



SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENTS

United Nations Headquarters, New York, 7 to 9 September 2005



INFORMATION NOTE

Introduction

1. The Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments is being convened by a decision of the 108th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Santiago de Chile, April 2003), as a follow-up to the first gathering of presiding officers that was organised in 2000 on the occasion of the United Nations Millennium Assembly. A Preparatory Committee composed of 15 Speakers of parliaments began planning for the event in January 2004.
2. The overall purpose of the Conference is to present the United Nations with a comprehensive view, and at the highest possible level, of the contribution of the world's parliaments in strengthening the multilateral system and in furthering peace, security, democracy, human rights and development pursuant to internationally agreed commitments. The Conference is expected to provide a direct input into the High-level Meeting of Heads of State that will take place at the same venue from 14 to 19 September 2005.
3. This Note is addressed to all Speakers of national parliaments, and is intended to provide them with a preliminary overview of the general rules and conditions of the event. It includes three documents as attachments:
 - Provisional annotated agenda;
 - Registration form for delegations;
 - Form to indicate speaking preferences.
4. A second, more detailed Information Note about the organisation of the Conference will be issued by 30 June 2005. It will introduce the Conference's draft declaration and draft rules of procedure.

Venue

5. The United Nations is hosting the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, pursuant to a decision of the General Assembly (resolution A/RES/59/19). The Conference will take place in the General Assembly Hall of United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Timetable and schedule of meetings

6. The **Plenary** of the Conference will begin at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, 7 September. The overall programme of work will be as follows:

Wednesday, 7 September 2005

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 3 p.m. | Inaugural ceremony with the participation of the United Nations Secretary-General |
| 3.45 p.m. | Item 1: Adoption of the agenda |
| | Item 2: Presentation of the report, <i>Parliamentary involvement in international affairs</i> |
| | Item 3: Progress report on meeting the Millennium Development Goals |
| | Item 4: Report on <i>The parliamentary dimension of democracy: A framework of criteria and good practice for addressing democracy within a country</i> |
| 4.15 p.m.– 6 p.m. | Item 5: General debate: <i>Parliaments and multilateral cooperation: Meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century</i> |
| 6.30 p.m. | Reception for participants (Delegates' Dining Room, fourth floor) |

Thursday, 8 September 2005

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <u>9 a.m. – 10 a.m.</u> | <u>Group photo</u> |
| 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Item 5: General debate |
| 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. | Item 5: General debate |
| 6.30 p.m. | Reception for Speakers of parliaments and their spouses |

Friday, 9 September 2005

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Item 5: General debate |
| 3 p.m. – 5 p.m. | Item 5: General debate |
| 5 p.m. – 6 p.m. | Item 6: Adoption of the Declaration |

7. Two **panel discussions** will take place on 8 September, the second day of the Conference, respectively from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., in Room

1. The panel discussions, open to all participants, will respectively review in greater detail the democracy framework referred to in Item 3 of the Conference's agenda and discuss the role and responsibility of parliaments as regards the work of the United Nations.

8. **Bilateral meetings** booked through the IPU Secretariat will be held in either Room 1 or Room 6, depending on availability.

Participation

9. The Conference will include the following categories of participants, observers, and guest speakers:

Participants

Speakers of all national parliaments, including in the case of bicameral parliaments those of both chambers, are invited. Non-members of the IPU are welcome to send participants provided the parliaments in question correspond to the IPU's definition of a national parliament.¹

Observers

- Presidents of international parliamentary assemblies that are associate members of the IPU or that enjoy observer status at IPU meetings;
- Heads of Programmes and Agencies of the United Nations system and the WTO;
- Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York

Guest speakers

High-ranking officials of the United Nations and other international figures will be invited to address the meeting on specific topics.

Size and composition of delegations

10. In view of the very large number of participants expected at this Conference and given the size of the General Assembly Hall, the participating Speaker or Speakers should be accompanied by only a limited number of members of parliament and/or staff. The maximum size of the delegation from each parliament, whether unicameral or bicameral, shall not exceed six persons, including the Speaker(s).

11. Observer delegations shall be composed of no more than two persons, with the exception of the delegations of Palestine and of Associate Members of the IPU, which shall be entitled to have the same size as national delegations.

¹ The IPU Council, in 1993, defined a parliament as a "national assembly which, according to domestic law, is endowed as a minimum with power to legislate and oversee the Executive".

Seating arrangements

12. Each delegation will have six seats in the United Nations General Assembly Hall, three at desks, and three immediately behind them, without desks. One of these seats will be reserved for the country's Permanent Representative in New York should he or she wish to accompany the delegation.

13. The country that will be seated in the front row will be determined by a drawing of lots, and all other delegations will follow in English alphabetical order.

Speaking rights

14. In accordance with past practice, only Speakers of parliaments (and in the case of bicameral parliaments, the Speakers of both chambers), Presidents of the official parliamentary assemblies that are Associate Members of the IPU and guest speakers will be invited to address the meeting.

Declaration

15. At the end of the Conference, participants will be invited to adopt a Declaration, which will have been drafted by a Preparatory Committee and will be submitted for the consideration of delegations well in advance.

Languages

16. The plenary meetings of the Conference will have interpretation in all six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). Speakers addressing the Conference in any other languages will need to have their individual statements translated into one of the six official languages. A special interpretation booth will be available, on a rotating basis, for interpreters supplied by delegations.

17. The panels will have interpretation in the four languages customarily used at IPU meetings, namely Arabic, English, French and Spanish. Two additional interpretation booths will be available, on a rotating basis, for the interpretation of individual statements from any other language.

Media

18. The United Nations media accreditation office will issue the necessary passes to allow journalists access to United Nations Headquarters. Due to the large volume of applications, travelling journalists should approach the accreditation center soon after arrival in New York in order to allow for a possible delay in the issuance of United Nations passes. The attached form should be completed and sent directly to the United Nations media accreditation office.

Registration and accommodation of delegations

19. Participants and observers are urged to complete the enclosed registration form as soon as possible and to return it to the IPU Secretariat by 15 July 2005 at the latest. The form may be submitted by Fax or e-mail, as follows:

Fax: +41 22 919 41 60

e-mail: postbox@mail.ipu.org

20. A provisional list of participants will be compiled based on registrations received. Delegates will have an opportunity to check the accuracy of this list before the end of the Conference.

21. A number of facilities will be available to delegates at the United Nations Secretariat: bank, restaurant, coffee bar, medical service, and post office. As regards travel and accommodation needs, delegations should contact their permanent missions in New York for assistance; they have all been notified of the Conference. Most of them are used to receiving national delegations to United Nations meetings, and are accustomed to handling hotel reservations and other requirements on their behalf.

Entry passes into the United Nations compound

22. Due to strict security measures in effect at the United Nations, every delegate to the Conference will need a special United Nations identification pass in order to enter the Secretariat building. Entry passes are to be requested for each person registered for the Conference through each country's permanent mission to the United Nations in New York.

23. Two kinds of passes will be issued, using different modalities: one for the Speakers, and another for other delegates.

24. Speakers of parliaments will be issued VIP passes. To obtain their passes, Speakers are requested to send three passport-size photos to their countries' missions in New York by no later than 30 July 2005. These passes will be made available to the permanent missions by the time the Speakers arrive in New York.

25. Members of parliaments and all accompanying persons in each parliamentary delegation will be issued with delegates' passes. They will need to obtain their photo passes directly from the United Nations Pass Office in New York. The number of such passes is expected to be large. To facilitate the processing of such passes, delegates are encouraged to arrive in New York by Sunday, 4 September. The United Nations Pass Office will be open as of Monday, 5 September. Delegates should contact their countries' permanent missions early Monday morning to seek appropriate guidance and assistance in order to obtain their passes. Delegations from countries that do not have a permanent mission to the United Nations in New York are invited urgently to contact the IPU Secretariat.

Entry visa into the United States of America

26. All delegates must have valid visas for entry into the United States of America. Representatives from countries that do not have diplomatic relations with the United States of America will have to approach the United States Mission in New York either directly or through their permanent missions. The United States Mission has been notified accordingly. Because processing times may take up to six weeks, visa applications should be submitted well in advance of the Conference.

Security

27. Security at United Nations Headquarters is the responsibility of the United Nations, which will apply its own regulations in this respect. One such regulation obliges all participants in the Conference to display their identity badges visibly upon entering and at all times while on the United Nations premises.

28. Armed bodyguards accompanying delegations require advance clearance from the United Nations Chief of Security and Safety Service. Otherwise, no undeclared firearm or deadly weapon is allowed on the United Nations premises.