protect the right to food. As women's empowerment is a key component of the efforts, it was agreed that parliaments should adopt entitlement laws that cover women's access to land, credit and markets. They should also give agricultural development the priority it deserves in the budget, examine current agricultural policies from a climate change perspective and promote policies and methods that have a less severe impact on the climate, monitor implementation of programmes to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable in society are met, and monitor the impact of trade agreements on the right to food.
5. In spite of the tremendous challenges the world faces in the area of food security, the parliamentarians reiterated their conviction that, working together, they can make a profound contribution towards a solution to this challenge.