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Geneva, 29 September 2005

Dear Mr. Speaker,

We have the pleasure of inviting your parliament to take part in a regional seminar entitled *The role of parliaments in the national reconciliation process in Africa*. This event, organized by the parliament of Burundi, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), will be held from **7 to 9 November 2005** at the Kigobe Centre National Assembly Building in Bujumbura.

Transition involves extremely diverse economic, social and political problems. Whether in a democratic transition or in a post-conflict situation, parliaments must face the challenge of assuming their role in creating the conditions required for reconstruction of a viable society. Yet the call for reconciliation raises enormous difficulties and dilemmas.

It is the hope of the seminar's organizers, in their commitment to reconciliation, that this event will make possible an exchange of views between parliamentarians of African countries and will foster better understanding of the role of parliaments in seeing through the reconciliation process and identifying pitfalls that must be avoided. Specifically, the seminar will focus on how to respond to the aftereffects of the human rights violations that often mark periods of violent conflict. It will consider several of the subjects addressed in a handbook entitled *Making reconciliation work: The role of parliaments*, that was recently published by the IPU and International IDEA and may be consulted online at the following address: www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/reconciliation_en.pdf.

You will find attached the provisional programme of this three-day seminar, which is open to all parliamentarians. The subjects on the agenda will be presented by parliamentarians and experts in the field of reconciliation. The accent will be placed on discussion, and sufficient time will be allotted to a free exchange of opinions. Interpretation will be provided in English and French.

As is customary for IPU meetings, we are inviting all parliaments to send a gender-balanced delegation with representatives from different political parties. This is all the more important in light of the subject matter. Enclosed you will find an IPU registration form, which I invite you kindly to return to our Secretariat no later than **20 October 2005**.

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Lastly, I would like to point out that all matters relating to visas, hotel accommodation and transportation of participants should be handled directly by the participants. To facilitate hotel bookings, I am enclosing a reservation form which participants may wish to use. Please note that both forms, along with the provisional programme of the seminar and other relevant documents, will also be available as of **30 September 2005** on the IPU website (<http://www.ipu.org>), under the section entitled *Future meetings*.

Looking forward to the participation of your parliament at the seminar, we remain,

Yours sincerely,

Gervais Rufyikiri



President of the Senate
Burundi

Immaculée Nahayo



President of the National
Assembly
Burundi

Anders B. Johnsson



Secretary General of the
Inter-Parliamentary Union

Annex: Provisional programme
Registration form
Hotel reservation form (list of hotels)