



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION  
118<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings  
Cape Town (South Africa), 13 – 18 April 2008



Assembly  
Item 2

A/118/2-P.7  
11 April 2008

**CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE REQUESTS FOR THE  
INCLUSION OF AN EMERGENCY ITEM IN THE ASSEMBLY AGENDA**

**Request for the inclusion of an emergency item  
in the agenda of the 118<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union  
submitted by the delegation of South Africa**

On 10 April 2008, the Secretary General received from the Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa a request for the inclusion in the agenda of the 118<sup>th</sup> Assembly of an emergency item entitled:

"The role of parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in ensuring that the United Nations brings a speedy halt to the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Darfur, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Colombia and Somalia, amongst others, and in facilitating self-determination of the disenfranchised, where this is an issue, through viable peace processes".

Delegates to the 118<sup>th</sup> Assembly will find attached the text of the communication submitting the request (Annex I), as well as an explanatory memorandum (Annex II) and a draft resolution (Annex III) in support thereof.

The 118<sup>th</sup> Assembly will be required to take a decision on the request of the delegation of South Africa on Monday, 14 April 2008.

Under the terms of Assembly Rule 11.1, any Member of the Union may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Such a request must be accompanied by a brief explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution which clearly define the scope of the subject covered by the request. The Secretariat shall communicate the request and any such documents immediately to all Members.

Furthermore, Assembly Rule 11.2 stipulates that:

- (a) A request for the inclusion of an emergency item must relate to a major event of international concern on which it appears necessary for the IPU to express its opinion. Such a request must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in order to be accepted;
- (b) The Assembly may place only one emergency item on its agenda. Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted;
- (c) The authors of two or more requests for the inclusion of an emergency item may combine their proposals to present a joint one, provided that each of the original proposals relates to the same subject;
- (d) The subject of a proposal that has been withdrawn by its authors or rejected by the Assembly cannot be included in the draft resolution submitted on the emergency item, unless it is clearly referred to in the request and title of the subject adopted by the Assembly.

**COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL  
BY THE SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Cape Town, 10 April 2008

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

On behalf of the National Assembly of the Parliament of South Africa, I wish to submit the following emergency item:

"The role of parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in ensuring that the United Nations brings a speedy halt to the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Darfur, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Colombia and Somalia, amongst others, and in facilitating self-determination of the disenfranchised, where this is an issue, through viable peace processes".

You will find attached an explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution for consideration during the 118<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

Bakela MBETE (Ms.)  
Speaker of the National Assembly  
of South Africa

**THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS AND THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION IN ENSURING THAT THE UNITED NATIONS BRINGS A SPEEDY HALT TO THE RAPIDLY DETERIORATING HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN DARFUR, PALESTINE, SRI LANKA, COLOMBIA AND SOMALIA, AMONGST OTHERS, AND IN FACILITATING SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE DISENFRANCHISED, WHERE THIS IS AN ISSUE, THROUGH VIABLE PEACE PROCESSES**

***Explanatory memorandum submitted by the delegation of South Africa***

The deteriorating humanitarian situation in places such as Darfur, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Colombia and Somalia collectively represents a major event of international concern on which it is absolutely necessary for parliamentarians and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to express themselves clearly and unequivocally. The continued killing and reported rapes of women and young girls in Darfur, the blockade of the Gaza Strip and shelling of its civilians, the bombing of Sri Lankan civilians, the hostage crisis in Colombia, and the destabilization of the Horn of Africa brought about by the ongoing violent conflict in Somalia have resulted in the rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation for people living in these conflict-ridden areas.

Not only do these conflicts cause tremendous suffering, they also undermine development efforts and economic development. By resolving these and other conflicts around the world, development will be accelerated, peace and stability can be achieved, and the humanitarian situation of the people affected will improve.

**THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS AND THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION IN ENSURING THAT THE UNITED NATIONS BRINGS A SPEEDY HALT TO THE RAPIDLY DETERIORATING HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN DARFUR, PALESTINE, SRI LANKA, COLOMBIA AND SOMALIA, AMONGST OTHERS, AND IN FACILITATING SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE DISENFRANCHISED, WHERE THIS IS AN ISSUE, THROUGH VIABLE PEACE PROCESSES**

***Draft resolution submitted by the delegation of SOUTH AFRICA***

The 118<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Cognizant* of the numerous unresolved internal conflicts around the world, including Darfur, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Colombia and Somalia,
- (2) *Recognizing and reaffirming* the principles of sovereignty, sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, peaceful co-existence, interdependence and non-aggression,
- (3) *Reaffirming* that the United Nations bears primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security,
- (4) *Convinced* that peace and security are critical factors in creating a conducive environment for international cooperation,
- (5) *Deeply concerned* about the rapidly escalating violence and devastating harm to life and limb in countries affected by internal conflicts,
- (6) *Cognizant* of the historical evidence that the only means of ensuring the lasting, peaceful settlement of conflicts is peaceful dialogue, not military intervention,
- (7) *Also cognizant* of the effort being made by the United Nations in various initiatives, resolutions and conventions, to address the problems in the countries concerned,
- (8) *Mindful* of the relationship between the IPU and the United Nations and of the mechanisms developed to strengthen that relationship with a view to dealing effectively with global concerns,
  1. *Expresses sympathy* with all those who have suffered as a result of an internal conflict, especially the marginalized and vulnerable, including women and children;
  2. *Calls for* immediate action by the United Nations to prevent any further deterioration in the humanitarian situation;
  3. *Urges* the United Nations to protect the rights of the people in affected countries as enshrined in international instruments;

4. *Demands* that the United Nations ensure the safety of fleeing civilians, prevent human rights abuses, establish and protect refugee camps, and take all necessary steps to prevent any further deterioration in the humanitarian situation in conflict areas;
5. *Calls on* the United Nations to facilitate peace and take the necessary steps to uphold the right to self-determination in the countries concerned;
6. *Urges* States affected by conflict to immediately refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, other than for the legitimate purpose of individual or collective self-defence against an armed attack;
7. *Calls on* all parties involved in conflicts to manage and seek to resolve any dispute between two or more of them by peaceful means in cooperation with the United Nations;
8. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments in countries where conflicts are currently taking place to ensure that their respective national parliaments and governments contribute to the resolution of the conflicts;
9. *Calls on* the IPU to work with the United Nations to settle the conflicts by, for example, visiting conflict zones, holding workshops with parliamentarians in the affected areas, and convening special sessions to discuss the conflicts.