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## **PROMOTING AND PRACTISING GOOD GOVERNANCE AS A MEANS OF ADVANCING PEACE AND SECURITY: DRAWING LESSONS FROM RECENT EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

***Preliminary draft resolution submitted by the co-Rapporteurs  
Mr. M. Gyöngyösi (Hungary) and Mr. J.J. Mwiimbu (Zambia)***

The 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Considering* that there is compelling evidence to support the positive correlation between good governance and the level of peace and security in society and in the world,
- (2) *Recognizing* that governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources,
- (3) *Mindful* that the role of public authorities in creating an environment for economic operators to function and in determining the distribution of benefits as well as the nature of the relationship between the government and citizens is pivotal in promoting and practising good governance,
- (4) *Noting* that good governance leads to efficient and accountable institutions, i.e. political, judicial, administrative, economic and corporate rules that promote development and the rule of law, protect human rights, and ensure that people are free to participate and be heard in decisions that affect their lives,
- (5) *Also noting* that the catalysts for the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa were the concentration of wealth in the hands of autocrats in power for decades, lack of transparency in the redistribution of that wealth, corruption, and in particular, young people's refusal to accept the status quo; spiralling food prices and famine were also determining factors, as they involve threats to food security worldwide,
- (6) *Acknowledging* that the disconnect between higher aspirations and lack of government reform might well have contributed to the protests;
- (7) *Noting* the undeniably positive influence of education and exposure to issues of good governance;

(8) *Recalling* the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which, inter alia, provide that every citizen, regardless of gender, religion or race, has a right to take part in the conduct of public affairs directly or through freely chosen representatives, and that the will of the people should be expressed through free and fair elections based on universal and equal suffrage and secret ballots, in the full exercise of the sovereignty of the people, so as to constitute the basis for legitimate and credible authority of government,

(9) *Also recalling* the resolution on *Providing a sound legislative framework aimed at preventing electoral violence, improving election monitoring and ensuring the smooth transition of power*, adopted by the 124<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly (Panama, 2011), which calls upon parliaments, where necessary, "to undertake constitutional and legislative reform, building on international obligations and commitments and taking into account local realities, so as to provide a sound legal framework for free and fair elections that includes the adoption of electoral systems that provide for representative and inclusive outcomes, and for the smooth transfer of power",

(10) *Further recalling* the above-mentioned IPU resolution, which urges parliaments "to conduct such electoral reform through a comprehensive, inclusive and open debate that fosters the broadest possible involvement of all stakeholders, authorities, political parties, media and civil society organizations in the electoral process",

(11) *Noting* that the events in the Middle East and North Africa have provided important lessons for all countries on democracy and freedom,

(12) *Also noting* that those events have shown that people everywhere need democratic governments based on the will of the people, expressed regularly through free and fair elections,

(13) *Further noting* that it is always the people who have the right to determine their own political future based on the cultural and historical characteristics of their nation,

(14) *Mindful* that people will not view democracy in a positive light if their livelihood is at stake, and that democracy and development are inextricably linked,

(15) *Considering* that it is only good governance, defined locally and taking into account specific cultural, historical and social peculiarities and differences, that can lead to peace and security,

(16) *Acknowledging* that the experiences of other regions tend to show that the process of democratization in the Middle East and North Africa will take time, given the fact that it is often a lengthy and complex process, which involves changing power relations in society,

(17) *Convinced* that the attainment of democracy requires extensive changes that are rooted in constitutions, electoral systems, laws and regulations related to political parties, the media, the justice system, and not least a change in mentality, including a paradigm shift regarding the place of women in political life,

1. *Invites* all States to consider the major lessons drawn from the Arab Spring on the need for democratic reforms and for governments to provide basic employment and economic opportunities to their people;

2. *Recommends* sustained investment in political reform, which should include the creation of independent government watchdogs, the amendment of constitutions, electoral systems, laws, regulations and processes related to political parties, the judicial system, the media, and the involvement of civil society;
3. *Calls upon* all Member Parliaments to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and ensure that freedom of thought, expression and association, as well as other civil and political rights, are guaranteed;
4. *Also calls upon* parliaments to ensure the establishment of governance systems that will lead to the improvement of people's livelihood so as to help restore faith in democratic institutions and democracy;
5. *Recommends* that new leaders in the Middle East and North Africa and the world over strive to implement policies that will help reduce economic inequality and tackle everyday problems, such as poverty, lack of access to health services and corruption;
6. *Encourages* IPU Member Parliaments to advocate for increased civic education, with a focus on the fundamental principles of democratic governance, while reflecting the diversity of histories and cultures;
7. *Urges* the international community to respect and comply with the principle of sovereignty as enshrined in the UN Charter, in order to avoid undue influence on the situation of and election outcomes in States;
8. *Calls upon* the international community to strengthen global partnerships in order to achieve peace and security;
9. *Encourages* States to comply with the Millennium Declaration, which calls for the promotion of peace, security, human rights, the elimination of hunger, poverty, and the importance of and right to education in the context of sustainable growth;
10. *Invites* political parties and national parliaments to implement policies and mechanisms aimed and enhancing the participation of women and youth in public and political life;
11. *Calls upon* all parliaments to enact legislation and take specific action to enhance their transparency, develop information and communication technology (ICT) tools to facilitate citizens' access to relevant information on parliamentary processes, and develop mechanisms for regular and robust outreach to civil society;
12. *Urges* the IPU to lend support to the democratization process under way in the Middle East and North Africa, particularly in areas relating to the process of constitutional reform and the drafting of new electoral laws, as well as the sharing good practices for open and inclusive electoral processes that are conducive to the establishment of representative and effective parliaments;
13. *Calls upon* the IPU to develop capacity-building and technical assistance programmes in support of the newly elected parliaments in the Middle East and North Africa.