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Geneva, 12 September 2012

Madam President,
Mr. President,

I am pleased to invite your parliament to the Parliamentary workshop “*Strengthening the role of parliamentarians in the implementation of Universal Periodic Review recommendations*”, which will be held on 12 and 13 November 2012 at IPU headquarters in Geneva. The workshop is being organized jointly by the IPU and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Through the UPR, the United Nations Human Rights Council examines the human rights situation in all United Nations Member States. Each examination is based on a national report prepared by the authorities of the country concerned and a constructive dialogue between them and the members of the Human Rights Council. Recommendations are then formulated for the State being reviewed, with a view to improving the human rights situation in that country. During the first cycle, from 2008 to 2011, all United Nations member States at the time submitted reports to the UPR, after which they received recommendations.

The second reporting cycle started in February 2012 and will end in 2016. It will evaluate the implementation of the recommendations made during the first cycle, a great number of which require legislative action. In this respect, parliament has a decisive role to play when it comes to implementing the recommendations.

The workshop in Geneva will focus on the countries to be examined in 2013 and 2014. It will provide a platform for discussion enabling the parliaments of the countries concerned to enhance their understanding of how the UPR functions. Each delegation will have the opportunity to share its experiences of promoting human rights and of its involvement, if any, in the work during the first UPR cycle concerning its country.

The aim is to enable the participants, once they have returned home, to play an active part as soon as preparations for the UPR get under way. The workshop will allow participants to express their needs with regard to their involvement in the process and enable the organizers to identify the assistance they can provide.

The organizers hope that your parliament will be able to designate two members of parliament and a parliamentary staff member, ideally those who have been involved in the promotion and protection of human rights, for example through participation on relevant standing committees within Parliament, to participate in the workshop.

I am pleased to enclose a draft programme as well as a registration form which I kindly ask participants to complete and return to us before 5 October 2012. I draw your attention to the fact that, in accordance with IPU practice, all questions relating to the participants' visas, hotel accommodation and travel arrangements must be dealt with by the participants themselves. To facilitate the reservation of hotel rooms, I enclose a reservation form for the participants to use, if they wish.

I am hopeful that your parliament will be represented at the workshop.

Yours sincerely,

Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General