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

**(c) INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON "PARLIAMENTS, MINORITIES  
AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS"**

**Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas (Mexico), 31 October - 3 November 2010**

This conference was one of the final activities of the IPU-UNDP project on the representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliament, which began in June 2008. The event was unusual in that it was co-organized with a national parliament (the Congress of the Union of Mexico) and a state government (the Government of the State of Chiapas). In all, there were 110 participants, 75 of whom were parliamentarians representing some 35 parliaments.

The participants used the Conference as an opportunity to network and learn lessons from different regions. Their exchanges were rich and substantive, with the parliamentarians from Latin America particularly active during the discussions. Much of the debate focused on issues of specific concern to indigenous peoples, such as ILO Convention 169 on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples.

They noted the difficulty in obtaining accurate data on the status of representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliament. Gender discrimination is particularly difficult to track in currently available data. One of the highlights was the dialogue between conference participants and about 40 leaders of indigenous communities from Chiapas, which allowed for a political and cultural exchange on the political participation and status of indigenous peoples in Chiapas.

At the end of the Conference, participants adopted by consensus the Chiapas Declaration. The Declaration urges parliaments to adopt a Plan of Action to make the right to equal participation and non-discrimination a reality for minorities and indigenous peoples. It notably proposes that parliaments require government to complement all draft legislation and the national budget with an assessment of their impact on minorities and indigenous peoples.

The Chiapas Declaration calls on the IPU to take the lead in collecting better data. The organization was further tasked with monitoring implementation of the Declaration, and convening a follow-up meeting in two years' time to discuss progress and set targets for future action.

Parliamentary action is required to translate international commitments into practice and the Chiapas Declaration sets forth some guiding principles for parliaments.

The Chiapas Declaration can be downloaded from: <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/chiapas10.htm>.

More information on the conference in Chiapas is available on the [conference blog site: http://ipuchiapas.wordpress.com/](http://ipuchiapas.wordpress.com/).

This conference was part of the IPU-UNDP project on "[Promoting inclusive parliaments: The representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliament.](http://www.ipu.org/dem-e/minorities/overview.htm)" <http://www.ipu.org/dem-e/minorities/overview.htm>.