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**THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN OVERSEEING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS, IN PARTICULAR WITH REGARD TO THE PROBLEM OF DEBT  
AND THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY AND CORRUPTION**

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**Introduction**

1. On the occasion of the world summits held at the United Nations in 2000, world leaders adopted a Millennium Declaration, together with eight goals and relevant indicators for their achievement. One hundred ninety-one UN members committed to achieving these goals by 2015.
2. A few days prior to that meeting, on 1 September 2000, the Presiding Officers of Parliaments adopted a declaration entitled "The parliamentary vision of international cooperation at the dawn of the third millennium". This declaration includes the following statement: *"We must work to create national and international conditions conducive to social development, social integration, the eradication of poverty and the reduction of unemployment."*
3. Five years later, the UN, The Heads of State and Government, and the Speakers of Parliament, made an initial assessment of progress toward achieving these goals. Numerous reports from the UN, NGOs, and the international financial institutions (IFI) have painted a contrasting and alarming picture of the progress achieved. This picture was eloquently conveyed in the report of the UN Secretary General for 2005, provided in Annex 1.
4. The Heads of State and Government solemnly declared the following: *"We strongly reiterate our determination to ensure the timely and full realization of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including those agreed at the Millennium Summit that are described as the Millennium Development Goals, which have helped to galvanize efforts towards poverty eradication."*
5. The most recent assessment (23 April 2006) comes from the World Bank, in its third Global Monitoring Report, "Strengthening Mutual Accountability, Aid, Trade, and Governance". With disarming candour, this report indicates continuing *"concerns over delivery"*. Referring to the G-8 commitments of July 2005, it adds *"concerns arise over whether these new commitments will be delivered, and if so, how effectively."*

6. These initiatives and reports clearly show that in the current state of affairs, and despite the progress achieved, all of the MDGs will not be achieved, and in fact have little chance of being achieved in many countries.

7. Among the causes for what would be a major setback for the international community is the deficiency of the financing system, an issue addressed by the IPU at its 112<sup>th</sup> Assembly<sup>1</sup>, but also failure to resolve the debt problem of developing countries and effectively fight against corruption.

8. Parliaments have a major role to play in monitoring government action within each country and within international organizations, including in particular the financial organizations. However, recalling this constitutional role of parliaments in their function of legislators, overseers of Executive action and representatives of the citizens presupposes, as the IPU has recalled on several occasions, that they dispose of the necessary financial and human resources to do so. Indeed, to understand and monitor the policies proposed by governments or international financial institutions with a view to achieving the MDGs in each country, relevant analytical tools must be made available. For instance, inter alia presenting the national budget in such a way as to focus on achievement of the MDGs and disposing of mechanisms to analyse and evaluate policies followed. All of this entails immense information efforts for elected officials and training for parliamentary staff. Moreover, as they are responsible for their actions, parliaments must draw up clear and simple documents for civil society.

#### **I. The eradication of poverty, a major objective for parliaments**

9. Eradication of poverty is not only a moral imperative for political authorities but also an economic necessity. Among the most important causes for delay in achieving the MDGs, the Sachs report<sup>2</sup> indicates the following: *“Economic development stalls when governments do not uphold the rule of law, pursue sound economic policy, make appropriate public investments, manage a public administration, protect basic human rights, and support civil society organizations - including those representing poor people - in national decision making.”*

10. One can add to this list the premise that is too often contradicted by the facts: peace, security and development are the prerequisites of poverty elimination.

11. Numerous documents containing recommendations for action have already been produced on the role that parliaments should play in the fight to eradicate poverty. These include UNDP manuals on:

- Communication between the executive and legislative branches on poverty reduction strategies.
- Parliamentary-civil collaboration in monitoring poverty reduction initiatives.
- Legislative branch and public awareness about the problems of poverty.

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<sup>1</sup> “The role of parliaments in establishing innovative international financing and trading mechanisms to address the problem of debt and achieve the Millennium Development Goals”

Report by Mr. Robert del Picchia (France) and Mr. Osvaldo Martinez (Cuba).

<sup>2</sup> “Investing in Development”, UN Report 2005.

12. More recently, during the 114<sup>th</sup> Assembly at Nairobi, Kenya, our organization published a good practices guide entitled: "Parliamentary democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century". It stresses the particularly important role of parliamentary participation vis-à-vis the Millennium Development Goals, particularly from a human rights perspective.<sup>3</sup>

13. Here again, as in the UNDP manuals, particular emphasis is placed on national poverty reduction programmes, known as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). These constitute the principal mechanism for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the world's 70 poorest countries. The PRSP is an implementation plan negotiated between governments, the World Bank, and the IMF that provides the basis for debt relief and financing on favourable terms.

14. It is important to recognize that this process has a direct impact on national policies, and therefore on citizens, but parliaments have been left out of the negotiations and therefore the decisions.

15. It is clear that in most cases negotiations between national governments and the international financial institutions (IFI) have kept parliaments out of the loop. The role of parliaments is confined to ratifying the PRSPs and monitoring financial commitments as part of the traditional budget procedure, which clearly requires some significant improvements. Parliamentarians have virtually no margin for manoeuvre when it comes to modifying such documents upon ratification. Parliaments need to intervene upstream, during the development of national strategies. The participation of those elected by the people to represent them nationally, in all their diversity - women as well as men in particular - can only improve these strategies and make their implementation more effective. In particular, parliamentarians must ensure that the PRSP underscore that great importance must be given to efforts aimed at promoting strong and lasting growth and a climate this is conducive to investment. These documents must also place special interest in redistribution policies in order to guarantee a fairly equitable distribution of the fruits of that growth.

16. The good practices cited in the organization's guide for parliamentarians in this area are examples worth noting:

- The participation of parliamentarians in PRSP working groups and the committee monitoring the PRSP process.
- Involvement of parliamentarians in development of the country's policy through a special parliamentary committee and participation by sectoral working groups.
- The organization of debates with NGOs and other civil society and development partners to seek the strongest possible consensus.
- The creation of thematic groups within parliament covering the key areas of development concern
- The submission of strategy documents to parliament for discussion.
- Monitoring implementation on the ground not merely for its financial soundness but especially for its effectiveness in delivering poverty reduction.

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<sup>3</sup> Draft guidelines: A human rights approach to poverty reduction strategies, 2002.

17. Those in charge can also be encouraged to fine tune their analyses. For example, the problem of targeting that aims at enhancing the efficiency of poverty reduction policies by identifying more clearly poor persons or areas where poverty is endemic. Similarly, integrated development strategies should be developed with a view to narrowing social and regional gaps and guaranteeing the conditions of suitable human development. Underlying these strategies are the promotion of employment and income-generating activities, greater access to services and development of basic infrastructure.

18. The parliaments of developing countries must lastly encourage the drawing up of national and regional reports on achievement of the MDGs. They must also urge their governments to adopt national strategies that bring about real change by refocusing policies on the MDGs. For their part, developed countries must draw up reports on Goal 8 (Develop a global partnership for development), which involves their commitment, in order to show that their activities are geared towards achieving the MDGs. Submitting these reports and developing these national or regional strategies could be discussed and followed up in parliament.

19. Such activities are just as necessary in developed country parliaments as in their developing country counterparts if parliamentarians are to ensure that developed country governments honour their aid commitments and that the amounts of aid provided are not largely cancelled out by the negative effect of unfair trade regimes and debt repayment obligations, which is the case today.

20. It is therefore particularly incumbent on the parliaments of developed countries to:

- Exert pressure on governments to fulfil their development aid commitments,
- To verify that the aid provided is used properly,
- Carefully avoid disassociating the monitoring of aid policy from international trade and financing policy. These activities can take the form in particular of parliamentary field missions to verify the proper use and allocation of aid in developing countries.

21. Poverty reduction strategies structured around the MDGs should clearly affirm the need for a major increase in public investment, capacity building, and the mobilization of domestic as well as ODA resources. They should provide for a series of measures to promote proper conduct in the handling of public affairs, the protection of human rights, civil society participation, and private sector involvement. (Sachs report, recommendation 2).

22. Moreover, parliaments have a special role to play in encouraging governments to foster better coordination and harmonization of donor assistance. From that perspective, special attention should be given to the Rome Declaration of February 2003 and the follow-up meetings to the Forum on aid effectiveness and harmonization. Parliaments must also play their part in convincing governments to enhance the predictable nature of ODA, place emphasis on budget aid and make specific commitments in the medium term to parliament and their citizens on measures to support the poverty reduction strategies conducted by recipient countries.

## II. Debt cancellation, in the interests of justice and as a condition for development

23. Debt continues to afflict peoples throughout the southern hemisphere, the legacy of debt policies as irresponsible on the part of creditor as debtor country government - but whose cost, for 20 years, has fallen solely on the debtor country populations, taking its toll in millions of human lives.

24. The mechanisms that produced the explosion of debt and interest owed by developing countries are well known. The interest rates have been indexed on rates in the United States. Thus, the sharp rise in US rates in the 1980s led to an untenable increase in annual interest obligations. The financial liquidity generated by successive oil shocks was invested indiscriminately in the developing countries.

25. Aggravating these two fundamental causes were manifest deficiencies in the governance of developing countries and unacceptable, indeed scandalous levels of corruption.

In 1980, external debt in the developing countries totalled \$603 billion.

By 1990, only 10 years later, this figure had more than doubled, to \$1,473 billion.

By 1997, the figure had exceeded \$2,317 billion.

Today, this external debt has surpassed \$2,500 billion.

The external debt of Africa now totals \$300 billion.

For each dollar owed in 1980, developing countries have repaid eight dollars and still owe four dollars.

26. In addition, loan conditionalities have helped reshape the economies of developing countries, now largely geared to export production for developed-country markets. The logic of globalization that has driven this transformation has not been conducive to the construction of solid, sustainable economies generating benefits for developing country populations. And this only compounds the imbalances that colonialism has already produced in these economies - imbalances accentuated by the IFIs' structural adjustment policies, themselves the product of misdirected free enterprise philosophies.

27. The same observation applies to the implementation of decisions taken by the WTO. In both cases, what is objectionable is not so much the objective but the way in which the transition and adaptation period is managed: without any regard for the realities developing countries face.

28. The rich countries, which far and away account for most of the world's wealth, bear a heavy responsibility for the accumulation of this debt. With very few exceptions, countries of the North have not fulfilled their commitment to dedicate a 0.7 per cent of GDP to official development assistance. The amounts actually disbursed to countries of the South do not exceed \$50 billion, whereas their annual debt repayment obligations exceed \$350 billion. Various UN reports have indicated that an additional \$50 billion annually - i.e. a doubling of ODA - is required to achieve the MDGs. This objective represents an unkept promise: today, on average, rich countries only dedicate 0.36 per cent of GDP to development assistance.

29. These facts are clearly in stark contrast with the generous declarations.

30. Developing country debt figured among the issues addressed in the final declaration made by the Heads of State and Government at their meeting in New York, in September 2005.

31. The Heads of State and Government called for a rapid, effective, comprehensive, and sustainable solution to the debt problem in developing countries, since financing and debt relief measures could obviously free up considerable capital for development.

32. The September 2005 declaration also underscored debt viability as a decisive factor in growth and the achievement of national development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, as well as debt relief as a significant means of liberating resources for activities to eliminate poverty and promote sustained economic growth and development.

33. The Heads of State and Government stressed the need for additional measures and initiatives to:

- Ensure long-term debt sustainability through increased grant-based financing.
- Allow cancellation of 100 per cent of the official multilateral and bilateral debt of heavily indebted poor countries.
- Significantly relieve or restructure the debt of low-and middle-income developing countries with an unsustainable debt burden and that are not part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.
- Explore mechanisms to comprehensively address the debt problems of those countries.

34. The G-8 meeting at Gleneagles in 2005 had raised hopes as a decisive turning point in the effort to increase aid commitments and deepen debt relief for the lowest-income countries. The Heads of State and Government meeting in New York welcomed this commitment in their September 2005 Declaration.

35. After all, commitments to increase aid by 2010 had exceeded \$50 billion, including a doubling of aid for Africa. The new multilateral debt relief initiative was projected to eliminate more than \$50 billion in debt and reduce annual debt service obligations by about \$1 billion.

36. And yet, as the World Bank itself emphasized, in its 2006 Global Monitoring Report, *“these commitments risk remaining unfulfilled. Aid commitments may fall victim to donor-country efforts to cut deficits. Debt relief is intended to be additional but may be counted toward fulfilling aid targets. Moreover, even if aid commitments are met, donors may not fulfill pledges to lift the quality of aid. Recent history suggests this will be an uphill struggle - aid remains poorly coordinated, unpredictable, largely locked into “special purpose grants,” and often targeted to countries and purposes that are not priorities for the MDGs. Finally, debt relief raises the risk of future unsustainable borrowing from commercial banks. Donors, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and most important, recipient countries need to monitor carefully aid flows and application of the enhanced debt sustainability framework to reduce these risks.”*

37. In a report published in connection with the G-8 meeting of Finance Ministers (Moscow, 9 June 2006) to prepare for the St. Petersburg summit in July, the NGO OXFAM has just criticized the progress toward meeting commitments in this area as insufficient.

38. OXFAM recognizes that \$50 billion in World Bank and IMF debt relief for some 40 countries has produced benefits, but characterizes the announced increase in international aid as an "accounting trick". Officially, 2005 contributions from the G-8 countries increased by 37 per cent relative to 2004, but according to OXFAM the debt cancellation agreements for Iraq and Nigeria alone accounted for \$17 billion of the \$21 billion increase announced last year. *"In fact, aid from France, Germany, and the United Kingdom decreased"* last year as a result of the calculation methods criticized in the report.

39. Discounting the debt cancellation for Iraq and Nigeria, the net increase in aid from the G-8 countries in 2005 was only 9 per cent. According to OXFAM, aid from France and the United Kingdom decreased by 2 per cent, and aid from Germany decreased by 8 per cent last year. Only Italy recorded a substantial increase of 46 per cent. Aid from the United States rose by 16 per cent, from Canada by 18 per cent, and from Japan by 14 per cent.

40. In the final analysis, the debt burden is clearly a major constraint on efforts to achieve the MDGs and eradicate poverty. While the positions taken and promises made are clearly moving in the right direction, actual delivery has often fallen short of the expectations created.

41. The IPU has dwelled on this question on several occasions, in particular at its Stockholm Conference held in September 1992 : Need for a radical solution to the problem of debt in the developing world; its Windhoek Conference held in April 1998 : Foreign debt as a factor limiting the integration of the Third World countries into the process of globalization; at its Brussels Conference held in April 1999 : Writing off the debt of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and most recently, in 2005.

42. The resolution adopted at Manila by the 112<sup>th</sup> Assembly:

1. *Underscores* the unbearable nature of the debt for a large number of developing countries; and *calls urgently* for effective debt cancellation and viable rescheduling procedures to be speeded up while measures are taken to avoid new over-indebtedness among developing countries;
2. *Suggests* that a vital link be established between debt cancellation and the earmarking of resources thus freed up for investments related to the MDGs, in particular in the fields of health, education and gender equality, as set out in each country's Poverty Reduction Strategy;
3. *Recommends* the study of other mechanisms to help countries that have serious debt crises, but that have too high a per capita income to qualify for the assistance afforded to the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs);

43. These recommendations obviously remain valid today, but it is also clear, as pointed out in the 2005 Sachs report, that "the viability of long-term debt" should be redefined as "the level of debt compatible with achieving the MDGs".

### III. Combating corruption is a major condition for development

44. Corruption in general, and political corruption in particular, is a serious problem, afflicting developed as well as developing countries to varying degrees.

45. Political corruption is the abuse of power by political leaders for personal ends, with the aim of increasing their power or wealth. Political corruption does not necessarily entail exchanges of money. It can also take the form of influence peddling or special privileges that poison political life and threaten democracy. Corruption can consist of a wide range of criminal and illicit acts committed by political leaders before, during, and after their terms in office.

46. In the case of parliamentarians it is common to speak of "conflicts of interest" rather than corruption. The Irish House of Representatives defines the term as follows: *"A conflict of interest exists where a Member participates in or makes a decision in the execution of his or her office knowing that it will improperly and dishonestly further his or her private financial interest or another person's private financial interest directly or indirectly."*

47. Corruption is particularly serious and criminal when it occurs among men, women, and organizations charged with representing the general interest. Corruption undermines the foundations of democracy. It weakens institutions, particularly those emerging in the new democracies, countries in transition, or countries in post-conflict situations. It must therefore be combated, tirelessly and resolutely.

48. The 2005 World Barometer on corruption produced by Transparency International is sadly enlightening on this point.

49. According to 55,000 individuals in 45 of the 69 countries surveyed, political parties are considered to be the most corrupt institutions. To varying degrees, depending on the region, political parties are followed by either parliaments or police and then by judicial systems, customs, or tax administrations as the institutions considered most corrupt.

50. The consequences and impact of corruption are obvious.

51. Political corruption is an indicator of non-transparency, but also raises concerns about equity and justice. Corruption encourages practices that make a mockery of human rights and hinder the fulfilment of human needs. More generally, by undermining citizens' confidence in their elected officials, it destroys the social compact, weakens democracy, and encourages the operation of "clans" or "mafias", which can lead to social and governmental collapse. The close links between corruption and other forms of national or international economic crime - and in particular organized crime, terrorism, drug trafficking and money laundering - are extremely troubling.

52. Corruption is the pursuit of individual interests, to the detriment of general interests. The vicious circle of corruption particularly affects the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society.

53. According to TI, the poorer the individual, the more his personal life is impacted by corruption. Forty-two per cent of the low-income population surveyed, compared with 36 per cent in the case of high-income earners, responded that corruption had affected them moderately or greatly.



54. In economic terms, corruption lowers income as well as productivity. It diverts scarce resources away from productive investments in all areas, but particularly in education and health. Corruption can also discourage foreign investors, who often associate it in their minds with threats to property rights, troublesome bureaucracies, or unsound management. It therefore represents a major obstacle to achievement of the Millennium Development Objectives and the eradication of poverty.

55. Parliaments and parliamentarians clearly have a role to play in fighting corruption, not only in terms of eliminating "conflicts of interest",<sup>4</sup> which inevitably arise in the performance of their duties, but also in terms of eradicating corruption in other sectors of national activity.

56. The document produced by the IPU in 2001<sup>5</sup> on the role parliaments can play in combating corruption, nationally and internationally, has lost none of its relevance today.

### **Parliamentary action at national level**

#### **(a) *Legislative measures***

57. Parliaments are vested with the authority to establish the legal framework for the organization and management of public and societal affairs. They are entrusted generally with working to ensure that the great principles of probity among elected officials, institutions, and agencies and transparent government are enshrined in the national Constitution. They can play a particularly important role by:

- Adopting effective and deterrent anticorruption laws.
- Establishing standards of probity for parliamentarians and other public figures.
- Adopting binding oversight legislation to ensure transparency and responsibility in public administration.
- Convincing governments to sign and/or ratify relevant international instruments, and then ensuring that national legislation is in line with these provisions and can be effectively enforced<sup>6</sup>.
- Adopting legislation to guarantee freedom of information and transparent decision-making, requiring the executive branch to disclose information considered necessary for parliamentary deliberations, particularly with respect to matters of corruption.
- Adopting legislation on political party and election campaign financing.
- Adopting legislation to prevent corruption where it is particularly tempting, through the following measures: guaranteeing an adequate level of social protection for every citizen; introducing civil service salary structures as disincentives for corruption; establishing swift and transparent administrative procedures permitting the participation of all, on an equal footing, in decision-making processes.
- Strengthening laws and regulations to ensure equitable procedures for public procurement, taxation, justice administration, etc.

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<sup>4</sup> See the analyses and examples of good practices in the IPU guide to Democracy in the 21st Century, p.104 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (2001) The role of parliaments in the fight against corruption. <<http://ipu.org/splz-f/hague01-bkgr.htm>>

<sup>6</sup> This applies in particular to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which entered into force in early 2006 and is described in Annex 2.

**(b) Oversight**

58. Parliaments should make the most of constitutional and other legal mechanisms for executive branch oversight to ensure transparent and responsible public administration. This means taking or strengthening the following measures:

- Establishing or strengthening parliamentary mechanisms for making the executive branch accountable for its actions, such as questioning government representatives and resorting systematically to public oversight committees. Parliaments may consider establishing or strengthening public accountability commissions.
- Ensuring transparent processes for approving and executing national budgets, providing guarantees against the misappropriation of public funds and resources. Giving more power and resources to parliamentary committees, public accountability commissions, etc.
- Establishing oversight institutions such as anticorruption commissions, auditors/comptroller's, independent mediators, etc. and ensuring they have the necessary resources and attention from parliament and the government.
- Ensuring that the opposition is adequately represented within the structure of parliament and is provided with the necessary resources, and allowing it to state its positions on the management of public affairs under equitable conditions, including the possibility of denouncing acts of corruption, conducting inquiries, or launching investigations into allegations of corruption.
- Establishing transparent and rigorous mechanisms for the selection of senior public officials.
- Establishing rules with respect to conflicts of interest for public servants and taking effective measures against illicit enrichment, including appropriate sanctions against individuals taking advantage of their positions to advance private interests.

**(c) Representation (interaction with civil society)**

59. Parliaments and parliamentarians represent the people and have the duty to make their voices heard on matters of public administration. This means:

- Encouraging the public to report corruption,<sup>7</sup> taking the legal and other measures required to support and protect from intimidation individuals who can play an active role in fighting corruption.
- Promoting or helping to promote a heightened sense of probity and moral integrity through awareness campaigns, including courses on civics in school programmes, etc.

60. Good governance which, in all its aspects implies transparency, is a necessary condition for lasting and balanced development. Discharging one's duties and upholding the rights of citizens require access to and a mastering of information. From this perspective, the proposals and recommendations made to the resolution adopted at the 109<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly held in Geneva on *The contribution of new information and communication technologies to good governance, the improvement of parliamentary democracy and the management of globalization*<sup>8</sup> remain very topical issues, notably the question of relations between elected officials, citizens and civil society.

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<sup>7</sup> According to Transparency International, reporting corruption is one of the most effective means of preventing it.

<sup>8</sup> Report by Mrs. Isabelle Fila Lemina (Congo) and Mr. Patrice Martin-Lalande (France).

## International action

61. Parliaments are increasingly called upon to play a key role on the international scene. In particular, they have the moral duty to ensure that international affairs are managed in accordance with the highest standards of probity. This international dimension of parliamentary activity requires more effective international cooperation in the fight against corruption. Parliaments have been called upon in particular to adopt the following measures:

- Promoting international cooperation among parliaments and parliamentarians<sup>9</sup> in the fight against corruption through the exchange of experiences, best practices, etc., encouraging parliamentarians to participate in regional and international seminars, fostering the exchange of information on anticorruption techniques and laws, promoting related research, and facilitating the review and improvement of institutional mechanisms and processes. Ideally, such measures should be coordinated within the framework of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the world organization of parliaments.
- Adapting their legislation to ensure that persons residing within their territories who engage in corrupting authorities or foreign officials are punished or at least extradited to the countries concerned, and to explicitly criminalize money laundering in connection with corruption, including in third countries.
- Organizing a conference of States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption to improve their capacity for strengthening cooperation, achieving the Convention's objectives and overseeing its application. It is highly desirable for parliaments to participate in and monitor the preparation and proceedings of this conference.

62. The Inter-Parliamentary Union should spearhead Inter-Parliamentary cooperation in the fight against corruption and redouble the efforts to introduce democratic reforms and good governance at national level.

63. If the role of parliaments in the fight against corruption is recognized at world level, many parliaments, particularly in the developing and newly democratic countries, often lack the resources required to carry out this mission. They therefore require support from international donors, but also inter-parliamentary cooperation, to develop processes and structures that will make them effective on a sustained basis.

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<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that a world organization of parliamentarians against corruption exists (2005) and has prepared a parliamentarian's handbook for combating corruption.

**ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
UNITED NATIONS REPORT OF 2005**

<p><b>Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b></p>	<p>Reduce by half between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day.</p> <p>Reduce by half between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.</p>	<p>Poverty is declining around the world, particularly in Asia. But millions have sunk into deeper poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, where the poor grow ever poorer.</p> <p>Progress has also been made in combating hunger, but with reversals in some regions owing to the slow pace of agricultural development combined with population growth. Since 1990, hunger has spread to millions in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where half of all children under five are malnourished.</p>	<p><b>Asia has taken the lead in the fight against poverty.</b></p> <p><b>The number of poor people is increasing in Africa.</b></p> <p><b>The poor grow ever poorer.</b></p> <p><b>Hunger is receding more slowly.</b></p> <p><b>Reversals nearly cancel out progress in the fight against hunger.</b></p> <p><b>More than one-fourth of all children in the developing world are malnourished.</b></p> <p><b>Poverty and hunger are aggravated by conflicts and disasters.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education</b></p>	<p>By 2015 ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.</p>	<p>Five developing regions have nearly achieved universal education. In sub-Saharan Africa, less than two-thirds of all children go to primary school. In other regions, including South Asia and Oceania, considerable progress is still required. There and elsewhere, education policy should be accompanied by efforts to keep children in school and provide high quality education.</p>	<p><b>Universal primary education has nearly been achieved in five regions.</b></p> <p><b>Eight out of every ten unschooled children live in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia.</b></p> <p><b>AIDS has taken a heavy toll on education.</b></p> <p><b>Children from rich families have a greater chance of attending school.</b></p> <p><b>Enrolling children in school is only half of the solution.</b></p> <p><b>In most of the developing regions, girls tend to stay in school less than boys.</b></p>

<p><b>Goal 3</b> <b>Promote gender equality and empower women</b></p>	<p>Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.</p>	<p>Slowly but surely, the gap between the sexes in primary school enrolment in developing countries is closing. This is a first step towards eliminating historical inequities.</p> <p>In nearly all of the developing regions, fewer women than men enjoy salaried employment, and even then are often relegated to precarious, poorly paid jobs. There has been undeniable progress, but women are still not equally represented at the highest levels of government, accounting for only 16% of all parliamentary seats around the world.</p>	<p><b>Schooling for girls still lags behind schooling for boys.</b></p> <p><b>Disparities between the sexes increase with the level of education.</b></p> <p><b>Women have fewer salaried jobs than men.</b></p> <p><b>There are more women than men at the bottom of the employment ladder.</b></p> <p><b>Men control decisions at the highest levels.</b></p> <p><b>More than 80 countries have taken measures expressly designed to ensure the participation of women in political life.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 4</b> <b>Reduce child mortality under five</b></p>	<p>Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the mortality rate among children under five.</p>	<p>The mortality rates for children under five are declining, but not fast enough. Every year, one million children - 30,000 per day - die from preventable causes or from treatable disease. In most cases, it would have been sufficient to expand existing programmes offering simple, low-cost solutions.</p>	<p><b>Progress in reducing mortality rates for children under five has slowed.</b></p> <p><b>To reach the target, mortality among children under five must be reduced substantially in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.</b></p> <p><b>More children can be saved through simple, low-cost measures.</b></p> <p><b>Vaccination against measles saves lives, but not all children are protected.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 5</b> <b>Improve maternal health</b></p>	<p>Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.</p>	<p>More than half a million women die every year during pregnancy or in childbirth. Twenty times that number suffer injury or disability. Progress has been made in reducing maternal mortality in the developing regions, but not in the countries where reproduction poses the greatest risks.</p>	<p><b>Women risk death to give life.</b></p> <p><b>The number of deaths in childbirth has declined, but not in the highest risk countries.</b></p> <p><b>More children are being delivered with assistance from qualified medical personnel.</b></p>

			Success is possible, even in the poorest countries.
<b>Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</b>	<p>By 2015 halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</p> <p>By 2015 halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.</p>	<p>AIDS has become the leading cause of premature death in sub-Saharan Africa and is the fourth leading cause of death worldwide. In European countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and in certain countries in Asia, HIV is spreading at alarming rates. New treatments are prolonging lives, but there is still no known cure for AIDS. To achieve this goal, preventive measures must be intensified in all regions of the world. Together, malaria and tuberculosis take nearly as many human lives as AIDS and drain national economies.</p> <p>Despite a redoubling of efforts in sub-Saharan Africa, that region still accounts for 90% of all malaria-related deaths. Tuberculosis is on the rise, partly as a consequence of HIV/AIDS, but a new international protocol for detection and treatment appears promising.</p>	<p><b>The prevalence of HIV remains high in sub-Saharan Africa, where deaths and new infections are multiplying.</b></p> <p><b>The prevalence of HIV has increased in all other regions.</b></p> <p><b>The AIDS epidemic is spreading, affecting girls and women more and more.</b></p> <p><b>AIDS has resulted in a record number of orphans.</b></p> <p><b>The solution lies in care and treatment, but even more importantly, in prevention.</b></p> <p><b>Malaria attacks the poorest and most vulnerable.</b></p> <p><b>The distribution of mosquito netting has become more widespread.</b></p> <p><b>Antimalarial pharmaceutical policies are becoming more effective.</b></p> <p><b>The old scourge of tuberculosis has reappeared.</b></p> <p><b>A new therapeutic strategy for combating tuberculosis is proving effective.</b></p>
<b>Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability</b>	<p>Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse loss of environmental resources.</p>	<p>Most countries have committed to the principles of sustainable development, but the resulting progress has not been sufficient to reverse the depletion of natural resources. Achieving this goal will require closer attention to conditions among the poor, where daily subsistence often depends directly on local resources, and unprecedented levels of worldwide cooperation.</p>	<p><b>It is in the poorest regions that forests are disappearing most rapidly.</b></p> <p><b>More areas have been protected, but species and natural habitats continue to disappear.</b></p>

	<p>Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.</p> <p>Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.</p>	<p>Action taken to prevent depletion of the ozone layer shows that progress is possible.</p> <p>Drinking water has become more accessible, but half of the developing world still do not have toilets and basic sanitation facilities. Close to one billion persons live in slum areas because urban population growth is outstripping housing development and productive job creation.</p>	<p>There have been gains in the efficiency of energy use, but not enough.</p> <p>The levels of greenhouse gas emissions are highest among the rich countries.</p> <p>The production of substances that deplete the ozone layer has declined considerably.</p> <p>Drinking water has become more accessible throughout the world.</p> <p>Half of the developing world lacks improved sanitation services.</p> <p>Poor populations in rural areas and urban slums should be the central target of public sanitation policies.</p> <p>Urban populations will soon exceed rural populations in the developing world.</p> <p>Population growth in city slums is outpacing urban development.</p> <p>Measures to improve slum living conditions should be expanded.</p>
<p><b>Goal 8</b> <b>Develop a global partnership for development</b></p>	<p>Address the special needs of the least developed countries and landlocked countries and small island developing States.</p> <p>Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory.</p>	<p>The Millennium Declaration is a global social covenant: developing countries will do more to help themselves, and developed countries will provide aid, debt relief, and improved trade prospects. Progress on each of these fronts is already producing results, but developed countries remain below their own established thresholds. In pursuit of these Goals, expansion of aid and debt relief must be accompanied by increased market access, an acceleration in technology transfers, and improved employment prospects for the growing youth population in developing countries.</p>	<p><b>While aid is vital for the poorest countries, trade is more beneficial for middle-income countries.</b></p> <p><b>Official development assistance has never been greater - but never so low in terms of donor country incomes.</b></p> <p><b>Supplemental aid mostly takes the form of debt relief and emergency assistance.</b></p>

	<p>Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems.</p> <p>In cooperation with the developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.</p> <p>In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.</p> <p>In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies - especially information and communications technologies to all.</p>		<p>The quality of aid is just as important as its volume.</p> <p>Developed countries are importing more and more goods duty-free from developing countries.</p> <p>Customs duties for a number of major developing country products have remained unchanged.</p> <p>Agricultural subsidies should be significantly reduced in the rich countries.</p> <p>External debt remains an obstacle to development, and not only for the poorest countries</p> <p>Unemployment among youth breeds social unrest.</p> <p>Essential drugs could save millions of lives.</p> <p>Antiretrovirals are more accessible but millions of patients are still deprived of them.</p> <p>Artemisine, an essential antimalarial drug, is in short supply.</p> <p>The inadequate provision of drugs and the lack of appropriate pharmaceutical policies are hindering the fight against tuberculosis.</p> <p>The information revolution is only just beginning in the developing world.</p>
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## UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION

The United Nations Convention against Corruption was opened for signature at the Conference in Mérida, Mexico, held from 9 to 11 December 2003. More than 130 States have signed, but entry into force required ratification by 30 countries. This was accomplished upon ratification by Ecuador, on 15 September 2005.

The purposes of this Convention are:

- To promote and strengthen measures to prevent and combat corruption more efficiently and effectively;
- To promote, facilitate and support international cooperation and technical assistance in the prevention of and fight against corruption, including in asset recovery;
- To promote integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs and public property.

It applies to the prevention, investigation and prosecution of corruption and to the freezing, seizure, confiscation and return of the proceeds of offences.

To prevent corruption, the Convention enumerates a detailed list of recommended measures, including the application of preventive policies and practices, the creation of preventive bodies, the application of codes of conduct for public officials, and objective criteria for the recruitment and promotion of officials and for public procurement. It also calls for the promotion of transparency and accountability in the management of public finances and in the private sector, by strengthening accounting and auditing standards. Measures are also established to prevent money laundering and ensure the independence of the judiciary. Public information and participation are also encouraged as preventive measures.

With respect to criminalization, detection, and punishment, the convention calls on States Parties to adopt legislative and other measures needed to effectively criminalize a long list of activities, including:

- The corruption of national or foreign public officials or officials of public international organizations.
- Embezzlement, misappropriation or any other illicit use of property by a public official.
- Trading in influence
- The abuse of functions and illicit enrichment.

States Parties are also urged to take measures necessary to:

- Establish the liability of legal persons.
- Permit the freezing, seizure, and confiscation of proceeds derived from offences.
- Protect witnesses, experts and victims.
- Protect reporting persons.
- Address the consequences of corruption.
- Ensure that those who have suffered damage have the right to initiate legal proceedings in order to obtain compensation.
- Create anticorruption bodies responsible for detecting and punishing corruption.
- Encourage cooperation with law enforcement authorities.
- Encourage cooperation between national authorities and the private sector.
- Overcome obstacles that may arise from bank secrecy laws.
- Take into account the criminal record of alleged offenders for use in criminal proceedings.

- Establish their jurisdiction over different types of offences: committed within their territories, against them, by one of their nationals, etc.

Each State Party must also take measures in respect of judicial prosecution, rulings, or sanctions for public officials so as to achieve a balance between their immunities and the consequences of their offences.

This Convention devotes a chapter to international cooperation. States Parties are expected to cooperate in criminal matters, extradition, and the transfer of sentenced persons under various circumstances set forth in the Convention. Much of this chapter is concerned with mutual legal assistance under different scenarios, to promote mutual assistance on as wide a basis as possible.

The States Parties can also transfer criminal proceedings when necessary, conduct joint investigations, and resort to special investigative techniques, such as electronic surveillance. Cooperation among law enforcement authorities, through better communication and cooperation channels in the conduct of investigations, is also encouraged.

Chapter V concerns asset recovery. The return of assets is a fundamental principle of the Convention. It encourages financial institutions to ascertain the identity of customers and beneficial owners of funds deposited into high-value accounts and to prevent the establishment of banks that have no physical presence and that are not affiliated with a regulated financial group. This chapter also indicates measures for direct recovery of property and mechanisms for recovery through international cooperation in confiscation. Such assets must then be returned by means of modalities established in the Convention. A financial intelligence unit and bilateral and multilateral agreements and arrangements are encouraged to enhance the effectiveness of international cooperation.

The States Parties also undertake to develop specific training programmes and provide each other with the broadest technical assistance. Information on corruption must be collected, exchanged and analysed, and concrete efforts must be made to develop cooperation at different levels to increase financial, material, and technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition.