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REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

**(e) PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP17/CMP7)**

Durban (South Africa), 5 December 2011

1. For a number of years, the IPU has been leading the way in enhancing parliamentary oversight of the intergovernmental negotiations carried out under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Annual sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP) and meetings of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) attract tens of thousands of participants, including representatives of government, parliament, business, academia, the scientific community and non-governmental organizations. The most recent session, COP17/CMP7, took place in Durban, South Africa, from 28 November to 9 December 2011.
2. The IPU invited all parliaments to see to it that their members specializing in questions of environment and climate change were included in the official national delegations to the UN Conference in Durban. The IPU organized, together with the South African Parliament, a Meeting for all parliamentarians present in Durban for COP17/CMP7. The Parliamentary Meeting took place on 5 December and was attended by 275 participants from over 40 countries and four international organizations, including 170 members of parliament.
3. The inaugural session was addressed by Honorary President of the IPU, Dr. T.-B. Gurirab; the Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, Mr. M.V. Sisulu; the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Ms. M. Wahlström; and UNDP Resident Coordinator in South Africa, Mr. A. Zacarias. At a separate session, the Minister of Home Affairs of South Africa, Ms. N. Dlamini Zuma, briefed legislators on the intergovernmental talks.
4. The programme of the Parliamentary Meeting included a series of interactive panel discussions and keynote presentations dealing with fast-track and long-term finance pledges by parties to the Convention on Climate Change, and the creation of a virtuous push and pull cycle for low carbon and renewable energy projects. The exchange of views on the concerted action by national legislators and local authorities on climate mitigation and adaptation was particularly lively, attesting to the largely complementary nature of climate-related efforts of the two principal actors of the legislative process.

5. Following the presentation of an oral report by the Meeting's Rapporteur, Mr. C. Th. Frolick, House Chairperson of the National Assembly of South Africa, the participants adopted by consensus an outcome document setting out several recommendations for action by national parliaments and the IPU (see [Annex](#)).

6. At a separate ceremony organized two days after the Parliamentary Meeting, Honorary President of the IPU, Dr. T.-B. Gurirab, conveyed the text of the outcome document to the COP17/CMP7 President, Ms. M. Nkoane-Mashabane, South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation. Dr. Gurirab underscored the paragraph of the outcome document which stated that, pending the establishment of a comprehensive framework, parliamentarians expected all major economies to honour their pledges under the Cancún Agreement, including their obligations under the Kyoto Protocol.

Recommendations

7. The Parliamentary Meeting in Durban reaffirmed the commitment of the IPU to work in partnership with other stakeholders, particularly local government, civil society organizations and the business community in seeking long-term sustainable solutions to global threats to the environment. It would be particularly important to enhance cooperation with the organization known as Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), playing the role of a focal point in the "governmental stakeholders" group within the UNFCCC process.

8. As stipulated in objective 5 of the IPU Strategy 2012-2017, the IPU is expected to pursue its efforts to accompany the global climate change negotiations on the parliamentary level. To this end, the IPU Secretary General is requested to carry out the necessary consultations with the Advisory Council of Qatar with a view to holding a Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of COP18/CMP8, due to take place in Doha from 26 November to 7 December 2012. In the meantime, IPU Members are invited to take timely steps in order to ensure that members of parliament are included in their country's official national delegation to Doha session of the UN Climate Change Conference.



**PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE**

Durban (South Africa), 5 December 2011

*Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa*



OUTCOME DOCUMENT

Adopted by consensus on 5 December 2011

1. We, parliamentarians from across the world, gathered in Durban, South Africa, on the occasion of the 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, recognize that climate change continues to present a potentially irreversible threat to humanity and the planet, which can exacerbate existing threats to international peace and security, and requires an urgent, collective and coordinated global response.
2. We reaffirm that climate change in its current form is one of the greatest challenges of our time, with projected impacts on forests, soil degradation, declining food and energy security, human and animal health and the supply of clean water, as well as heightened risks of flooding, drought and other calamities globally. All Parties must, therefore, work together to address climate change so as to ensure long-term sustainable development, food, energy and water security and reduce the risks of natural hazards turning into disasters.
3. We recognize the scientific evidence of global warming and that higher average temperatures are due largely to the increase in greenhouse gas emissions. We also recognize that deep cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions are required to limit the rise in global average temperatures to no more than 2°C above pre-industrialization levels. We therefore welcome the formal decision reached at COP16/CMP6 in Cancún to adopt the global long-term goal of a maximum temperature increase of 2°C on the understanding that this target will be reviewed by 2015 in the light of the latest scientific findings. We strongly urge all Parties to show the highest level of commitment possible.
4. We welcome the positive outcomes of the Cancún Agreements, which outlined some of the key steps necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help developing nations protect themselves from climate impacts and build a sustainable future. COP16 recognized emission-reduction pledges for the post-2012 period submitted by some of the Parties at the Copenhagen Conference (COP15) and the requirement for them to implement low-carbon development strategies. In addition, COP16 required the Parties to scale up their reporting on emissions and on their actions to reduce emissions and provide new, stepped-up and additional financial and technological support to developing countries. We view these achievements as a step towards restoring trust and hope among nations in the future. It is vital to build on this momentum and ensure that the fast-start finance commitments made in Cancún are fully honoured and rapidly disbursed.
5. We reaffirm our belief that in order to achieve a comprehensive and balanced outcome at COP17/CMP7, the Parties must continue to work on the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC within the framework agreed in Bali and the principle agreements reached in Cancún. We take this opportunity to reiterate that a transparent and open multilateral process under the UNFCCC is the only forum for negotiations on international commitments on climate change and that it is necessary to ensure that the interests of the developing countries, in particular the most vulnerable, are protected.

6. We reiterate our view that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities must be the fundamental basis of any multilaterally agreed action to address climate change and must not be compromised. We reaffirm that we, as parliamentarians, will do all we can to enhance international cooperation with a view to achieving the objectives of the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and the COP17 climate change agreements.
7. Noting that the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol will end in 2012 and that the developing countries currently account for a larger share of emissions reduction, we reaffirm that the ultimate goal of the negotiating process is the adoption of a legally binding new global agreement setting the world on the path towards low-emissions and resilient development. Pending the establishment of a comprehensive framework, we urge all major economies to honour their pledges under the Cancún Agreement including countries' obligations under the Kyoto Protocol.
8. We reaffirm the urgent need to support developing countries in implementing their adaptation plans, particularly the most vulnerable small island developing States (SIDS), the least developed countries (LDCs) and countries in Africa. We therefore underscore the importance of obtaining a guaranteed balance between adaptation and mitigation, the two facets of the efforts to combat climate change that are pivotal to the negotiations. We call on the Parties to prioritize disaster risk reduction and capacity-building as cross-cutting issues and to give them their utmost attention.
9. We underscore that the mobilization of financial resources and the transfer of technology by developed country Parties as pledged under the UNFCCC are crucial to dealing with climate change and require that governance issues and institutional arrangements be dealt with transparently and efficiently, thus ensuring accessibility and an equal footing for developed and developing countries in the governance and administration of climate finance and technology flows.
10. We therefore call for the swift operationalization of all the institutions established under the Cancún Agreements, including the Adaptation Committee, the Technology Executive Committee and its Climate Technology Centre and Network, the Registry of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, the Work Programme and possible Forum on the Response Measures, and the Green Climate Fund.
11. As Members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, we reaffirm our commitment to work in partnership with other stakeholders, particularly local governments, civil society organizations and the business communities in seeking long-term sustainable solutions to global threats to the environment. We therefore call on parliaments to continue to do all they can to ensure adoption and implementation of climate change policies and legislation.
12. We resolve to continue fostering a common understanding of the threat of climate change and of the action needed to avert dangerous human interference in the climate system.
13. We reiterate our commitment to assist our governments in implementing existing and future climate change and disaster risk reduction agreements.
14. We call on the Parties participating in the Durban Conference to find lasting solutions and agree to an equitable, comprehensive and legally binding outcome establishing a fair and effective international framework with the participation of all major economies.

15. We appeal to the Inter-Parliamentary Union to share and promote the content of this document with multilateral forums, governments, civil society organizations and the business community in order to send a strong message that collaboration is essential to address climate change as set forth in the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC, and charts the way for a cleaner, healthier, safer and better future.

16. We reaffirm our strong belief that parliaments should be granted an appropriate status at the UNFCCC negotiations process. Convinced that this would go a long way to creating further opportunities to address climate change, we undertake to campaign for the attainment of this objective.

17. We resolve to enhance our oversight of government action and commitments relating to climate change negotiations and to advance peer support to those parliaments that are less able to fulfill their oversight functions.