

Inter-Parliamentary Union Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments

Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 7 September 2005, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Páez Verdugo (Chile)
Later: Ms. Kgosietsile-Mbete (Vice-President) (South Africa)
Later: Mr. Wu Bangguo (Vice-President) (China)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Opening of the Conference

1. **The President** declared the Conference open and invited participants to observe a moment of silence in tribute to the victims of Hurricane Katrina in the United States of America.

2. *The Conference participants observed a moment of silence.*

3. The Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments had four major objectives: to air the views of the representatives of popular sovereignty from all regions of the world; to take stock of parliamentary action in international affairs over the past five years; to consider how to increase support for international cooperation and the purpose and mission of the United Nations; and to help bridge the democracy gap in decision-making in international relations.

4. Since the first such conference, the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments held in 2000, the world had witnessed deplorable forms of terror and outrageous violations of fundamental human rights, and international law had been grievously ignored and undermined. As a result, there had been repeated calls for more structured world governance and for the establishment of stronger humanitarian and democratic guarantees.

5. Among the key questions to be addressed by the high-level plenary meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly was that of United Nations reform. The draft declaration to be adopted by the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliament expressed broad support for those reforms and encouraged all parliaments to debate the proposals presented to the Heads of State and Government and to encourage their respective Governments to give concrete form to those proposals, based on an understanding of the linkage between the four fundamental pillars of the international system: democracy, security, development and human rights.

6. It was time to establish a strategic partnership between the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations. The advent of globalization had given new and urgent meaning to efforts to promote international cooperation. Multilateral institutions and international negotiations had not traditionally been subject to parliamentary scrutiny, but IPU would work to ensure that parliaments were more involved in decision-making on subjects such as fair and free trade and the protection of the world's most vulnerable groups. IPU would propose concrete and practical actions for all legislators, and all parliaments were expected to ensure a deeper, more systematic, and more sustained involvement in international cooperation.

7. IPU had instituted its own reform process some years before, and visibility and political action were now key aspects of its identity. All Speakers of parliaments were invited to back the rhetoric of the draft declaration with

actions. IPU must increase its credibility among its constituents, orient its policy squarely and meaningfully towards the future, and let its actions be guided by solid ethical and moral criteria. It was to be hoped that the Conference would mark the beginning of a new and bolder relationship between the world's parliaments and multilateral organizations.

8. **Mr. Ping** (President of the General Assembly of the United Nations) said that on the eve of the high-level plenary meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, the presence of so many participants testified to the will of the world's parliamentary representatives to play an active role in the search for solutions to the problems facing the international community. IPU was to be congratulated in particular for its tireless efforts to strengthen cooperation between parliamentarians and the United Nations.

9. The goal of the Conference, which was to consider how to strengthen the action of parliaments on behalf of democracy and multilateralism, was a particularly welcome one, since the world leaders attending the high-level plenary meeting would be taking a number of important decisions regarding the future of the United Nations and world governance. Moreover, the General Assembly was engaged in difficult negotiations on a draft outcome document to be submitted to Heads of State and Government, which would hopefully reflect the broadest possible consensus on how to adapt the institutions of the United Nations to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

10. The great challenge for the United Nations was to reach agreement on how to ensure a more effective response by the international community to the world's need for greater development, peace, security, and human rights protection. Development must be recognized as fundamental to the wealth of societies. Although development was first and foremost the responsibility of individual States, it also required global partnership at all levels.

11. During the preparatory process for the high-level meeting, Member States had expressed their recognition of the importance of the Millennium Development Goals agreed at the 2000 Millennium Summit. However, the time had come to move from principles to actions. Extremely difficult negotiations continued to be held on important questions,

including development financing, debt, trade, South-South cooperation and many others. With respect to peace and security, a broad consensus had emerged on the need to take collective action in accordance with the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

12. In order to adapt the United Nations to its new challenges, the work of the General Assembly must be revitalized, the Economic and Social Council must be given the means to carry out its mission, the Security Council must be reformed, and the management of the Secretariat, which faced new and increasingly demanding challenges, must be modernized. Parliaments were the guardians of the interests of the world's peoples, and their support for the decisions to be taken by the Heads of State and Government at the high-level plenary meeting would be crucial to ensuring their implementation. The conclusions of the Conference would play a vital role in strengthening multilateral cooperation within the context of the actions of the United Nations.

13. **Mr. Dreier** (United States of America), speaking on behalf of the host country, said that the terrorist attacks of recent years, including the attacks of 11 September 2001 on the United States, had brought enormous changes for individuals, communities and nations. Such attacks targeted the core values of freedom and democracy embodied in the democratic parliaments represented at the Conference. There was another threat to lives and freedoms around the world: oppressive Governments which denied not only democratic rights, but also basic human rights. The common thread that ran through such regimes was the lack of a strong legislative check on executive power.

14. However, anti-democratic forces had been defeated before. Formerly communist countries had been transformed into some of the world's strongest democracies, and the key to that transformation was an effective legislature acting as a strong check on the power of the executive branch. In the early 1990s the United States had implemented a programme, known as the Frost-Solomon Task Force, to provide material and technical assistance to 10 developing Eastern and Central European parliaments.

15. A new wave of democratization was now sweeping the globe, as reformers threw off the

shackles of oppression. In response to that process, the United States House of Representatives would soon begin a new programme — the bipartisan House Democracy Assistance Commission — to strengthen democratic institutions by offering technical assistance to parliaments in emerging democracies.

16. The world's parliaments must work together to build bilateral and multilateral relationships, strengthening existing legislative exchanges and initiating new ones. They should also reach out to opposition parties working against intolerant regimes. Parliamentarians were uniquely positioned to contribute to the advancement of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and Conference participants could make great strides in achieving the promise of a more equitable and representative future for everyone around the globe.

17. **Mr. Johnsson** (Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that the Steering Committee wished to propose certain amendments to the draft declaration agreed by the Preparatory Committee for adoption by the Conference. The words "and with a sound basis for effective management reform" would be added to the first sentence of paragraph 4, and a new paragraph concerning human rights, good governance and the rule of law would be inserted after paragraph 6. The suggested amendments would be incorporated into the text and circulated to participants for their approval.

18. Two Speakers of parliaments had been unable to attend the Conference because of difficulties relating to the granting of visas by the United States authorities. That situation was unacceptable, and the Steering Committee had accordingly prepared a statement expressing outrage at the decision, for adoption by the Conference.

19. **The President** read out the draft statement and invited the conference participants to adopt it.

20. *The draft statement was adopted.*

Adoption of the agenda and rules of the Conference

21. *The agenda and rules were adopted.*

Presentation of the report on parliamentary involvement in international affairs

22. **Mr. Kéita** (Mali), Rapporteur, said that IPU had put a number of questions to Speakers of parliaments throughout the world in 2004 to find out to what extent and in what manner their parliaments had become involved in international affairs, in keeping with their millennium pledge. The IPU report entitled "Parliamentary Involvement in International Affairs" provided a compilation of the responses and showed that almost all parliaments — in developed and developing countries alike — had unique experience to share regarding their involvement in international affairs. Apart from the question of access to modern information technology, there were no obvious North-South divides. Broadly speaking, parliaments had reached different stages in moulding their procedures to the globalized agenda of the twenty-first century. In some institutions the changes were already operational, while in others they were still being debated. However, throughout the world, almost all were grappling with that task.

23. There was a myriad of institutional activities under way in the world's legislatures intended to enable them to manoeuvre closer to the multilateral arena. With only a few exceptions, parliaments had an important constitutional role in the ratification of international agreements. Interestingly, however, the responses showed that parliaments exerted only a limited influence on the ratification process. For example, parliaments rarely took action to accelerate ratification. On the other hand, once an international agreement had been ratified, they played a major role in enforcing implementation.

24. The digital divide separating the parliaments of the North from those of the South was an area that would benefit from considerable investment of time and resources by the international community.

25. Almost every parliament had reported on action taken to increase citizens' awareness of and involvement in parliamentary work. More systematic use was being made of outreach through delegations, committee hearings, videoconferencing, evidence-taking, submissions, petitions in all forms (increasingly in electronic form) and campaigns to solicit input from the public.

26. In regional terms, national parliaments in the European Union had an edge over others when it came to parliamentary oversight of international negotiating processes. European

decision-making in Brussels had obliged those parliaments to monitor such negotiations closely and to seek to influence them. No single model had been adopted to achieve that purpose: each parliament appeared to have chosen the mechanism that best suited its own political and parliamentary traditions.

27. In sectoral terms, multilateral trade negotiations were found to be in a class of their own, receiving almost universal attention from parliaments. In developed and developing countries alike, whether or not they were members of the World Trade Organization, parliaments made strenuous efforts to follow and influence trade negotiations. The trade programme developed by IPU over the past six years had evidently been of significant use to parliaments.

28. The Millennium Development Goals underpinned much of the work carried out in parliaments. Many parliaments in developed countries had included the Goals on their agendas and had adopted development strategies and policies that related to them, which they monitored closely. They had worked hard to meet some of the Goals, those relating to HIV/AIDS and gender being the most frequently cited. However, direct interaction with the international organizations concerned seemed to be sporadic.

29. It might be too early to seek to identify patterns and models on the ways in which parliaments were adapting to the challenges of an ever more globalized agenda. Clearly, however, a great amount of energy was being devoted to the issue and some particularly innovative mechanisms and arrangements were emerging.

Progress report on meeting the Millennium Development Goals

30. **Mr. Dervis** (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) recalled that in the year 2000 the international community had committed itself to the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals with a view to improving the lives of the world's people. While some progress had been made in certain areas, it was time to translate the promises made into concrete action and results. Money alone would be insufficient to achieve the development objectives set without support for the implementation of the policies and reforms required. In that respect, progress was needed at the forthcoming Doha round of trade talks,

which should adopt a development-oriented approach. The United Nations agencies also needed to coordinate their activities better by working together as a team to help countries to recover from conflicts, which were often linked to combating poverty. He therefore called upon parliaments to come together to strengthen their commitments to poverty reduction.

Presentation of the report on parliaments' contribution to democracy

31. **Ms. Sauri** (Mexico), Rapporteur, said that the preliminary report by IPU entitled "Parliament and Democracy in the 21st Century" was based on a framework which identified a set of values and principles relevant to parliament as well as the possible institutional mechanisms for putting them into practice. First, the framework conceptualized democracy, as practised by parliaments, as a network of relationships in which parliaments had a key representative role in mediating between the people, on the one hand, and the other institutions of governance, on the other. The key question in that regard was how well parliaments fulfilled that mediating role and how representative of the people they were in their diversity. Second, the framework conceptualized parliaments' contribution to democracy in terms of the following functions: law-making; approval of taxation and expenditure in the context of the national budget; oversight of government; ratification of treaties and monitoring of their compliance; hearing and redressing grievances; and approving constitutional changes. Third, the framework examined the set of values which governed the manner in which parliament operated and related to society. Democracy thus addressed issues related to accessibility and accountability to citizens as well as the transparency of parliamentary proceedings. The preliminary report contained information provided by some 70 parliaments on their institutional practices based on that framework. It also contained numerous examples of innovative mechanisms put in place by parliaments to cope with their evolving roles and emerging challenges.

32. The draft strongly upheld the principle that parliament must be representative, making a strong point for fair and inclusive parliamentary procedures as well as a consensual approach to the decision-making process. The report also emphasized the need for parliaments to be transparent, and thus more open to citizens, by

improving public access and removing barriers to media reporting. In addition, it focused on various modes of promoting direct contact among citizens and their representatives.

33. The report had given parliaments the invaluable opportunity to contribute to the defining principles and practices of democracy from their own experience, making it possible to achieve a broad consensus on the assessment criteria and the modalities for the implementation of those criteria in the context of universally agreed principles. It might also enable parliaments to correct their often negative image, which in many cases had contributed to public disillusionment with democracy. She looked forward to receiving many useful insights and examples of good parliamentary practices to enrich the report further and also hoped that parliaments would take ownership of the final product and promote its use.

34. *Ms. Kgosietsile-Mbete (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

General debate on parliaments and multilateral cooperation: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century

35. **Mr. Lipponen** (Finland) said that for almost a century, men and women in Finland had had both the right to vote and the right to stand for election to Parliament. Parliamentary democracy was vital to peace and well-being. Its absence from many countries was a cause of instability and human rights violations, including the right to free speech. Finland's Parliament, the Eduskunta, played a strong role in foreign and European Union policymaking, and its Special Committee on the Future stimulated public debate by reporting on topics such as the information society. Parliaments in the Nordic and Baltic countries cooperated closely. The Finnish Parliament had many other bilateral contacts, and was active in strengthening parliamentary networks and the parliamentary dimension of multilateral organizations, for instance by including its members in national delegations to global negotiations.

36. His delegation supported the United Nations reforms proposed by its Secretary-General, including broader representation on the Security Council. Reform of the Security Council should be designed to bolster its ability to act when global security was threatened. Military stabilization should go hand-in-hand with humanitarian assistance and

reconstruction. The Council's working methods should be more transparent, inclusive and legitimate. The European Union could play a more robust role in the Council, and European Union members with permanent seats in the Council should promote the Union's policies within it.

37. **Mr. Nzouba-Ndama** (Gabon) drew attention to the role of parliaments in representing the peoples of the world, and the importance of cooperation between national parliaments and the United Nations. He noted that, although representative democracy and market economy had taken hold everywhere, unfortunately the same could not be said of international peace and security. Conflicts of various kinds, human rights violations and excessive nationalism posed challenges to the United Nations in its irreplaceable role of maintaining international peace and security while promoting development. His delegation supported the proposals of the Secretary-General for reforming the United Nations, especially those aimed at bringing about more equitable representation and more democratic procedures in the Security Council. He hoped to see increased cooperation in future between the United Nations and regional parliamentary organizations, as well as IPU. He welcomed and endorsed the report of the Secretary-General, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), and expressed the hope that Africa would become a zone of peace where all conflicts could be settled by peaceful means.

38. **Mr. Wu Bangguo** (China) said that in the past 60 years human society had made significant progress in national independence, industrialization and economic development. Living standards were rising and there was a general consensus on pursuing peace, cooperation and development. However, both traditional and non-traditional threats to security posed challenges to lasting peace and sustainable development. Multilateral cooperation was vital to overcoming them, and that called for mutual trust and for mutual respect for the diversity in world civilizations, and for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations. People of all countries had the right to choose independently a social system and a path of development which suited national circumstances. The internal affairs of each country should be left to its own people to decide, and world affairs should be settled by all countries through consultations on a footing

of equality. Multilateral cooperation was a means of safeguarding common interests and addressing each other's concerns. Threats to security should be countered through a new security concept based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. Disputes should always be settled through dialogue and cooperation, never through the use or threat of force.

39. In stepping up multilateral cooperation, the aim should be to promote shared development through the Millennium Development Goals. The developed countries should fulfil their pledges of debt relief towards the developing countries, offer them more unconditional assistance and help them enhance their capacity for self-development. The international community should be more attentive to the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, and should propel the world economy towards steady and balanced development. It must adhere strictly to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, uphold the authority of the United Nations and the Security Council, and work at improving the efficiency of the Organization.

40. IPU should further reinforce its coordination with the United Nations. It should also increase its contacts with parliaments of all countries, strengthen its ties with regional parliamentary organizations, and improve the level of cooperation among regional parliamentary organizations.

41. China would continue to pursue an independent foreign policy geared to peace and development worldwide. Its National People's Congress stood ready to join parliaments of other countries in promoting all forms of multilateral cooperation in a sustained endeavour to build peace and prosperity.

42. **Ms. Szili** (Hungary) said that the new challenges emerging in a globalizing world must be handled through enhanced international cooperation, through the United Nations and through regional and parliamentary organizations. Despite occasional setbacks, the United Nations had achieved significant results and should be able to rely on the support and political will of all its Member States. The pattern of its future operations would probably be set by the forthcoming high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly. The European Union had played an active role in the preparations for

the meeting, creating an opportunity for advancing reform of the Organization through constructive dialogue with countries of the developing world and regional groups.

43. Following Hungary's accession to the European Union, its National Assembly had played the leading role, from July 2004 to May 2005, in coordinating the multilateral activities of parliaments in European Union member countries. The Speakers of 49 parliaments, including those of the western Balkan countries, had attended the annual meeting of Speakers of European Union parliaments, held in Budapest. As one of the nine founding members of IPU, Hungary attached great importance to its observer status with the United Nations, as a first step towards establishing a strategic partnership with the Organization. In the face of threats to society which no nation could overcome alone, multilateral cooperation and parliamentary dialogue were more important than ever. The World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments should become a regular quinquennial event at the United Nations.

44. **Mr. Weisglas** (Netherlands) said that Governments and parliaments must periodically adapt their working methods to new circumstances. Since 2002, it had become clear that the population of the Netherlands was no longer happy with the way democracy was functioning, and that the consensus model which had been adopted to ensure that all socioeconomic groups had a political party to represent them in parliament no longer seemed to answer their needs or reflect the tensions in society. Such a model made it too difficult for parties and parliamentarians to provide citizens with a longer-term vision of how the country and the world should be organized. It tended instead to focus on the issues which affected people on a day-to-day basis. The changes now being made in the Parliament of the Netherlands to address current needs were a cause for optimism, but he was concerned that parliaments in general were losing control over international developments to the international organizations which tackled specific international issues such as the environment and defence. National parliaments should increase their influence on decision-making in those international forums. He therefore welcomed the efforts by IPU to put together a framework of democratic principles and practices that parliaments could use to guide changes in their working methods.

45. **Mr. Kim** Won-Ki (Republic of Korea) said that, since the first Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments in 2000, the world had faced many new challenges, especially the war on terrorism. The increased pace of globalization had widened the gap between economies, and global warming together with reckless development had resulted in frequent environmental disasters. However, the past five years had also witnessed improvements in international cooperation, democracy and human rights. Remarkable support had been forthcoming from all over the world to countries hit by the 2004 tsunami. He was therefore convinced that the world could successfully overcome the numerous challenges it faced in the twenty-first century.

46. The will of the Korean people had not been shaken by 35 years of colonialism or by the subsequent forced national division, tragic fratricidal war and a series of cruel dictatorships. They had achieved astonishing economic growth, at the same time developing democracy, improving human rights and promoting social justice. The Republic of Korea had successfully played host to the 1988 Olympic Games and the 2002 World Cup and was in the vanguard of the revolution in information and communication technology. Parliamentary democracy was making great progress, and the wounds caused by national division were gradually healing.

47. However, tension ran high in Northeast Asia, a region crucial to international peace and security, and the Korean peninsula was still the world's only divided country. He had therefore made a proposal to North Korea for inter-Korean parliamentary talks, with a view to enhancing inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation and securing peace. The prospect of inter-parliamentary talks among the countries represented in the six-party talks — his own country, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the United States of America, China, Japan and the Russian Federation — was also being seriously considered. When the six-party talks reconvened shortly in Beijing, once the issue of nuclear disarmament of North Korea had been dealt with, discussion would begin on converting the present armistice into a peace treaty. Negotiations could soon follow on establishing multilateral peace and security regimes in Northeast Asia. The parliaments of the countries concerned must be proactive in ensuring that those efforts did not fail.

48. Regional and multilateral parliamentary democracy were especially significant in an era of participatory politics. For that reason, his delegation proposed setting up a special committee within IPU to foster solidarity in international parliamentary diplomacy. It would also be useful if the World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments could be convened at more frequent intervals than five years.

49. **Ms. Oogi** (Japan) said that, remembering the tragedy of 11 September four years previously and the terrorist incidents during 2005 in the United Kingdom, Egypt and elsewhere, her country would pursue the fight against terrorism with resolution. Japan was the only country in the world to have suffered atomic bombing, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and many people were still suffering from its after-effects. From its defeat in war, Japan had learned the importance of international cooperation and had been following the path of a peace-loving State. Parliamentarians everywhere should tell the world about the devastation inflicted by nuclear weapons and urge that it should never be repeated. She called on all countries to work to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and on those possessing nuclear weapons to strive for their ultimate abolition.

50. The second priority should be to eradicate poverty and correct regional disparities. In order to reach the Millennium Development Goals and alleviate poverty in Africa, parliamentarians should embrace the commitment of assistance to Africa which had been made at the G8 summit meeting in July. Japan intended to increase its official development assistance by \$10 billion over the next five years, while doubling assistance to Africa over the next three years and supporting self-help efforts by African countries. The House of Councillors of Japan had begun to monitor the Government's progress in implementing its assistance pledges.

51. The third priority was to address climate change in a framework of international coordination and to strive to formulate post-Kyoto rules for 2013 and beyond. During the past summer the Japanese Diet had set the temperature in its meeting rooms at 28 degrees Celsius, as an example of its commitment to the Kyoto Protocol.

52. Fourth, the reform of the United Nations deserved the support of IPU. IPU would, she hoped, transcend the stage of observer status at the General Assembly and contemplate specific

measures to strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations.

53. Lastly, as the first woman Speaker of Japan's House of Councillors in 60 years, she wished to close by recalling the message of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and emphasizing the importance of women's participation in politics and in the policymaking process.

54. **Mr. Teshome** (Ethiopia) said that the discussions at the Conference would feed into the high-level plenary meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. IPU provided forums for parliamentarians to debate and exchange experiences and national policies. Since the 2000 Millennium Summit at the United Nations, sustainable development had been the main issue on the international agenda, and building democratic institutions was seen as the basis for sustainable development.

55. Ethiopia had adopted poverty eradication strategies with the human person at the centre of its development priorities. His Government had called for additional aid delivered more effectively and for sustainable debt relief. It was strongly committed to the Millennium Development Goals and to reform of the United Nations. It saw the United Nations system as the cornerstone of the aspirations of all for a safer world.

56. *Mr. Wu Bangguo (China), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

57. **Mr. Ramírez** (Mexico) said that every Parliament had its own agendas, yet some issues, such as peace and relations between peoples, were best addressed together. Globalization had not resolved the inequalities in the world, and the main immediate task for the future was the development of new global relationships.

58. Another task that could not wait was fighting crime and corruption. Mexico, as a sending and transit country, wished to formalize agreements with other countries regarding the labour rights of migrants. It valued its relationships with its neighbours, but wished to defend the rights of its own citizens, wherever they might be located, as well as its international interests. Mexico was a democratic, tolerant and sovereign State with a strong national identity and wished to improve

the lives of its citizens while living out its commitment to international brotherhood.

59. **Mr. Romero Pizarro** (Chile) said that greater participation was the foundation and pillar of his country's Parliament. It had promoted a policy of participation in decision-making and transparency in the legislative process, after years of operating behind closed doors. The decisions of parliament must be taken within view of all and should be subject to citizen review. The reform of the Constitution which was under way in Chile would be the subject of public discussion and would be endorsed by a popular vote. That would provide a new opportunity to parliament to demonstrate that its commitment to transparency and participation went beyond words into action.

60. **Mr. Rakotomaharo** (Madagascar) said that, on the eve of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, differing views on the proposals for enlargement of the Security Council threatened to derail the entire package of reforms. However, it was clear that the United Nations was more essential than ever as a tool to deal with the proliferation of conflict in the world and the challenges of development. After the triumph of democracy following the end of the cold war, the amount of fragmentation and crisis had nevertheless been surprising. In that context, the international community must mobilize to affirm the values of multilateralism. The world's parliaments should join in the reflections on the reform of the United Nations system, thereby allowing IPU to play its role as the voice of the peoples and contribute to the concept of the future of the Organization.

61. The Conference took on particular significance in view of the fact that West Africa was currently host to the largest number of United Nations peacekeeping forces since the conflict in Korea, and that East Africa was also involved from the border of Eritrea to Burundi. It seemed appropriate to propose that such peacekeeping operations could be transferred to the authority of the newly-formed Peace and Security Council of the African Union, under Chapter 8 of the Charter of the United Nations. That would require training for both troops and officers, and Madagascar would be honoured to host a training centre for peacekeepers. In any case, it was ready to assist the family of nations in any activities to advance the cause of peace.

62. **Mr. von Sydow** (Sweden) said that the declaration to be adopted by the Conference was a balanced text that called for real responsibilities to be taken in support of the Secretary-General's proposals for reform of the United Nations and towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Swedish Parliament had taken its participation seriously and had seen that each national policy area had its own strategy towards achieving the Goals. A solid international effort was needed to arrive at a common policy on climate change, as there were too many negative examples of its effects to allow the situation to continue.

63. It would not be possible to say that democracy had been achieved in a country until men and women enjoyed equal opportunity. Parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, by being more active in the United Nations system, could ensure that the voice of the people was heard at the global level and that the commitments made to development were the right ones. Opposition members, too, should participate in global conferences of parliamentarians, and Governments should invite parliamentary representatives to participate in their delegations to international bodies.

64. **Ms. Udre** (Latvia) said that in the current age, it would be hard to imagine that an individual country could exist independently and be governed by laws which were not compatible with the general rules governing the development of the world and humanity. The parliament was the highest legislative body of a country; it embodied the sovereignty of the people. The purpose of law was to establish justice, among various social and religious groups, groups with differing opinions, between the majority and the minority.

65. In an age of globalization, the ultimate task was to ensure that the achievements of one individual, group or community did not cause other individuals or communities to sink into poverty. Parliaments were responsible for establishing the universal value of justice in their countries. In order to understand the universal principles to which parliaments should adhere in their work, inter-parliamentary cooperation must be intensified, through forums such as the Conference.

66. A priority task in the world was to eliminate the deficit of democracy, through mutual cooperation of all stakeholders by means of interaction among grassroots

movements, civil society, parliaments, donors, the media and the United Nations system. Political dialogue was an essential element for strengthening democracy, and parliaments had a specific role to play. They should become more open and accessible to citizens, so that it was clear what decisions had been made and why. Civic education, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by modern information and communications technologies, was of cardinal importance.

67. Latvia appreciated the value of international cooperation and dialogue. The experience it had gained could be useful to others, and it had already initiated assistance projects to help neighbouring countries establish a democratic civil society and strengthen their institutions. Closer contacts and cooperation among representatives elected by the people would play a decisive role in responding to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

68. **Mr. Gurirab** (Namibia) said that the mission of the Speakers and presiding officers of the world's parliaments at the Conference was to reiterate their firm and collective commitment to the principles and ideals that had inspired the founding of the United Nations sixty years earlier. In the 2000 Millennium Declaration, world leaders had echoed the shared desire to revitalize the United Nations; five years later, parliamentarians renewed their dedication to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the advancement of democracy and social justice. It was disheartening, nevertheless, that the world remained divided into mutually exclusive and hostile camps: the rich debated stem cell research, while the poor struggled to fill empty stomachs.

69. Global stability and human security were two sides of the same coin. A prominent section in the Millennium Declaration addressed the special needs of Africa, in particular poverty eradication and sustainable development. Debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced flows of official development assistance and foreign direct investment, as well as transfers of technology, would bring Africa into the mainstream of the world economy. As Speakers of parliament, participants in the Conference should redouble their efforts towards bridging the democracy gap in international relations and forging a stronger role for parliamentarians.

70. **Mr. Martin** (United Kingdom) noted that, although he was a non-political Speaker, he fully supported the principle of inter-parliamentary co-operation. Parliamentarians had much to learn from one another and could develop ideas from other parliaments to use in their own. Events such as the Conference could lead to strengthening co-operation between members of the world's parliaments. He drew attention to the role played by the House of Commons in international affairs. As it was in the interests of all for democracy to succeed, he welcomed the important work the IPU had done with emerging democracies.

71. Many countries and cities had faced international terrorism — London had recently joined New York City and Madrid in that group — but despite such attacks, it was important to defend the democratic process and to continue to make parliaments accessible to the citizens they represented. He tried to remember in the conduct of his duties that the Speaker served the House and its backbenchers, and by extension the people who elected its members, and not the Executive.

72. **Mr. Radi** (Morocco) said that the world in 2005 was more dangerous than it had been at the time of the previous Conference five years earlier. Despite scientific and technical knowledge, humanity still faced the consequences of disease, poverty and famine. The United Nations had been created “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”, and though there had been no world war, regional and local conflicts had proliferated, and collective security was threatened at all levels.

73. Action should be taken through IPU to assist the United Nations in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The need was greater than ever to take the initiative to reform and strengthen its role in international law.

74. **Mr. Gama** (Portugal) said that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals required measures in the areas of development aid, strengthening international peace and security and respect for human rights, as well as United Nations reform. The recent natural and human catastrophe caused by Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama was also a painful example of the urgency of the problems caused by climate change. Reinforcing peace and security also required a serious commitment to disarmament

and non-proliferation; he therefore encouraged the proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission, which could have a decisive role in stabilizing countries in situations of conflict. The planned strengthening of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the establishment of a new Human Rights Council would also make an important contribution.

75. The world of the twenty-first century needed a strong and active United Nations. There were no alternatives to multilateralism, and courage would be needed to reform the system in order to achieve more transparency, efficiency and democracy. The reform of the Security Council was under debate, and should result in increased transparency and authority. The multilateral system should be based on multi-disciplinary cooperation among international organizations, Governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector. Parliaments, as bodies of plural expression of the people's will, should have a fundamental role in following up the major issues before the international community in their national debate. A stronger parliamentary dimension in the cooperation between countries was fundamental to an international system based on law, freedom, security and development.

76. **Ms. Mbete** (South Africa) said that for the past eleven years, the South African Parliament had been at the centre of the evolution of the nation's multi-party democracy. In order for true democracy to flourish anywhere, the aspirations of ordinary citizens must find voice through parliaments, as a reflection of the will of the electorate. They must seek to uphold the values and principles of the constitution and laws of each country. For its first two years, South Africa's Parliament had also functioned as a constitutional assembly, adopting a constitution in 1996, which spelled out its duties and responsibilities.

77. In South Africa, the People's Assembly and the Women's Parliament had been among the most successful interactions with the public. Through those programmes, ordinary citizens from all provinces had direct contact with members of Parliament. Parliamentarians' ability to exercise oversight had also been strengthened by the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislature Act of 2004 which protected their freedom of speech and enabled Parliament to summon witnesses. The Parliament was

involved in the ratification of all international instruments and in ensuring that the country met its international commitments. It had been involved in the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into the current African Union, and would continue its efforts to help the Pan-African Parliament to be a true voice of the African masses.

78. On the eve of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly, the challenge faced by nations was global poverty and underdevelopment. She hoped that the outcome of that meeting would address the needs of the poorest.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.

Inter-Parliamentary Union Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments

Summary record of the 2nd meeting

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 8 September 2005, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Radi (Vice-President) (Morocco)

Later: Ms. Soruco de Salvatierra (Vice-President) (Bolivia)

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General debate on parliaments and multilateral cooperation: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century (*continued*)

Mr. Radi (Morocco), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

General debate on parliaments and multilateral cooperation: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century (*continued*)

1. **Mr. De Croo** (Belgium) recalled that, at the First World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, he had called for parliaments to play a greater oversight role with regard to the increasingly globalized activities of the United Nations. Given that the General Assembly was made up of representatives of governments, which themselves reflected the views of a majority of their respective parliaments, there should be greater awareness of that need.

2. He welcomed the opportunity to meet every five years with other Speakers of parliaments but stressed the need to justify before each parliament and before the citizens of the world, who were all affected by the actions of the United Nations, any decisions taken; it was important to be able to show that real progress was being made. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) provided an ideal forum for the exercise of parliaments' oversight role. Indeed, important issues could be raised at the Union's spring meeting for submission to the United Nations General Assembly the following autumn for further consideration.

3. It was to be hoped that the current Conference would achieve concrete results and ensure that IPU would be seen as the main forum for parliamentary oversight of

international activities. His Government was working towards the shared goal of greater oversight and greater information-sharing at the international level, but individual efforts on the part of States would not suffice. The merits of a greater collective oversight role for parliaments, exercised through IPU, must therefore be recognized.

4. **Mr. Al-Khurafi** (Kuwait) said that he welcomed the opportunity to meet at the Headquarters of the United Nations, an organization that aimed to promote peace and build a better world, but regretted that violence and suffering remained common and that the cultural divide between South and North, and East and West, continued to grow. It was therefore essential for the international community to cooperate to overcome obstacles and help build a better and more stable world, respectful of the human rights of all, in keeping with the numerous commitments made; that was a shared responsibility of both the developed and developing countries. There must also be an end to conflict and unilateralism, in politics and in trade. His Government would pursue its political reforms and called for continued reform of international institutions and for the establishment of a fair environment for international trade free of political influence and respectful of different cultures, as well as for debt relief.

5. The role of the United Nations in promoting peace and a stable world order must be reinforced. Its efforts must be complemented by cooperation with other international organizations, including IPU. Partnerships with civil society must also be encouraged with a view to promoting democracy, which was a basic goal for all

humankind. His own parliament had made great progress in promoting democracy, the role of civil society, the independence of the judiciary, democratic institutions and the role of women.

6. Turning to the issue of terrorism, he said that that phenomenon threatened world stability and security and was not unique to any one nation or creed. He categorically condemned terrorism and stressed the need for greater international cooperation to combat that scourge but cautioned that security operations should not be carried out at the expense of individual human rights. In order to adequately address the problem of terrorism, its root causes must be identified. Accordingly, the international community must promote good governance and the rule of law, encourage job creation and address the problems of the least developed and developing countries.

7. He regretted that the situation in the Middle East had for decades threatened international peace and security. No true progress would be possible unless the international community worked to achieve a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital. In addition, the people of Iraq must be supported in their efforts to establish a unified, independent and democratic country. All stakeholders shared the responsibility for ensuring success in political reform, because they would likewise also all suffer the consequences of failure.

8. **Mr. Ascencio Mansilla** (Chile) said that the current Conference was being held at a time when the international bodies established to promote democracy and human rights were in crisis and seemed to lack the necessary influence to ensure that their objectives were achieved. The international scene was dominated by other leaders, strategies and interests, and most countries were relegated to the role of simple observers. The United Nations itself was affected by that crisis, as evidenced by the summit of world leaders to be held the following week to address the issue of reform of the Organization.

9. It was therefore important for parliamentarians to cooperate through diplomacy to promote democracy and the

interests of their constituents. Bilateral efforts had been shown to achieve good results because the issues involved were often concrete and easily identified and evaluated; he noted, for example, his Government's bilateral relationships with Argentina and the European Union and similar efforts to promote better relations with Peru and Bolivia. His Government was also a member of numerous multilateral institutions but often felt that those institutions were not making concrete progress towards achieving their objectives, despite the large sums of money spent by them.

10. His constituents in Chile expected results from their elected representatives, as did all voters. Meetings such as the current Conference should serve as a forum for the exchange of legislative experience and provide an environment for political dialogue based on the search for innovative measures to share that diversity of experience and translate it into laws at the national level to promote employment, education, health and quality of life.

11. The Conference should identify relatively few goals, which could be implemented in good time. It should, for example, make a commitment to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. A standing committee should be established within IPU and within each parliament with a mandate to suggest ways of realizing the Goals, which reflected the most important task of the United Nations, namely, the eradication of poverty and inequality. It was important to stress the human dimension of the Goals and to take on only commitments that could really be met.

12. **Mr. Kaparo** (Kenya) said that the world was changing at an unprecedented pace. Globalization and technological advances in particular posed serious challenges for developing countries and, unless multilateral cooperation was mobilized to address that problem, the disparity between the developed and developing countries would be perpetuated. Parliaments had a front-line role to play in enabling citizens to understand and cope with the increasingly complex interconnections between globalization and their daily lives and in translating citizens' concerns into national and international policy.

13. International cooperation and decision-making could be seen as posing a threat to national or local interests and even to democracy. However, multilateral cooperation was an unavoidable reality, and multilateral initiatives provided an invaluable form of global governance. Increased multilateral cooperation had added new features and meaning to international relations, which were no longer limited to traditional diplomacy. Parliaments, which both shaped and reflected public opinion, had an important role to play in international relations, including an indispensable oversight role in guaranteeing rights and liberties, and must also be active participants in multilateral efforts in the economic, social and environmental fields.

14. It was important for parliamentarians to come together to take stock and to share information, experiences and lessons learned with a view to strengthening their national parliaments and parliamentary networks. Action to honour international commitments demanded the involvement of parliaments, and many issues addressed by parliaments at the national level had an international dimension. Furthermore, the experience gained at multilateral forums better equipped national parliaments and their members to actively press their respective governments to adhere to international instruments and ensure their implementation.

15. **Mr. Al-Mousawi** (Bahrain) said that he was proud to have participated in the reforms promoted by the King of Bahrain and embodied in the National Action Charter, which had been approved by more than 98 per cent of voters in a referendum. The committee that had drafted the Charter included both men and women, and 49 per cent of those who had approved the Charter in the referendum were women, which was unprecedented for the Middle East.

16. In accordance with the Charter, amnesty had been granted to political detainees; members of the opposition living abroad had been allowed to return home; citizenship had been granted to certain stateless persons; and greater freedom had been promoted for civil society through the authorization of trade unions, the adoption of the new Constitution and the establishment of constitutional monarchy.

The choice of a bicameral system provided balance and ensured an important role for the legislature in the reform process. The reforms had been designed to meet domestic needs and reflect the commitment of the King, who had a clear vision for the future.

17. In addition to political reform, legislative reform ensured that the population would be involved in decision-making. The Constitutional Court would ensure respect for the Constitution and constitutional guarantees of human rights and democracy. Human rights organizations had been authorized, and full rights had been granted to women, as evidenced by their participation in municipal elections. There were six women members of the Shura Council, as well as women ministers and ambassadors. A Supreme Council for Women had been established to plan further measures for the advancement of women.

18. **Ms. Benaki** (Greece) said that the vision of the United Nations for a better world was shared by the world's parliaments. Cooperation between IPU and the United Nations was therefore essential. In that connection, she welcomed the decision to grant observer status in the General Assembly to IPU, which would enable it to work in a more institutionalized and constructive way with the United Nations in dealing with problems of common interest. The United Nations, for its part, would become more aware of the parliamentary community's views and positions. In addition, IPU would bring a democratic perspective to the United Nations efforts and strengthen cooperation among its members.

19. In 2003, the Athens Group had developed principles to govern inter-parliamentary cooperation among the parliaments of the European Union. Fundamental principles should govern the work of every parliament: accurate representation of society, transparency, free access to parliamentary proceedings, effectiveness, and accountability to the electorate. Parliamentarians' close contact with citizens and their role as representatives of their respective parliaments gave them an additional responsibility in defending political and social institutions.

20. Greece, a small country with a rich history, had traditionally pursued a policy of friendly relations with other countries. Democracy, an idea born in Greece, tolerance, pluralism, dialogue, human rights and diversity were lasting values defended by the Hellenic Parliament at the national and international levels.

21. As the anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 approached, she wished to stress the importance of security, the strategic role of the Mediterranean and the effect of the continuing tension in the Middle East and the pending Cyprus question on international security. It was imperative for the international community to coordinate its efforts to combat the spread of terrorism. It also, however, had a duty to identify the root causes of that phenomenon and address them through democratic procedures, without jeopardizing progress made in the areas of political and human rights.

22. **Mr. Mwanamwambwa** (Zambia) said that the challenges of the twenty-first century required multilateral organizations to adopt a parliamentary dimension in order to promote a viable and democratic international system able to address the concerns of the international community. Parliamentarians, as elected representatives, would bring an important democratic element to multilateral bodies, while a parliamentary dimension in international politics would complement and support traditional cooperation among States. In that context, he stressed that multilateralism continued to be an indispensable instrument for achieving global consensus on important issues confronting the human race.

23. Zambia, like other African countries, faced many challenges, which were being addressed in cooperation with multilateral organizations. While there was not yet any legal provision giving the Zambian Parliament a mandate to scrutinize and ratify the Government's international commitments, measures had been put in place to enable parliaments to demand accountability in the context of development assistance and cooperation. Reforms had also enabled parliamentary committees to develop links with external organizations in order to strengthen their oversight role and encourage accountability

on the part of those organizations. In addition, workshops had been organized to familiarize members of Parliament with multilateral agreements.

24. It would be important for the current Conference to establish mechanisms for formal, regular contacts between multilateral institutions and parliamentary bodies in order to allow members of parliaments to make their contribution to multilateral agreements on behalf of the local communities they represented. That would rectify the existing democratic deficit in multilateral institutions and cooperation.

25. **Mr. Bonfoh** (Togo) stressed the Togolese people's commitment to building a peaceful democratic society in spite of the difficulties and obstacles encountered. His Government was working for national reconciliation, political and social dialogue, the return of refugees and the reintegration of displaced persons.

26. He regretted that little progress had been made since the adoption by the First World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments of the declaration entitled "The parliamentary vision for international cooperation at the dawn of the millennium". The challenges identified in that document remained just as relevant, and new challenges had been identified: tension and conflict continued to be widespread in Africa; the democratic processes begun in the developing and some emerging countries had led to political crisis; and the social insecurity caused by globalization was a source of increasing concern.

27. It was therefore fitting that the Second World Conference had identified as its theme "Parliaments and multilateral cooperation: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century". Parliamentarians and the international community must work together to create a world of peace and tolerance, a just and humane world. To that end, cooperation between the peoples and parliaments of the world within IPU must be strengthened. Cooperation between IPU and the United Nations must also be strengthened because in crisis situations parliaments should have available to them mediation mechanisms, including the sending of envoys to establish the facts and propose solutions. In addition, cooperation between parliaments and the United Nations would give parliaments input into

issues requiring an international commitment. IPU must be the cornerstone of such cooperation efforts.

28. Meetings such as the current Conference provided an invaluable forum for reflection, sharing of experience and parliamentary diplomacy. Participants should resolve to promote ever greater and more effective inter-parliamentary cooperation, with full respect for individual differences, and to work alongside the United Nations to face the growing challenges of the twenty-first century.

29. **Mr. Majali** (Jordan) said that his delegation welcomed the draft declaration agreed by the Preparatory Committee, which emphasized the vital contribution of national parliaments to meeting the challenges faced by the international community and the central role of the United Nations in promoting cooperation to resolve conflicts, combat poverty and achieve development in all its forms.

30. Regrettably, progress in the Middle East had been held back by six decades of Israeli occupation and repression, which had led only to misery, bitterness and despair. While his Government remained committed to achieving a comprehensive and just settlement in the region, in accordance with the will of the international community and decisions of international legitimacy, there could be no peace or hope in the Middle East until an independent Palestinian State was established with its capital in Jerusalem; the rights of the Palestinian people were secured, including the right of return; and Israel withdrew from the Syrian Golan and the Shaba'a farms. In addition, the occupation of Iraq must be brought to an end, while preserving that country's territorial integrity and checking the emerging sectarian tendencies.

31. His Government was pursuing its efforts to rid the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction and to ensure the application of the relevant international instruments. While it rejected terrorism in all its forms, it believed that terrorism must be distinguished from the legitimate struggle of peoples to restore their usurped rights. In Jordan, his Government was seeking to achieve sustainable development, implement political and social reform and establish democracy as a way of life for peoples and communities, while supporting

civil society organizations, which played a crucial role in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

32. **Mr. Sheikh Aden** (Somalia) said that his delegation's participation in the Conference marked Somalia's return to the community of nations. The Conference, which was taking place five years after the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, was a timely opportunity for Speakers of parliaments to articulate the will of the peoples their parliaments represented. His delegation welcomed the draft declaration agreed by the Preparatory Committee and endorsed the views expressed in the report "Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century" regarding the core institutional and political functions of parliaments. A stronger role for parliaments in bridging the democracy gap in international relations would depend largely on the capacity of national parliaments to perform their functions.

33. The inauguration of the Transitional Federal Parliament of Somalia had concluded a two-year National Reconciliation Conference and was the first step in the reconstitution of the Somali State. The process would continue in accordance with the Transitional Federal Charter adopted at the Conference. The national reconciliation process faced momentous challenges, including the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of militias and the rehabilitation and modernization of the physical infrastructure. Only when those tasks were accomplished would it be possible to put Somalia on the path to recovery and sustainable peace.

34. The Transitional Federal Parliament had been conceived as a central pillar of the reconciliation process. While the Parliament lacked resources and institutional memory, as the most representative national political body, it would have overall responsibility for ensuring the transition to final democratic institutions. Its development would determine the effectiveness of those institutions and the success of the entire reconciliation process.

35. **Mr. Almeida** (Angola) said that partnership among nations was an instrument of development. In that context, it was important for the international community to focus on issues that mattered:

guaranteeing human rights and fundamental freedoms; strengthening the rule of law; combating poverty, unemployment, exclusion, social inequalities and injustice; improving the situation of women, children and youth; protecting the environment; achieving sustainable development; promoting cultural and educational progress; and ending conflicts.

36. While his Government believed in the benefits of economic and political globalization, it recognized that those benefits had been unevenly distributed, exacerbating the marginalization and exclusion of communities, countries and regions. The international community must therefore make a concerted and systematic effort to lay down rules for the new international system and counter the emerging threats to peace and security, which, in a globalized world, escaped the control of States. The United Nations constituted a forum in which those challenges could be addressed in partnership with regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations. His delegation looked forward to the holding of the forthcoming High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, which represented an important step in that direction.

37. Parliamentary diplomacy was growing in importance as countries became increasingly interlinked. Parliamentarians had a responsibility not only to reflect the concerns of the people they represented, but also to bridge diverging views through dialogue. Multilateral cooperation could, and should, contribute to overcoming the prevailing insecurity and building a safer world with the human being at its centre.

38. **Mr. Dorje** (Bhutan) said that the National Assembly played a crucial role in the life of Bhutan. That role was set to increase as a result of the political reforms currently being implemented. A drafting committee had prepared a constitution for the Kingdom, which had been distributed to the people in March 2005 and posted on the Internet. There would be extensive public consultation, after which the draft constitution would be adopted by referendum.

39. The world was changing rapidly with the emergence of new challenges and opportunities. Yet the United Nations remained the best hope for ensuring global

peace and stability and promoting a more equitable international order. Parliamentarians could contribute significantly by working closely with the Organization. His delegation therefore welcomed the granting to IPU of observer status in the General Assembly and trusted that the current Conference would lead to further meaningful cooperation between national parliaments, IPU and the United Nations. It was to be hoped that humankind would see a new era of peace and prosperity. In furtherance of that goal, his Government advocated development that not only promoted economic growth, but also advanced the well-being of citizens.

40. **Mr. Hays** (Canada), Speaker of the Senate, said that, since the First World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments in 2000, the world had witnessed terrorist bombings, tragic natural disasters, regional conflicts and famine. No country was immune from tragedy and violence. It was therefore essential for peoples and nations to communicate, share ideas and discuss common responses to the challenges they faced.

41. The current Conference was an opportunity for Speakers of parliaments to have constructive exchanges regarding their roles and responsibilities, particularly in the field of international relations. By sharing expertise and, above all, creating personal bonds, they would be in a position to foster better inter-parliamentary relations and ensure that their parliaments contributed to the promotion of democracy and good governance and improved understanding among nations. He noted, by way of example, the efforts under way in Canada to achieve a rapprochement with the Muslim world through exchanges with parliamentarians in Muslim countries, including a recent visit to Indonesia.

42. Canada's parliamentarians participated in 12 international parliamentary associations, as well as a number of international friendship groups. In addition, in their role as parliamentary diplomats, the Speakers of the House of Commons and the Senate met and interacted with most of the 120 heads of mission residing in Ottawa, enabling them to establish networks and achieve greater insight into world events.

43. Conferences of parliamentarians enhanced the participants' understanding of

the operation of parliamentary government and reinforced their conviction that no other system provided such a high degree of efficiency, fairness and flexibility to the management of human affairs. Lastly, he emphasized that one of the prerequisites for the conduct of both politics and diplomacy was the spirit of conciliation.

44. **Mr. Milliken** (Canada), Speaker of the House of Commons, said that parliamentary diplomacy was an important complement to traditional diplomacy, since parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, enjoyed democratic legitimacy and, hence, wide influence, and could give voice to the views and concerns of the electorate. As Speaker of the House of Commons, in addition to receiving foreign dignitaries and leading delegations of parliamentarians to visit their counterparts abroad, he also participated, in the course of such visits, in informal meetings with representatives of non-governmental organizations, chambers of commerce, journalists, academics, students and other interested persons. Those meetings, too, constituted parliamentary diplomacy, for international relations were forged through a broad range of contacts.

45. The Canadian Parliament was eager to share its knowledge and experience. In 2003, the first parliamentary cooperation seminar had taken place: representatives of Parliament had travelled to several African countries, organizing seminars for parliamentarians and officials at which they had described how Canadians govern themselves. Exchanges such as the seminars and the current Conference allowed parliamentarians to converse about their ideas and about the challenges their societies faced. Through that dialogue, they could add much to what were already fruitful relationships.

46. **Ms. Ergma** (Estonia) said that, in the globalizing postmodern world, the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs was becoming obsolete, for events abroad could have a very immediate impact at home. It was therefore vital for humankind to pursue common goals: peace and security, respect for human rights, good governance, poverty reduction, disease prevention and sustainable development. While there had been progress towards those goals in the five years since the Millennium Summit, much remained to be done.

47. The international community could not find real solutions to the problems of today and tomorrow by following outdated models of multilateral cooperation. Recognizing that fact, regional and international organizations, including the United Nations, had begun to restructure their work. In that connection, her Government supported the entire reform package proposed by the Secretary-General, particularly the establishment of a Human Rights Council and a Peacebuilding Commission.

48. One of the most important aims of multilateral cooperation was the promotion of the traditions of parliamentary democracy, including the holding of free and fair elections. Electoral monitoring missions could have a very positive influence in that regard. She noted, by way of example, the mission organized to monitor the third round of presidential elections in Ukraine, in which members of the Estonian Parliament had participated. The experiences and impressions with which parliamentarians returned from such missions enabled them to see domestic problems in a different light and to understand that their decisions could have an impact far beyond their countries' borders. It was important for them to take an interest in and responsibility for issues that seemed distant at first glance because, in the postmodern world, everything was connected.

49. **Mr. Christofias** (Cyprus) said that, 60 years after the defeat of fascism, the world was still caught in the throes of wars, social injustice and poverty. While the system built on the ruins of the Second World War had placed the United Nations and its Charter at its centre, the stark reality was that decisions taken within that framework were often not implemented and international law was constantly being undermined through the pursuit of narrowly perceived national interests and the use of military and economic might by powerful countries. If States sincerely wished to strengthen international peace and security and ensure respect for human rights, they must abide by international law and United Nations resolutions. That commitment must also guide their efforts to find solutions to such long-standing international problems as the situations in the Middle East and Cyprus. Parliamentarians, for their part, must spare no effort to ensure that Governments acted

collectively to reassert the authority of the United Nations and the primacy of international law. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005) and believed that the reform of the United Nations must remain a priority.

50. Hundreds of millions of people were still trapped in absolute poverty, particularly in the developing countries. Yet multinational companies continued to make huge profits in those countries by exploiting their natural resources. In such conditions, it was imperative for all States, especially the rich ones, to adopt policies that took due account of the Millennium Development Goals. While initiatives to alleviate the debt burden of heavily indebted poor countries and establish more equitable financing and trade mechanisms were welcome, they were not sufficient. In future, the major world actors must place the human being at the very core of their activities. Success in combating poverty would contribute to eliminating one of the root causes of terrorism, as well as promoting respect for fundamental human rights.

51. **Mr. Rivlin** (Israel) said that, in 2005, as nations across the globe had marked the sixtieth anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany, the same message had echoed over and over, "Never again". Today, democracy was under threat from the scourge of global terrorism and, as Israelis had learned long ago, it had not only the right, but the duty, to defend itself. Terrorism targeted the democratic world and the precious values of freedom and human rights because it regarded those values as heresy. At the same time, it sought to exploit those values in the most cynical way in order to undermine the very existence of democracy. Regrettably, many countries refused to draw the necessary practical conclusions from that sad new reality and turned a blind eye to terrorism so long as it did not strike in their own backyards.

52. Combating terrorism was an unpleasant task involving the use of methods that might appear harsh, but counter-terrorism was very different from conventional law enforcement because conventional crime was not aimed at destroying democratic societies. Legislators were finally beginning to understand that

distinction and were granting their Governments the appropriate legal tools to fight the war on terror within the boundaries of the rule of law. Much, however, remained to be done. The United Nations could begin by defining terrorism as a crime against humanity, a basic step that had not yet been taken. National parliaments, for their part, must join with international organizations in combating terrorism, and all nations must remain true to their pledge that tyranny and terror would never again prevail.

53. **Mr. Somavia** (Director-General of the International Labour Organization) said that unemployment had risen by 25 per cent in the past 10 years and that more than 40 million jobs would have to be created annually during the next decade to cover the increase in the world's labour force. More seriously, youth unemployment rates were three times greater than those for adults. IPU, the Bretton Woods institutions and the specialized agencies should therefore work together to make job creation a priority.

54. The International Labour Organization was currently helping many Governments set up national employment programmes. Speakers of parliaments could make an important contribution to the success of such efforts by ensuring that all social, macroeconomic and investment policies were centred around job creation and by promoting investments that had a strong impact on employment. At the international level, they could help ensure fair treatment in the areas of trade, access to markets, migration, debt management and support for workers displaced by world production systems. They could further contribute by working with international organizations to promote quality growth favouring job creation, investment and initiative. Most importantly, they could ensure that their Governments focused on reducing youth unemployment, which would add US\$ 2.2 billion to the world economy.

55. **Ms. Meyer** (Switzerland) said that her Government expected the United Nations to deal with the major challenges facing the world today. Development aid to the poorest countries must be increased and improved; the fight against AIDS must be maintained; and efforts to counter climate change must be intensified. Other priorities included the reinforcement of international

law through the International Criminal Court and the defence of human rights. At the same time, counter-terrorism and efforts to combat proliferation must be stepped up, while progress towards peace between Palestine and Israel and in Iraq must continue.

56. Her Government attached great importance to democracy and good governance. It was particularly proud of Switzerland's popular voting system and decentralized administration. Since its founding, the Swiss Confederation had seen 533 popular votes at the constitutional and legislative levels. Although each country needed to define its own political system, nothing could justify tyranny and corruption. Good governance was achieved when the different levels of government exercised their power efficiently and responsibly; an independent, accessible and impartial judicial system was also essential.

57. Lastly, her Government would support any measure aimed at remedying the democracy deficit in international relations, including giving a stronger role to democratic national parliaments.

58. **Mr. Paulauskas** (Lithuania) said that active parliamentary diplomacy was needed to create a more peaceful, democratic, prosperous and just world. Each country needed to ensure good governance at home and to assist the international community by sharing its experience of promoting democracy, strengthening respect for human rights and the rule of law, and ensuring genuine participation by all its citizens in the governing process.

59. His Government fully realized the significance and benefits of its involvement in international organizations and was striving to promote democracy in cooperation with other countries, at all levels. The Lithuanian Parliament played an active role in foreign policy and was ready to foster cooperation between IPU and the United Nations so that other countries might establish and consolidate their democratic processes.

60. **Mr. Lima** (Cape Verde) said that his Government urged IPU to become more involved in the United Nations efforts to promote good governance and democracy, including through the creation of global public policy committees composed of members of parliament from different

countries. It also believed that a stronger relationship between the United Nations system and national parliaments should be encouraged so that they could work together to solve "global internal policy" issues and execute the different cooperation programmes financed by the United Nations system.

61. Cape Verde was cooperating with various United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme, which had provided financial assistance for the elaboration of studies on parliamentary reform. The Cape Verde Parliament had included development issues, especially those relating to the Millennium Development Goals, in its working agenda.

62. With respect to United Nations reform, special priorities included collective security for all; the promotion of human rights and democratic law, in keeping with the imperatives of globalization; and stronger multilateralism and cooperation.

63. **Mr. Balopi** (Botswana) said that genuine global development and security required a strong, reformed United Nations. The Organization urgently needed to address such ills as extreme poverty, hunger and HIV/AIDS. Recent studies had shown that, unless drastic action was taken, Africa would not achieve all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

64. For its part, the Parliament of Botswana continued to ensure sustainable, people-centred economic and social development and consistent adherence to democracy and good governance. On the economic front, the Southern African Development Community had sought to harmonize policies and foster joint economic development. Regional plans to tackle food shortages, HIV/AIDS and civil conflicts had also been put in place. Nevertheless, greater efforts were urgently required to enhance multilateral cooperation through negotiation forums at the national, regional and continental levels.

65. **Mr. Biruta** (Rwanda) said that there had been significant progress in Rwanda since the First World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments in 2000 and in the 11 years since the 1994 genocide. His Government had initiated a comprehensive reform of the legal system, including the

establishment of a series of *gacaca* courts, in which private citizens could participate directly, the aim being to promote justice and national reconciliation.

66. With respect to democracy and good governance, a new Constitution had been promulgated and pluralist presidential and parliamentary elections had been held in 2003. Several good governance institutions were also operating successfully, including an ombudsman's office and a national human rights commission. Those institutions were accountable to Parliament.

67. Given that social and economic development could not be achieved without peace and security, the Rwandan Parliament had launched a number of regional parliamentary initiatives aimed at supporting efforts to re-establish peace in the Great Lakes region. Furthermore, Rwanda was proud that, only 11 years after the genocide, it was able to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security in other African regions, within the framework of the African Union and the United Nations.

68. His Government firmly believed that democracy would remain threatened unless it was given an economic and social context. In that respect, the Millennium Development Goals should serve as a road map for the achievement of human development everywhere. Lastly, his Government endorsed the draft declaration of the Conference and would support any initiative aimed at strengthening the role of parliaments at the international level.

69. **Mr. Valéri** (Monaco) said that Monaco's institutions were founded on solid and long-standing democratic values. However, the Principality's true image continued to be distorted owing to baseless accusations concerning money-laundering. His Government wished to point out that, in 1993, Monaco had established legislation criminalizing money-laundering, in accordance with international norms, and was cooperating fully with other nations to suppress it.

70. With respect to the country's institutional structure, the Government was appointed by the Head of State and was accountable to him, while the Parliament voted on national laws and on the budget and was elected by the people. Its role had been strengthened in 2002, when it was

accorded greater power to both initiate and amend legislation. Although the system was not a parliamentary regime, it was nevertheless based on democratic values. In fact, few other countries had such a broad internal consensus concerning their institutions. Furthermore, Monagasques enjoyed "immediate democracy" in that they were close to their elected representatives, both geographically and personally.

71. **Mr. Kaboré** (Burkina Faso) said that international relations had changed profoundly since the creation of the United Nations in 1945, with national and international parliaments now figuring among the major actors. However, parliaments could not aspire to replace Governments but only to supplement government action and add new dimensions.

72. In order for parliaments to fulfil their new role effectively, three conditions must be met: first, each parliamentary assembly must be truly representative and sovereign; second, parliaments must highlight the central concerns of peoples, which, for countries in the southern hemisphere, included sustainable development, debt reduction and HIV/AIDS, as well as the global priorities of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and good governance; third, international parliamentary organizations must become the institutional response to the new brand of international relations.

73. The democratization of international relations and the participation of the people in debates and decisions concerning their future hinged on the establishment of a more fruitful relationship between the United Nations and IPU.

74. **Mr. Ghani** (Yemen) said that, following reunification, the Yemeni legislature had embraced democratic and economic reform. Freedom and human rights were now flourishing: there were more than 20 political parties and over 4,000 non-governmental organizations, and women enjoyed unprecedented equality with men. Special strategies had been adopted in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals.

75. His Government supported United Nations reform, which would enhance the Organization's programmes. There was an

urgent need for practical measures whereby rich countries could support poor ones. Such measures should include not only assistance with meeting immediate needs but also the transfer of technology to those countries and the cancellation of their debts so as to help them achieve sustainable development.

76. His Government had consistently rejected terrorism in all its forms and would do its utmost to fight it but would always distinguish between terrorism and the defence of human liberty.

77. Tensions in the Middle East would persist until international legal decisions were implemented, Palestinians were able to establish their own independent State and the occupied territories of Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic were returned to them. In Iraq, the Government must work for independence and sovereignty.

78. **Mr. dos Santos** (Vice-President of the European Parliament) said that, in his report on reform of the United Nations, the Secretary-General had declared the need for new mechanisms to make international institutions accountable to their members. Accountability was the key to progress; where it was lacking, there would be failure. In order to meet the challenges it faced, the international community must rely on multilateral efforts. Such efforts required effective and credible institutions whose decisions were perceived as legitimate. In the European Union, that principle was reflected in its Parliament, which was elected by direct universal suffrage. The role of the Parliament was expanding, although in some areas intergovernmental procedures were still predominant, and the distance between Governments and their citizens remained significant.

79. With regard to United Nations reform, the European Parliament supported the Secretary-General's proposals and agreed that security could not be separated from economic and social development, respect for human rights and environmental protection. Concerning the Security Council, it was clear that its membership no longer reflected the present state of the world and that the number of developing countries represented in the Council must be increased. The European Parliament had expressed support for a common European approach with respect to the possible

allocation of additional seats to some of its member States. As to the General Assembly, it must revitalize its links with civil society, including by establishing a parliamentary assembly of the United Nations to formulate recommendations. In that connection, the European Parliament supported the call in the draft declaration for a strategic partnership between IPU and the United Nations.

80. Other international forums also required greater democratic legitimacy. In the area of international trade, for example, the European Parliament, together with IPU, had launched a debate among parliamentarians from across the world, thus demonstrating its commitment to free and fair trade, sustainable development and the fight against poverty. Five parliamentary conferences of the World Trade Organization had been held thus far.

81. Lastly, regarding the Millennium Development Goals, the European Parliament had introduced in the budget of the European Union, specific criteria to ensure that community programmes furthered the achievement of the Goals. It had also encouraged member States to set more ambitious targets with respect to official development assistance.

82. **Mr. Rojo García** (Spain) said that for centuries relations among the peoples of the world had been characterized by controversy and conflict. The Second World War had left two apparently contradictory legacies, the atomic bomb and the establishment of the United Nations, both born of that conflict and both considered to hold out hope for an end to conflict. The United Nations had in fact played a positive role, and the twentieth century should be remembered for the affirmation of universal human rights, as well as great advances in technology, science and medicine.

83. Although the United Nations had not been able to put an end to military confrontation, it had limited the scope of war by encouraging the resolution of conflict through dialogue. Parliamentarians, as representatives of their citizens, knew how important it was to transmit to future generations the notion of a human community where men and women of different cultures could share their experiences and achieve mutual understanding.

84. The major challenges of the new millennium would be to satisfy the shared desire for well-being, overcome obstacles such as tyranny and guarantee access to knowledge, learning and information. The international community must seize the opportunity to give itself the tools to meet those objectives by strengthening institutions, promoting dialogue among religions, bringing civilizations closer and affirming that a better world was possible. To that end, parliaments should join in multilateral efforts in the social, educational and cultural fields and help promote dialogue and the spirit of freedom which made universal understanding possible. The United Nations and its agencies also had a major role to play.

85. Although his own country had suffered the effects of fascism and terrorism, for more than 30 years it had provided an example of how the desire for democracy and peace could succeed in overcoming any threat. Just as there were moments when States had to rise to meet the challenges facing them, the United Nations too must meet the challenge of ensuring full implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Parliamentarians, whose work was based on dialogue and cooperation with a view to achieving consensus, could help realize that objective and create a new world reality based on the empowerment and fulfilment of all humankind.

86. **Mr. Konoplev** (Belarus) said that globalization processes must be made manageable so that all countries could benefit from them. Integration of States in the world economy depended on harmonization of their national economic policies with the global rules of the game, which were primarily market-oriented. Belarus, and many other States, linked attainment of that objective with membership of the World Trade Organization. The Belarusian Parliament was taking active measures to amend national economic legislation so as to ensure broader access for foreign goods, services and investments to the domestic market. Consequently, the Belarusian economy already operated in conditions to close WTO standards. In return, Belarus expected to be admitted to membership of WTO on equal and fair terms.

87. Regrettably, the development of regional and subregional cooperation often failed to take due account of the interests of third countries. The tactics of economic deterrence used by the European Union against Belarus were a case in point. Nevertheless, Belarus was investing considerable resources in international programmes to combat transnational organized crime, flows of illegal immigration and terrorism, making it a net donor of security in the interests of other countries. Because of its geopolitical position, Belarus could serve as an important link between the economic regions of Europe and the East. It was a predictable and reliable partner, ready for increased mutually advantageous cooperation.

88. The development of democratic institutions was an important means of implementing the Millennium Development Goals. However, some countries abused the issue of advancing democracy and human rights to promote their own political ambitions. His Government supported increased international parliamentary cooperation based on the principles of mutual respect and equal partnership. Parliaments could make an important contribution to the preservation of the world's cultural diversity and the settlement of ethnic, national and religious disputes that could lead to terrorism and international conflict. Inter-parliamentary cooperation could also help prevent ecological disasters and eliminate their consequences. It was to be hoped that the final declaration of the Conference would reflect a new vision of the role of parliaments in addressing current global challenges and promoting constructive international cooperation.

89. **Mr. Nnamani** (Nigeria) said that parliamentary democracy was now strongly rooted in Nigeria and was being strengthened through the development of quality infrastructure and human resources. Nigeria was committed to the ideals and objectives of IPU, which it had rejoined in 1999.

90. One of the key challenges to be addressed through multilateral cooperation was reducing poverty and insecurity. The crisis of poverty in the world could only be effectively addressed through a legislative framework that committed national

governments to the global agenda constituted by the Millennium Development Goals. The Goals challenged the international community to invest abundant resources to overcome hunger and indignity everywhere in the world.

91. The Nigerian Parliament recognized that official corruption and fiscal indiscipline denied the State vital financial resources to improve welfare outcomes for the poor. It had therefore enacted laws setting up an anti-corruption commission and a financial and economic crimes commission. Those laws would encourage sustainable economic growth, thereby contributing to poverty reduction. The Parliament was also providing the legal framework for the development of a medium-term expenditure framework that took account of the Millennium Development Goals. The purpose was to ensure that scarce financial resources could be channelled towards identified drivers of poverty reduction like education, health and social infrastructure. His Government had designed a comprehensive reform programme which the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund considered capable of engendering economic growth in Nigeria. Parliament oversaw the implementation of that programme.

92. The secretariat of the Nigerian Parliament was preparing reports from IPU conferences and working committees to guide Parliament in enacting laws to protect human security in a globalizing world. Parliament was considering an anti-terrorism bill that would align Nigeria with the global consensus against terrorism. His Government was seeking to learn from other countries how to combat terrorism, while maintaining respect for human rights.

93. In the light of the inequalities and democratic deficits in the global political system, it was commendable that IPU was being repositioned and, more importantly, that the United Nations was proposing significant reforms, especially of the Security Council. Granting two permanent seats to Africa would be a good start and would reflect Africa's increasing involvement in the promotion of world peace. The challenge before the Conference was to strengthen the relationship between the United Nations, its specialized agencies and national parliaments, so that the voice of the unheard could be

heard. The Nigerian Parliament, for its part, would continue to work with other national legislatures, IPU and the United Nations, in the quest for a more socially, economically and politically stable and prosperous world.

94. **Ms. Burdjanadze** (Georgia) said that parliaments not only constituted the bedrock of democracy in their respective countries, but also the building blocks of global modern democracy. The United Nations recognized a number of fundamental principles as the underpinning of modern international law and civilized relations and as the basis for the realization of a truly democratic and just international order. They included the sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity of States and protection of and respect for human rights. While every parliament wished to implement those basic principles, the world was burdened with separatism, terrorism and crime. By drafting and adopting good laws, parliamentarians could champion the cause of good against evil. However, they must not only enact laws and ratify international treaties but also fulfil their oversight function to make sure that Governments followed those laws and treaties.

95. It was impossible to build and strengthen democracy and protect human rights without achieving national stability and security. While parliament played a decisive role in conflict resolution, the international community must also do its part. In that connection, she called for greater international involvement in the peace process in the two conflict zones in Georgia. Conflicts persisted in Georgia because of double standards. Rather than turn a blind eye to the problem, the parliaments of the world, along with IPU, must ensure adherence to a single set of standards established 60 years earlier. They must build bridges, share know-how and help establish a more comprehensive global understanding of the challenges that threatened to hinder the democratic developments taking place in formerly oppressed regions. Most importantly, parliaments must ensure that international organizations upheld the primacy of international law. In particular, situations in which a State recognized the territorial integrity of a neighbouring State but then annexed part of its territory and gave support to separatists could not be

tolerated. She was convinced that, through concerted efforts, the international community could achieve a more just and secure peace in the world.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

Inter-Parliamentary Union Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments

Summary record of the 3rd meeting

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 8 September 2005, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Páez Verdugo (Chile)
Later: Mr. Nzouba-Ndama (Vice-President) (Gabon)
 Ms. Oogi (Vice-President) (Japan)
 Mr. Al-Khurafi (Vice-President) (Kuwait)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Address by Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

1. **Mr. Annan** (Secretary-General of the United Nations), recalling that the first World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments had been held just days before the Millennium Summit, said that once again the international community was looking to the World Summit for important decisions on the full range of issues before the United Nations. That was not to say that no progress had been made in the past five years. There had been important progress in development, including unprecedented support for the Millennium Development Goals, and the United Nations was keeping the peace in more places than ever before, helping war-torn communities around the world to build lasting peace and sustainable democratic institutions and taking the lead in coordinating and providing humanitarian aid in many countries. Such contributions should not, however, blind the international community to the full extent of the challenges it faced: over a billion people still lived in extreme poverty and 20,000 died from preventable causes every day; terrorism affected all parts of the world and was made even more dangerous by the failure to check the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; large parts of humanity were affected by civil war; and human rights and democratic values continued to be trampled underfoot in too many countries.

2. While the collective responses to many of those challenges were inadequate, it was also in the international community's power to change that. Economic growth and technological advances had provided the

resources needed to tackle problems, while advances in knowledge and understanding, combined with exchange of ideas among governments, academic experts and civil society, had created a shared vision of many of the strategies and priorities required. The World Summit was an opportunity to put that vision to work, with significant advances in development, security, human rights and institutional reform. While negotiations on the draft outcome document had been difficult, the Member States had underlined their desire for a strong outcome. He very much hoped that they would be able to finalize a document that included a clear and agreed strategy to halve poverty in the next 10 years; new action to combat terrorism, build sustainable peace, protect human rights and prevent genocide; and important institutional reforms of the United Nations. Such changes must include further management reforms of the Secretariat to help restore staff morale and public confidence in the Organization's integrity and effectiveness.

3. Whatever was achieved at the Summit, the next few days were only the beginning, as States would need to turn immediately to the task of implementation. After all, the ultimate value of the process would be measured by its impact on the peoples of the United Nations. It was in their daily lives, in their safety and security, in their prosperity and sense of opportunity, that progress would be most visible and setbacks most keenly felt. The engagement of parliamentarians was therefore vital in terms of focusing political attention on the reform agenda, encouraging governments to engage with good will and follow through on commitments, bringing citizens into close contact with the process and ensuring that their concerns were heard. Parliamentarians

were the embodiment of democracy and, by engaging with the United Nations, they made it more democratic, too. They also often controlled the purse strings in their respective countries. Their decisions could therefore help determine whether States made available the resources that the Organization needed to be effective. For example, one reform being discussed was designed to ensure that United Nations agencies had guaranteed funds within three or four days of a sudden humanitarian emergency, without having to wait for donor responses to flash appeals. He therefore appealed to participants in the Conference to support and contribute to a revised Central Emergency Revolving Fund, which would help ensure that those in need were reached more reliably and in time to save more lives. It was to be hoped that, should participants convene in another five years, the international community would have made measurable progress in modernizing its institutions and building a freer, fairer and safer world.

4. *Mr. Nzouba-Ndama (Gabon), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

General debate on parliaments and multilateral cooperation: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century
(continued)

5. **Mr. Lytvyn** (Ukraine) said that the world's destiny in the twenty-first century depended heavily on the role of parliamentarianism. Where that role was reduced to window dressing, freedom and democracy ended. Where voices, particularly those of the minority, remained unheard, fear and destitution prevailed and the danger of social collisions and authoritarianism grew. While representatives of the executive power were frequently tempted to react hastily and harshly to the challenges and threats of globalization, such "one-person" decisions were not necessarily the best solution, especially when parliaments were excluded from the decision-making process. As the highest representative bodies, parliaments could galvanize public will and find the most effective ways to resolve and, more importantly, prevent internal discord and international conflicts. When tension in Ukraine had reached a critical point in late 2004, for example, the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) had embarked on constructive dialogue and found a politically legitimate solution to the crisis, averting large-scale civil conflict in the centre of Europe. Inter-parliamentary cooperation in such situations was extremely valuable.

6. While it was impossible to predict the challenges of the future, the international community needed to forecast as accurately as possible what the world might be like by the middle of the twenty-first century and take the necessary preventive measures. Parliaments must make a real contribution to such an exercise. His delegation supported the draft declaration entitled "Bridging the democracy gap in international relations: a stronger role for parliaments", particularly its provisions on addressing the most dangerous threats, provided that such action was taken collectively and within the framework of the United Nations system. It believed that the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century would not diminish but would increase in all areas, as the global network and interdependence between countries grew. The Parliament of Ukraine had ratified 12 international counter-terrorism treaties in the past five years and was convinced that the creation of international norms should remain a priority in the context of cooperation between the United Nations and parliaments in order to consolidate international efforts to combat terrorism. He welcomed the enhanced role of regional and continental inter-parliamentary associations and called for consideration to be given to establishing a worldwide integrated parliamentary system.

7. **Mr. Casini** (Italy) said that it was time to provide parliamentary diplomacy with content. Such was the request of citizens, whose need for representation extended beyond national borders. Everyday occurrences now had global consequences. International politics was therefore the new frontier of parliamentarianism. The world had undergone profound changes in the five years since the first Conference. A brand of fundamentalist terrorism had emerged, which sought ostensibly to provoke a clash of civilizations, but was in fact an attack on human civilization as a whole because it undermined beyond repair such fundamental values as free and democratic coexistence, tolerance and peaceful progress. It was therefore important to reject the logic of the clash of civilizations and instead promote dialogue between the world's cultures and religions. That was the only way of overcoming the prejudices and falsehoods used by terrorism to form its disruptive design. Parliamentary cooperation played a key role in that task by identifying joint working tools and developing strong and unifying ideals and values.

8. In the light of continuing social and economic imbalances in the world, opening up markets was a priority objective. Unless the dominant positions established by means of protectionism and economic nationalism were eliminated, a number of good initiatives, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), ran the risk of remaining a dead letter.

9. Some 40,000 parliamentarians sat in the legislative assemblies belonging to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), devoting their efforts to the promotion of peace, solidarity and development within the framework of multilateral cooperation. Those present at United Nations Headquarters were reminded not only of the unbreakable bond between IPU and the United Nations, but also of their unease at the insufficient consideration they had been given thus far. It was unthinkable for IPU to be regarded as any other non-governmental organization. Parliaments were the source of the institutional legitimacy of the very governments making up the United Nations. IPU must therefore be the parliamentary interface of the United Nations. In the twenty-first century, the United Nations must be both an intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary organization. Lastly, he noted the important role of women parliamentarians and the need for a new alliance between North and South, a task to which parliaments were better suited than any other institution.

10. **Mr. Kosmo** (Norway) said that the increased demand for democracy in international affairs and better conditions for the poor was a positive trend, as it put pressure on parliamentarians to be increasingly engaged in international politics. While welcoming the draft declaration's focus on the role of national parliaments in international affairs, he said that parliamentarians must also work through international parliamentary forums. He firmly believed that consolidating existing forums was preferable to creating new ones, since international parliamentarians could be more forceful if they worked through assemblies that were well established and already known to their governments and electorates. A number of new initiatives in the international parliamentary arena should be channelled through IPU, which was one such assembly. For IPU to strengthen its role, it must recognize that it could improve. For example, it needed to make itself more relevant to the United Nations by choosing topics more directly linked to the Organization's agenda. With regard to working procedures, participation and capacity,

his delegation supported the draft declaration's invitation to IPU to avail itself of the expertise of members of standing and select committees of national parliaments.

11. Turning to the forthcoming High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, he said that parliamentarians must not lose their focus on development issues and the Millennium Development Goals. Rich countries must continue to aim for the goal of allocating 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to development assistance, and commitments made in that respect must be fulfilled. Work on innovative financing mechanisms must complement, not replace, existing development assistance. United Nations reform was necessary to improve the efficiency of human rights work and enhance the Organization's role in settling conflicts and building peace. Enlargement of the Security Council would enhance its legitimacy and should be welcomed, for it was crucial that the world body for peace and security was perceived as being representative of the different peoples and regions of the world.

12. Lastly, climate change had already affected natural resources and wildlife in the north and would cause further suffering if appropriate action was not taken in time. The indigenous populations of the north were particularly vulnerable. While the Arctic States had a particular responsibility to avoid damage, they could not act alone. The different challenges facing the populations of the world could only be met with understanding — and assistance — from the entire international community. The current Conference was one means of achieving such understanding.

13. **Ms. Lizin** (Belgium) said that it was important for the Conference to put forward concrete proposals. First, it should encourage the United Nations to follow the example of many other international organizations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe, by establishing a genuine parliamentary assembly. In that regard, those present should urge the representatives of their respective executive branches to strengthen the somewhat weak reference to IPU in the draft outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting. Second, while democracy and good governance were mutually reinforcing, it was not enough to simply organize regular elections. Funding was also needed to ensure that elected representatives enjoyed health insurance and pensions, which in turn would help prevent the evolution of bad governance

and corruption. Such funding was already available in some countries, but was still very limited or non-existent in developing countries. Lastly, each year IPU could draft a framework law on a key United Nations topic — such as violence against women — with a view to its adoption by as many parliaments as possible.

14. **Mr. Stevens** (United States of America) said that events such as Hurricane Katrina, the largest natural disaster in the history of the United States, highlighted the need for parliamentarians to try to understand the problems facing individual nations and the world and to seek to develop the international support required to deal with them successfully. No one could predict where help would be needed tomorrow, but the international community must do more to anticipate and prepare for crises. In 2004, as Chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, he had created the Subcommittee on Global Climate Change and Impacts and the Subcommittee on Disaster Prevention and Prediction to assist with such efforts. While the causes of global climate change could be debated, the effects could not be ignored. Nations must share their scientific knowledge and resources to adapt to the new reality and, where possible, prevent events such as Hurricane Katrina and the violent storms on the Alaskan coast from becoming full-blown disasters.

15. The nations of the world must also work together to confront the threat of terrorism. It was to be hoped that meetings such as the current Conference would convince parliamentarians around the world to review what was being done to eliminate global terrorism and assure freedom. If left unchecked, the threat of terrorism could become the scourge of the twenty-first century. He applauded the commitment of the Americans serving in Afghanistan and Iraq to preserve and protect freedom, and thanked those States that had sent troops or assisted with reconstruction efforts. The twenty-first century presented great challenges which, as in the past, would be overcome only by nations working together. The next chapter of history would then be written by free nations, not by those living in fear of terrorists.

16. **Mr. Donnelly** (Chair, fifty-eighth annual DPI/NGO Conference) said that the DPI/NGO Conference was pleased to work in partnership with IPU in strengthening and providing more support to the United Nations. Indeed, as the theme of the fifty-eighth annual DPI/NGO Conference “Our Challenge: Voices for Peace,

Partnerships and Renewal” indicated, the Conference, like IPU, was hoping to act with civil society as a catalyst, protector and promoter of democracy. The DPI/NGO Conference was unconditionally committed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In that regard, he suggested that the Conference, together with its partners, should promote a decade of compliance with the commitments already undertaken and declare that what was needed was greater partnerships rather than new resolutions. Above and beyond the millions of dollars generated, NGO investments in the global community were aimed at further developing the awesome capacities of the countless millions of people and communities around the world and ensuring that their voices were heard. He urged members of IPU to continue to raise their voices and to hold governments to their promises.

17. **Lord Brabazon of Tara** (United Kingdom) said that it was useful to distinguish between multilateral cooperation between parliaments themselves and multilateral cooperation between governments which parliaments monitored. The House of Lords played a very full part in international parliamentary cooperation, particularly in conferences and study visits organized by IPU or by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and made every attempt to respond positively to invitations to participate in ad hoc conferences sponsored by United Nations bodies. Both Houses of Parliament sent delegations to many international parliamentary assemblies, including the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, collaborated extensively with parliamentarians of other European Union member States and were involved in capacity-building projects of various kinds in emerging democracies.

18. Turning to the role of parliaments in scrutinizing multilateral cooperation activities of governments, he noted that the House of Lords Select Committees on the European Union, on Economic Affairs and on Science and Technology frequently conducted inquiries involving issues of multilateral cooperation like globalization and climate change. The House of Lords also drew on its members’ high level of expertise and knowledge of foreign affairs to hold Government ministers to account in debate on the floor of the House. Debates were regularly held on all aspects of multilateral cooperation, particularly on development and trade issues, and on many of

the important themes underlying the Millennium Development Goals. In October, the House would debate a recent report published by its Select Committee on the European Union on the European Union's role at the forthcoming High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. The Select Committee strongly supported the Secretary-General's reform document entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005) and his reform package.

19. The role of many Speakers of parliaments, including those of the two Houses of the United Kingdom Parliament, was apolitical and largely procedural and administrative. Since they were unable to take positions on policy issues, he, like the Speaker of the House of Commons, would be unable to take part in the vote on the draft declaration. While international meetings of Speakers of parliaments could be valuable, he wondered whether it would not be better if, when the subjects to be addressed related to important policy matters of international concern, parliaments were represented by their members, drawn from the full spectrum of political opinion, rather than by their presidents.

20. **Mr. Bounou** (Comoros) said that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was the main focus of the agendas of both IPU and national parliaments. His country, was just emerging from a protracted institutional and political crisis. A new parliament had been recently established in 2004 following a democratic and transparent electoral process. Within a few months, it had enacted the bulk of the legislation provided for by the Constitution, thus contributing to the country's recovery and to the strengthening of the national reconciliation process. That had led to the resumption of international cooperation with the country's development partners, including negotiations with the Bretton Woods institutions. Furthermore, the Comorian Parliament had just adopted a bill on the family code which would considerably improve the status of women and children by providing them with better protection.

21. Progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals was mixed mainly owing to the failure to honour international commitments, especially with respect to official development assistance (ODA) to the poorest and most vulnerable countries; indeed, ODA had continued its steady decline of the 1990s. The standard of

living of an unprecedented number of countries had fallen sharply. For example, more people were suffering from hunger in 11 sub-Saharan countries than 10 years previously. In order to reverse that trend, parliamentarians had to use every bit of influence they could bring to bear as representatives of the people in mustering support for the Secretary-General's proposal for a new world partnership for development. Lastly, he appealed to the international community to support the pledging conference that his country would be organizing at the end of the year in Mauritius to mobilize the necessary resources for strengthening national reconciliation and development.

22. **Mr. Al-Abrach** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the parliaments of the world should contribute to the strengthening of international peace, stability and security and that the United Nations should carry out its tasks under the Charter. The People's Assembly of the Syrian Arab Republic believed in the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and the importance of dialogue in international relations and respected the right of peoples to self-determination. However, it condemned unilateral sanctions imposed by some countries against other countries, including the Syrian Arab Republic, since such sanctions ran counter to the basic principles of civilized behaviour, international law and the Charter of the United Nations. They also had an adverse impact on the economic and social development of the countries affected.

23. It was only by undertaking genuine and democratic reforms that the United Nations could dispel the perception that it was weak and used double standards with respect to the implementation of resolutions — implementing those resolutions that did not anger Israel while allowing that State, which occupied large swathes of Arab land and denied Arab citizens their basic human rights, to ignore those it deemed detrimental to its interests.

24. The Syrian People's Assembly strongly condemned international terrorism and supported the Syrian leadership's position thereon. Efforts to combat that scourge should be based on international cooperation stemming from legitimate international resolutions. In that regard, an international definition of terrorism should be drawn up under the auspices of the United Nations. Such a definition should differentiate between terrorism and the right of peoples to resist foreign occupation, as enshrined in the Charter and the principles of international law.

Furthermore, the root causes of international terrorism, including oppression, foreign occupation and poverty, must be addressed. It was also vital to eliminate weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East. In that regard, the Syrian initiative submitted to the Security Council on behalf of the Arab Group in December 2003, which was blocked by a certain country in order to protect Israeli interests, needed to be revived. Lastly, he urged rich countries to fulfil their obligations under the Millennium Declaration to assist developing countries in implementing their poverty eradication programmes.

25. **Mr. Arinç** (Turkey) said that national parliaments should place far more emphasis on efforts aimed at bringing the peoples they represented closer together and promoting a culture of reconciliation that would put an end to disputes and conflicts causing rifts among countries. The common values and principles embraced by humankind were far more powerful than any religious or cultural differences. Violence, fanaticism and terrorism had no place in any religion or culture. Indeed, the only way to bequeath a peaceful, prosperous and stable world to future generations was to usher in a climate of reconciliation based on an effective, constructive and sincere dialogue that would counteract the prejudices, animosities and polarization being promoted by radical groups. In that regard, his delegation fully endorsed the proposal submitted by Spain to the General Assembly the previous year for an alliance of civilizations. That initiative was a source of hope at a time when the world needed increased tolerance, understanding and constructive dialogue more than ever.

26. National parliaments should make special efforts to eradicate the democracy deficit in international relations. Success in that regard would make a valuable contribution to peace and security, reconciliation and tolerance. Accordingly, national parliaments must strongly support the reform agenda set forth in the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all". They should also make a special effort to ensure that their peoples better understood and provided further support to the United Nations.

27. In its approach to international issues, the Turkish Grand National Assembly had always been an ardent and constructive supporter of the United Nations, in which it had full confidence. Turkey was determined to give steadfast support to the ever-increasing

requirement for global reconciliation, stability, peace and security. Its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the term 2009-2010 underscored that approach. The mission of parliaments was to transform the hopes of the peoples they served into reality; accordingly, it was vital for the forthcoming High-level Plenary Meeting to fulfil the expectations of parliaments and the peoples they represented by taking concrete decisions.

28. **Mr. Nguyen Van An** (Viet Nam) said that inter-parliamentary cooperation in all its aspects had contributed to United Nations efforts throughout the world. Various forums, including the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Conference and the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, had been convened to boost the coordination of action on global and regional issues within the IPU framework. Close ties and cooperation between parliaments and governments at all levels had also contributed greatly to the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals worldwide. Despite the efforts of the international community, the world continued to grapple with challenges and uncertainties that could threaten the common development of humankind. While globalization created opportunities for nations to promote trade and cooperation, it also widened the development gap, leaving many countries facing the risk of marginalization.

29. He recommended that the Conference should consider establishing an inter-parliamentary partnership for the Millennium Development Goals. Such a partnership would enable IPU member parliaments to build capacity and share their experiences in supporting and urging governments to deliver on their commitments to the Goals, including their commitment to increase ODA, provide debt relief and promote foreign direct investment. IPU member parliaments should also support and monitor governments as they conducted multilateral negotiations aimed at promoting peace, security, cooperation and development.

30. In response to dramatic changes in the world, the United Nations, in its sixtieth year, needed to reform itself to become a more effective instrument in pursuing the noble goals and fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter. Such reform should focus on measures to increase democracy and transparency in the Organization's work and strengthen the central role of the General Assembly. In that regard, a strengthened partnership between the United

Nations and IPU would contribute to the Organization's efforts to reform itself. Noting that the Vietnamese people had successfully implemented a comprehensive poverty reduction and growth strategy and made progress in almost all areas pertaining to the Millennium Development Goals, he said that such achievements would have been impossible without the valuable support and assistance of the international community. Lastly, he reaffirmed the Vietnamese National Assembly's resolve to participate actively in inter-parliamentary cooperation with a view to achieving peace, stability and sustainable development.

31. **Mr. Requeijo Gual** (Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations) said that the commitments made at the Millennium Summit remained distant goals yet instead of evaluating the implementation of those commitments, as originally intended, participants in the forthcoming High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly would be considering a so-called reform of the United Nations which, far from making the Organization more democratic, sought to make it even more subject to the will of its most powerful members. The preparations for the High-level Plenary Meeting had highlighted the arrogance of those who believed themselves to be masters of the Organization and who turned their backs on the problems of humanity. Conference participants should reject any distortion of the meeting's original goals and the priorities for the international community should remain the eradication of hunger, malnutrition, poverty and illiteracy, the protection of the environment and natural resources, and the promotion of healthy living conditions and development for the third world.

32. It was essential that the lies used by some to perpetuate an unfair and irrational world order be replaced with truth, in order to avoid leading the world to catastrophe. The Iraq war, so costly for both the Iraqi and American peoples, had been justified on the grounds of the fight against terrorism yet those who had undertaken the Iraq war refused to extradite Luis Posada Carriles, a confessed terrorist, to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for trial and continued to keep five anti-terrorist fighters in maximum security confinement despite the recommendations of an expert panel of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and a decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. Moreover, the Government of the

United States supported anti-Cuba terrorists, who operated in that country with total impunity. He therefore reiterated the urgency of establishing a new world order based on justice, solidarity and freedom, failing which future generations would be cursed with a legacy of chaos and death.

33. *Ms. Oogi (Japan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

34. **Mr. Bensalah** (Algeria) said that his delegation supported the Secretary-General's efforts to reform the United Nations, an organization which, rather than merely reflecting the balance of power around the world, should genuinely reflect the desire of the world's peoples for peace, security and development. The biggest challenge for the United Nations was to develop the capacity to resolve the major problems confronting the world: armed conflicts, terrorism, natural disasters, epidemics, chronic diseases, the fight against poverty, and the promotion of development.

35. The reform of the United Nations must not be limited to the enlargement of the Security Council. The reforms should also seek to increase the Council's credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness, and the process of democratization within the Organization should embrace all its institutions and agencies, including the General Assembly, which must be granted broader powers. Above all, the United Nations must enforce its resolutions, notably those relating to the question of Palestine and to Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories in Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon, and those relating to the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

36. The United Nations should also continue to strengthen its relations with NGOs and civil society. His delegation welcomed the strengthening of the relationship between the IPU and the United Nations and would encourage the development of similar relationships with regional parliamentary organizations around the world. National parliaments, for their part, must monitor the implementation of United Nations resolutions designed to foster peace, security and cooperation.

37. **Mr. Pacheco Osoria** (Dominican Republic) said that the theme of "Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century", to which one of the reports before the Conference was devoted, was very relevant to the political affairs of the countries of Latin

America. Although it was received wisdom that citizens of those countries had lost confidence in democratic institutions, political participation through elections and political parties had become virtually universal. More than any other democratic institution, parliaments provided space for reflection and the exchange of ideas and experiences concerning society's most pressing issues.

38. The act of legislating had become more complex than before because a greater range of interests and groups must be reconciled in order to achieve a consensus. Consolidating democracy required strengthening a culture of mutual responsibility between citizens and institutions. Just as legislators must carry out their mandates and remain accountable to the electorate, citizens must know their rights and respect the legitimacy of their public bodies and elected leaders. Democracy and parliament were the mainstays of a system based on cooperation in which all parties sought to resolve conflicts by exchanging ideas, while respecting the right to debate and the dignity of the citizen.

39. **Mr. Djibril** (Cameroon) said that the cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations provided a powerful tool for building a more just, peaceful, democratic and prosperous world. However, five years after the Millennium Summit, the international community must show greater determination to make the required changes. Intentions were not enough; the construction of a more just and prosperous world would require greater political will and a spirit of consensus. The problems of debt, development aid and access to Western markets for products from countries of the South remained the major concerns.

40. Although the decisions of the recent Group of Eight Summit were significant, they were far from meeting the expectations of the developing world. The governments of developed countries should therefore continue their efforts to meet at least the recommendations of the Commission for Africa. It was time for the international community to recognize that without solidarity among nations, it was illusory to believe that the other challenges — peace, security, democracy and respect for human rights — could ever be achieved.

41. **Mr. Tabone** (Malta) said that the commitments entered into at the Millennium Summit were more vital and urgent than ever. Security and development were intertwined. Indeed, the past five years had brought an

unprecedented rise in terrorist activity, which threatened the values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The world was also faced with a growing religious divide, an issue that IPU, in cooperation with other international institutions, including the United Nations, should consider more deeply. In that context, he welcomed the proposal for an alliance of civilizations that would bring together Western and Muslim nations with a view to overcoming misunderstandings.

42. Equally relevant and important were issues such as the environment, maritime cooperation and organized crime, particularly the traffic in drugs and human beings. With regards to the latter, he highlighted the problem of illegal immigration that had reached crisis proportions in Malta. He urged IPU to consider organizing an event similar to the high-level dialogue on international migration and development to be held by the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

43. Parliamentarians were well positioned to help make sure that governments kept their promises, whether in the political, economic or social sphere. In that regard, the proposal to establish a United Nations Democracy Fund to assist countries in establishing or strengthening democratic government, as set out in the Secretary-General's report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", was very welcome.

44. **Mr. Novitsky** (Belarus) said that, in the context of efforts to consolidate the international legal framework, it was absolutely essential to strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation. It was also crucial to enhance the global security system, and Belarus had taken many significant steps towards that goal over the past five years. Parliamentarians must also demonstrate effective policy integration with respect to terrorism and adopt realistic legislation capable of responding to that threat. Inter-parliamentary cooperation should play a role in establishing a legal framework for the suppression of illegal migration and drug trafficking. His Government had taken practical measures to address those issues, with the cooperation of international institutions and other States. It was time for the international community to establish a comprehensive strategy for responding to the new challenges and threats to the independence and integrity of States.

45. **Mr. Alasgarov** (Azerbaijan) said that, since regaining independence in 1991, Azerbaijan had taken significant steps towards the

establishment of democracy and the rule of law. The elections to be held in November 2005 would mark a decisive stage in that process. However, although Azerbaijan based its own relations with other countries on the principles of peaceful coexistence, good-neighbourliness, respect for sovereignty and non-intervention in internal affairs, Armenia continued to occupy 20 per cent of its territory and to ignore the will of the international community, as expressed through the relevant Security Council resolutions. His Government remained committed to the peaceful settlement of the conflict, for full regional cooperation and development in the South Caucasus could be achieved only through lasting peace, based on international law and on the principles of the inviolability of borders and the territorial integrity of States.

46. **Mr. Lejaha** (Lesotho) said that parliament was the arena in which national politics were conducted, public issues and policy options were debated, and binding decisions were taken. Legislation was the pure manifestation of the democratic process. The role and functions of parliaments were therefore central to the role of democracies and systems of government. Parliaments faced many challenges. They were no longer simply the setting for the debating of issues, but must also be part of their solutions. Parliaments around the world should therefore play a greater role in international affairs and should work together in an effort to improve the lives of their peoples.

47. The Parliament of Lesotho faced an immense problem in trying to deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic and wished to thank the United Nations Development Programme and other international institutions for their assistance in that regard. As part of a major programme of parliamentary reforms, it was also trying to ensure equal participation by men and women in parliament and was committed to ensuring broad public participation in parliamentary democracy.

48. **Mr. Šeks** (Croatia) emphasized the need for stronger parliamentary involvement in the decisions of international organizations. The Croatian Parliament supported its Government's efforts within the United Nations to contribute to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. The Goals were closely linked to Croatia's own strategic development and to the reforms set in train to obtain full membership for Croatia in the European Union. Formerly a recipient country of a United Nations mission, Croatia now

contributed to more than half the peace operations dispatched by the Organization. International cooperation, including cooperation between parliaments at the global, regional and subregional levels, played a vital role in combating the global problems of terrorism, poverty, hunger and disease, and in addressing the security issues resulting from them.

49. **Mr. Bhalakula** (Thailand) said that there was a need to strengthen inter-parliamentary organizations within their appropriate roles, so that they could cooperate effectively with international organizations. International issues were no longer the reserved domain of the executive branch of government. Parliamentary organizations monitored the work of international organizations and cooperated with Governments in contributing to them. IPU was now seeking to establish links with the United Nations in as many areas as possible. Many problems, such as poverty eradication, terrorism, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings, were shared by all countries. That being so, there was no need for ideological confrontation within inter-parliamentary organizations. Instead, they should be offering guidelines to solve common problems, such as converting debt to equity to help alleviate the financial burdens of developing countries, or preparing legislation along the same lines to combat terrorism and trafficking.

50. Democracy involved the participation of the people in many areas of the decision-making process. It also gave citizens the right to receive accurate information, as well as the right to freedom of expression. In addition to working more closely together, IPU and other parliamentary organizations should make room for individual citizens, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the press to play a greater role in their work.

51. **Mr. Jordanovski** (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that national parliaments should play a greater role in international forums and in international relations generally. Through dialogue and cooperation, international parliamentary organizations could do much to help resolve conflicts. In South-East Europe, the process of building stable and democratic societies was still fragile. His Government was committed to creating a climate of understanding, tolerance and cooperation as a basis for overcoming conflict, suppressing organized crime and terrorism, and establishing lasting stability and security in the region. The Republic's Assembly

had been actively involved in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration and in building cooperation with regional and international institutions and organizations.

52. **Mr. Van der Linden** (President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) said that the Parliamentary Assembly was the driving force behind the Council, most of whose decisions originated in resolutions of the Assembly, which had also inspired the adoption of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Assembly was completely independent of the Committee of Ministers, the intergovernmental organ of the Council. It had insisted from the outset that in order to represent the peoples of the member countries, delegations from national parliaments must be chosen from parties of the opposition as well as from majority parties. Regional parliamentary organizations looked to the Assembly as a source of inspiration. It had recently concluded a cooperation agreement with the Pan-African Parliament, and the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace had taken it as a model for a future Asian parliamentary assembly. As for the United Nations, he was convinced that greater involvement of national parliaments in its work would enhance its legitimacy and permit closer follow-up of its decisions. IPU would be playing a key role in introducing a parliamentary dimension in the work of the United Nations.

53. **Mr. Nguema Owono** (Equatorial Guinea) said that since 1991 Equatorial Guinea had had a well-established system of pluralist democracy. Its parliament, the Chamber of Deputies, was elected at five-year intervals. It was receiving support from the European Union and from IPU to develop its democratic institutions, and its Chamber of Deputies worked alongside the Government to secure the country's integrated development, with special emphasis on education, health and human rights. He appealed to the international community to put a stop to the mercenary elements from abroad that were attempting to destabilize the country. Governments could not be changed through violence, only through the will of the people.

54. **Mr. Gryzlov** (Russian Federation) expressed support for greater involvement by national parliaments in international relations. In the State Duma, the Power chamber of the Russian Parliament, 67 groups of deputies maintained contacts with foreign parliaments. Russian parliamentarians participated in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the

Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as in the work of IPU. They also took part in the activities of inter-parliamentary bodies in the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

55. The Russian Parliament recognized the role of the United Nations in strengthening stability and security in the world and addressing key regional and global issues. Moreover, it was from that standpoint that the Russian Federation approached the difficult and important question of reforming the United Nations Security Council.

56. Over the past decade, the Russian Federation had been making progress towards building a democratic society. The Russian Constitution guaranteed the separation of powers and the independence of both chambers of Parliament. Russians were aware that the role of parliaments was not only to legislate, but also to establish and strengthen democratic institutions. The Russian Parliament ensured that decision-making on key issues of national policy was thoroughly transparent. It had passed laws on political parties, on elections and on the establishment of a mechanism to enable a high level of public scrutiny of the authorities. In 2004 both chambers had ratified the Kyoto Protocol, a vital instrument in solving the problem of global warming. Members of the Russian Parliament continually called for joint efforts, including in the parliamentary sphere, to fight international terrorism, and they counted on active support from other parliaments. He looked to the United Nations to prepare and adopt universal legal instruments providing specific measures to combat that scourge.

57. **Mr. Nin Novoa** (Uruguay) expressed regret that parliamentary representatives from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Cuba had been prevented from attending the Conference through an administrative ruse. His own delegation included the Speaker of the House of Representatives, who for the first time in history was a woman. Since October 2004, also for the first time, a leftist and progressive force had commanded a majority in the Government and Parliament of Uruguay. Uruguay was committed to peace, freedom, democracy, transparency and security, and also to gender equality. It looked to international organizations to secure the peaceful settlement of disputes and for help in tackling poverty and violence, the main victims of which in Latin America were women and children. With regard to trade, it was essential to secure free

entry to the world's markets for the produce of the developing countries, both food and manufactured goods, and to abolish the subsidies that kept them out.

58. **Ms. Soruco de Salvatierra** (Bolivia) said that for 23 years, following a series of dictatorships, her country had been a democracy governed by the rule of law. Its people looked for peaceful solutions to their problems, and especially for justice for the poorest. Significant changes had taken place in economic and political terms, but the country's social problems had still to be tackled, and that was why the people were now challenging the prevailing systems. Because of the macroeconomic conditions imposed by the international financial institutions to achieve equilibrium, there was a gap between the Government and the people and their problems, especially unemployment, poor housing and inadequate educational provision and social security. The traditional methods of the political system had failed to produce results. The parliamentarians of the developed countries must broaden their intellectual horizons so that when they made decisions on behalf of their electorates, the impact of those decisions on the less developed countries was not forgotten. They had a collective responsibility to ensure that countries with subsistence economies were able to export their products under fair terms of trade. Democracy was more than a theory of participation; there was also an economic and a social dimension to be developed.

59. Lastly, she acknowledged the fruitful collaboration between Bolivia and Chile in tackling common problems.

60. **Mr. Marín** (Spain) said that national parliaments needed to work together to transform their commitments to the Millennium Development Goals into concrete actions. The modern world presented new risks, such as international terrorism, to which the only response must be greater international cooperation among those for whom law, democracy and human rights were universal values. Such risks were an opportunity to recognize that different civilizations needed to understand and respect each other. The time had come to debate the establishment of an alliance of civilizations, which would not only serve to strengthen international security but would also weaken international terrorism, since reconciliation among different cultures based on sincere and constructive dialogue was the best way to isolate radical fundamentalism. Freedom, democracy and the rule of law

provided the common ground for collective efforts to ensure international security.

61. **Mr. Nyamdorj** (Mongolia) said that, in an era of increasing globalization and interdependence, there were many common threats and challenges that required a joint response from the international community and made it imperative to enhance partnerships among executive authorities and parliaments. The United Nations played a key role in promoting international cooperation but needed to undergo effective reform.

62. Parliaments made an enormous contribution to implementing the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring sustainable development at the national level. While sustainable development was linked to many factors for which nations themselves were responsible, it was also necessary to increase official development assistance and reduce the debt burden of the least developed countries. There was no doubt that acute social problems were one of the root causes of terrorism, which posed a serious threat to basic human rights and freedoms. Significant efforts were therefore needed at national, regional and international levels to address that threat.

63. **Mr. Sami** (Serbia and Montenegro) said that Serbia and Montenegro had a serious problem in Kosovo-Metohija: since 1999, over 230,000 Serbs and non-ethnic Albanians had been forced to leave the province, more than 3,000 people had been killed or were missing, and 146 monasteries or churches had been burned down or demolished. Many Serbs and non-ethnic Albanians in Kosovo-Metohija were living in ghetto-like enclaves, fearing for their lives and property and being denied such fundamental human rights as the right to live and to raise their children. All the main political parties in Serbia and Montenegro supported a political resolution to the problem through dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, with the assistance of the international community. The issue of Kosovo-Metohija could not be resolved by treating Kosovo as an independent State since the altering of national borders was contrary to the basic documents of the United Nations and would set a dangerous precedent, undermining peace and stability in the world.

64. *Mr. Al-Khurafi (Kuwait), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

65. **Mr. Cruz Zepeda Peña** (El Salvador) said that parliamentarians contributed to the strengthening of democratic institutions and, above all, to the stability and governance of

countries. That was especially true of countries like El Salvador, which had found peace through the mediation of the United Nations. El Salvador had learned how to live in peace and democracy. However, along with other countries, it faced new dangers, including terrorism, organized crime and HIV/AIDS. If the international community was to address those challenges, the United Nations would have to be reformed.

66. Democratically elected and participatory governments were the best way to safeguard the right to live in dignity and freedom, as had been shown by the holding of the first free and direct presidential elections in 1996 by the people of the Republic of China on Taiwan. By doing so, they had adhered to the principle of freedom in the Millennium Declaration.

67. The Legislative Assembly of El Salvador supported the efforts of the United Nations to further development, respect for and promotion of human rights, and the maintenance of international peace and security. It also firmly supported peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

68. **Mr. Tekebaev** (Kyrgyzstan) said that, while globalization helped to promote common values and aspirations, it also highlighted inequalities among countries and, as such, was a source of radicalism, hatred and conflict threatening global stability and security. The international community must therefore assume greater responsibility for those parts of the world that continued to feel defenceless by increasing its assistance to developing democratic institutions, including parliaments. It was only through strong parliaments that nations could truly influence Heads of State and Government and, eventually, the decisions of the United Nations and other international organizations. One of the most effective means of exerting such influence was the participation of parliaments in regional organizations, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community. By unifying legislation in the area of security and by coordinating the actions of their executive agencies, the members of the Community had increased the effectiveness of their efforts to combat terrorism, political and religious extremism and organized crime. The experience gained by similar inter-parliamentary associations might be useful in reforming the United Nations.

69. **Mr. Bogado González** (Paraguay) said that the Parliament of Paraguay was working with the Government to fulfil the commitments

made in connection with the Millennium Development Goals. Parliament had increased the budget of various official agencies in the area of social expenditure and had authorized the Government to allocate resources to help the most vulnerable sectors of the population in the poorest parts of the country. With respect to universal primary education, it had approved substantial budgetary resources to eliminate once and for all *ad honorem* posts in the teaching profession and had also adopted a statute governing relations between the State and teachers. To ensure that legislation maintained a gender perspective, advisory committees on gender equality had been established in both parliamentary chambers. Parliament had also approved a new Code for Children and Youth, which reflected the realities of the modern world while respecting national specificities. The national budget for health and the fight against HIV/AIDS and other diseases was being increased, and national hospitals were being given adequate budgets to provide treatment to the most vulnerable.

70. It was a great effort, however, for extremely poor countries such as Paraguay to devote their scarce resources to the priority areas of health, education and the environment. The multilateral cooperation agencies and all Governments interested in putting an end to poverty must therefore spare no efforts or resources to ensure the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in those countries.

71. **Mr. Al-Za'noon** (Palestine) said that the draft declaration, while welcome, had failed to mention the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination or to call for the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

72. The recent removal of Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip was a positive precedent and, to move the peace process forward, similar steps should be taken in the West Bank. However, instead of taking that approach, the Government of Israel had intensified its efforts to enlarge Israeli settlements there. It had also continued to erect the racist segregation wall, which created a new geographic and demographic situation, transforming the West Bank into isolated cantons and making it impossible to establish a viable Palestinian State.

73. He therefore called on the Conference participants to ensure that their Governments put pressure on the Government of Israel to

make its withdrawal from Gaza a first step towards the establishment of peace and security for both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples. The greatest guarantee for security, peace and stability in the region was to end the occupation, cease settlement building, release detainees and establish a Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

74. Despite the occupation, the Palestinian people were exerting their best efforts to establish democracy and build a civil society. In that connection, fair and transparent presidential and local elections had recently been held and legislative elections would soon be held in the same spirit.

75. **Mr. Mahlangu** (South Africa) said that global interdependence required universal institutions to govern or spearhead multilateral relationships. Since those institutions dealt with States through their governments, it was parliaments that were responsible for ensuring that the interests of all their citizens were addressed. At the same time, multilateralism itself gave rise to political concerns about the potential loss of sovereignty to such institutions.

76. Many African countries had suffered a great deal of economic decline as a result of international economic institutions that had failed to incorporate their needs and experience. As representatives of their citizens, parliaments needed to be involved with those multilateral institutions at the policymaking stage to ensure that powerful countries did not dictate the policies to be implemented. Unless parliaments worked together to tackle those challenges, it would be difficult to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which were fundamental for addressing global poverty and disease in the twenty-first century. As part of their role, parliaments must therefore work towards building the consensus needed to promote a free and fair global system to facilitate conflict resolution, poverty elimination, human development and economic growth.

77. **Ms. Nahayo** (Burundi) said that she was pleased to report the successful conclusion of the peace process in Burundi and thanked the international community for its support. After the recent elections for offices ranging from the local level to the Presidency, Burundi had democratically elected institutions at all levels. Moreover, women held a number of high-level posts in the new Government, making gender balance a reality. The main objectives of the newly restored democracy in Burundi were to

promote equity, respect for human rights, sound management of public assets, gender equality, development for all and durable peace.

78. IPU had been working closely with the United Nations for the past decade to strengthen the parliamentary dimension of international cooperation. Many parliaments had made their contribution to meeting the challenges facing the international community by implementing the international commitments made in the United Nations and other such forums and by incorporating them in national legislation and policy. Her Parliament had been focused on the peace process, which had led from the signing of the Arusha Accord in 2000 to the democratic elections which had just taken place. Burundi would continue to rely on the support of its partners as it consolidated peace and democracy.

79. **Mr. Bautista García** (Dominican Republic) said that the Conference provided an opportunity to reflect on whether the actions of parliaments were contributing to democratic governance and progress for their peoples, or whether more effective mechanisms were needed. Of course, some of the challenges faced by democracies were beyond their control, for example, the price of oil for non-producing countries. The agreements made at the Millennium Summit could guide actions to reduce poverty and combat violence in all its manifestations.

80. The social phenomenon of migration was high on the national agenda of the Dominican Republic and required the active participation of the United Nations, particularly due to the massive movements of citizens from its neighbour, Haiti, because of the difficult situation in that country. With regard to United Nations reform, parliaments, as representatives of the people, should play a larger role in the Organization.

81. **Ms. Gaspà** (Andorra) said that cooperation between the United Nations and IPU had enormous potential, in particular for resolving problems with global effects like gender discrimination and environmental degradation. The world's Heads of State would meet once again in a few days to review the outcome of the Millennium Summit, the progress made and areas where greater effort was required to prevent social injustice from dominating the planet. Small countries like Andorra had turned their weaknesses into strengths, and their voices had been heard

along with those of large countries in the negotiations for the outcome document.

82. **Mr. Al-Ali** (Saudi Arabia) said that greater efforts were needed to assist people living in poverty and injustice, eliminate tensions in the world and rid the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction. Saudi Arabia believed in reform and had begun reforms of its political, economic and education sectors well before the recent calls for such action. It was currently giving 4 per cent of its GDP as ODA, the highest percentage of any State and well above the agreed target of 0.7 per cent.

83. Terrorism was the worst problem the world was facing, and Saudi Arabia had suffered its effects like so many other countries, despite the fact that Islam forbade violence and invited tolerance. It joined the call for an international conference against terrorism. Lastly, it hoped to see the Palestinian and Iraqi peoples enjoying their independence and full sovereignty as members of the international community.

84. **Ms. Yathotou** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that there had been visible progress in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, and regular interaction between the United Nations and IPU had led to greater understanding and cooperation in areas of common interest. Other regional parliamentary organizations, for instance the Inter-Parliamentary Organization of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, had also responded to the new challenges posed by the era of globalization.

85. The Lao National Assembly attached great importance to multilateral cooperation and had worked to enhance its role in the executive body by co-hosting international conferences and its oversight of international agreements and treaties signed by the Government.

86. During the second half of the decade, IPU and other regional parliamentary organizations should focus on multilateral cooperation in addressing the issues of poverty, advancement of women and fighting terrorism. Her country's goal was to graduate from least developed country status by 2020. She expressed appreciation for all the support the Lao people had received in their efforts for national reconstruction and economic development.

87. **Mr. Jarzembowski** (Poland) said that he perceived three main areas of international parliamentary cooperation that would be particularly significant in the near future. The first and most important objective was the task

of spreading democracy across the world, while maintaining respect for cultural diversity. The second area was promotion of economic trade between countries, since economic factors lay at the foundation of many global problems such as poverty and rising extremism. The third important area was security. Dramatic reports from various continents confirmed that, since the turn of the century, a new threat in the form of international terrorism had been on the rise. No country was capable of coping with that phenomenon on its own.

88. In the twenty-first century, the need for international unity appeared much stronger than at any point in history. Only through international unity would an increasing number of common problems be solved. Unity among parliamentarians should be the foundation and impetus for cooperation between countries at every level. Although representing different cultures and outlooks on the world, the actions of IPU members should be focused on the common good.

89. **Mr. Atwal** (India) said that, in the five years since the first Conference, the world had witnessed unprecedented levels of violence from terrorism, the most dangerous challenge currently facing the international community. The achievement of the ambitious targets set in the Millennium Development Goals, leading to real economic transformation, could only happen with the achievement of Goal 8, which would require fundamental reform of the international economic and financial institutions.

90. The United Nations had been established in 1945 to ensure that peoples could live in peace and concentrate on socio-economic development. Sixty years later, it was essential for it to reflect current realities and direct its energies to meet the aspirations of the vast majority of its Members, which were developing countries. The need to expand the Security Council to include developing countries as permanent members was imperative. The developing country perspective would bring new approaches and enhance the Council's effectiveness and legitimacy.

91. **Mr. Meleşcanu** (Romania) said that the key role of parliaments in furthering the United Nations agenda was highlighted by the fact that democratic governments were subject to their scrutiny and that any decision taken in the multilateral sphere would sooner or later have to enjoy parliamentary support if it was to

enter into force. Nevertheless, efforts still fell short of what was needed: a genuine parliamentary dimension of multilateral cooperation to help translate the lofty goals of the United Nations into practice and to reverse the democracy deficit of global governance. For those two mutually reinforcing goals to be met, better cooperation between national parliaments and the United Nations must be ensured. The key resources of the world's parliaments — legitimacy, trust, political experience, legislative knowledge — should be used to their full potential. IPU had the capacity to provide parliamentary structures in the global space which were both representative and effective and to mainstream a coherent contribution by parliaments to multilateral relations. Parliaments and their members were in the best position to forge participatory processes placing the rights and well-being of people at the heart of human development.

92. **Ms. Vollmer** (Germany) said that better use should be made of the potential of IPU to help bring the United Nations closer to the hearts of the people at a crucial moment in its history. Democratic scrutiny of international politics was at the heart of international society. The challenges facing the United Nations were growing, yet there was still no form of parliamentary scrutiny of its decisions. One way to remedy the democratic deficit in international relations would be to give parliaments more influence, and the granting of observer status to IPU had been a step in the right direction. The German *Bundestag* had passed a resolution calling on the United Nations to create a parliamentary dimension within the United Nations system through the development of IPU as a platform, along with the establishment of an IPU standing committee at United Nations Headquarters.

93. In another recent initiative, German parliamentarians were standing up for their colleagues in places where they were threatened for their political work. She expressed her incomprehension that representatives of two States had been prevented from attending the Conference, in contradiction of the purpose of IPU, which was to promote democratic structures through dialogue. National parliaments could become workshops to forge a vision of global democracy.

94. **Mr. del Picchia** (France) said that the challenges of the twenty-first century called for a global response through action at the national level to exchange information

between the executive and legislative branches of governments and at the international level through the development of cooperation among parliaments. Globalization had made such cooperation essential.

95. He reaffirmed the desire to pursue cooperation between the United Nations and IPU, by institutionalizing and strengthening their existing ties while respecting the essential principle of democracy, the separation of powers. IPU represented an extraordinary network of over 40,000 elected members of parliaments, which could be used to serve the people who had elected them.

96. **Mr. Arnold** (Argentina) said that the challenges currently facing the world demanded more from democratic systems than ever before. The United Nations should be the cornerstone of international relations, with development as a priority concern. In order to meet the commitments for development finance made in the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus, the parliaments of Member States should show the necessary political will to provide the United Nations with adequate human, legal and financial resources to meet urgent economic and social needs.

97. He agreed that security was a necessary condition for development, but also that development was a condition of security. The United Nations must also address questions of global security, especially questions of nuclear non-proliferation and arms control. The actions undertaken to combat terrorism were welcome.

98. Parliaments should be actively involved at the international level, not only through inter-parliamentary cooperation and diplomacy, but also through involvement and influence on international negotiations, follow-up on development commitments and oversight of international instruments and commitments. He reaffirmed the recommendations made in the Millennium Declaration and was optimistic about the outcome of the debate on the best way to ensure more structured interaction between the United Nations and national parliaments.

99. **Mr. Karoui** (Tunisia) said that world events required a re-examination of the international cooperation system to allow international organizations to play a major role in combating conflict, poverty and terrorism, as well as natural disasters.

100. He called on IPU to help in developing a better system for delivery of assistance to combat poverty through North-South partnerships and such initiatives as the Global Solidarity Fund. He hoped that the forthcoming High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly would find ways to make the Millennium Development Goals a reality and to eradicate poverty, defuse tensions and ensure a more equitable distribution of wealth and modern technology.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.

Inter-Parliamentary Union Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments

Summary record of the 4th meeting

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 9 September 2005, at 10 a.m.

President: Ms. Meyer (Vice-President) (Switzerland)
Later: Mr. Majali (Vice-President) (Jordan)
Later: Mr. Marín González (Vice-President) (Spain)

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General debate on parliaments and multilateral cooperation: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century (*continued*)

Ms. Meyer (Switzerland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

General debate on parliaments and multilateral cooperation: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Baghdasaryan** (Armenia) said that the involvement of parliaments in settling global issues had become imperative. Strong parliaments were necessary to a viable democracy, since they were the institution most closely related to the people, and democracy was the most efficient way to meet the challenges of the millennium: terrorism, violation of human rights, hunger and poverty. The power of the parliament should be guaranteed at the constitutional level, and restrictions on its power should be resisted. Parliaments should operate on the principle of transparency and be open to inter-parliamentary cooperation.

2. Unfortunately, parliamentary colleagues from Azerbaijan were using every possible forum to denounce Armenia, instead of taking the opportunity to advance cooperation and good relations with their neighbours. It was widely understood that the Karabagh conflict was about the struggle of the Karabagh people for self-determination and freedom, which they had managed to achieve through a war unleashed by Azerbaijan itself. In the lengthy peace process, Armenia had consistently advocated regional cooperation as a confidence-building measure, since isolation of any of the countries would threaten the stability of the region. As President of the National Assembly, in the past few years he had been meeting with Speakers of the parliaments of the Southern Caucasus to

discuss common problems, and a memorandum had been signed providing for the start-up of the Southern Caucasus Parliamentary Assembly on 1 January 2007. In order to promote a progressive society committed to the principles of justice, equality and freedom, the National Assembly of Armenia had adopted an electoral code and had instituted constitutional reforms aimed at decentralization of power and fair, transparent and democratic elections.

3. **Mr. Drilon** (Philippines) said that five years ago Governments had been presented with the challenge of halving the proportion of the world's population suffering from extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015. At the United Nations Millennium Assembly they had committed themselves to addressing the problems of international peace and security, democracy, respect for human rights, sustainable development and social progress. His Government was committed to those goals and over the past five years had made some modest gains. The Philippines had enacted the Magna Carta for the Poor, to provide them with sustained opportunities for development. In the area of security, it had enacted a comprehensive dangerous drugs act to curb the influx and use of prohibited drugs in the country and had passed a strong anti-money-laundering act. In the area of human rights, it had enacted a Magna Carta for Women, to afford women protection against violence and exploitation and promote their full integration into the mainstream of development. It had also established a comprehensive juvenile justice system and a delinquency prevention programme.

4. But the Philippines, like most developing countries, had been kept from making substantial gains towards achieving millennium targets by a number of roadblocks: oil price

increases, the high cost of servicing the public debt, corruption, weak infrastructure, an inefficient financial sector and trade barriers. Many of those roadblocks could only be eliminated through global effort and multilateral cooperation. The challenge that confronted parliaments in the twenty-first century was to tip the scales in favour of improvement, rather than deterioration, in the quality of human life.

5. The Philippines supported proposals to strengthen and reform the United Nations, in particular the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission to assist countries emerging from conflicts and a Human Rights Council. It was also in favour of the creation of peacebuilding and democracy funds, the early adoption of a comprehensive convention on terrorism and the revival of the moribund United Nations disarmament machinery. Liberalized inter-country migration was a special development concern that nations should consider to promote common and complementing growth. Parliamentarians, who were responsible for creating the legal framework within which Governments fulfilled their commitments, could make an immense difference in creating a world free from poverty, hunger and other forms of deprivation.

6. **Mr. Norodom Ranariddh** (Cambodia) said that many countries in the developing world were facing poverty, but were forced to choose between paying insurmountable debt and addressing great social ills. Parliaments must act collectively and energetically with Governments, civil society and the private sector to meet the Millennium Development Goals and set the situation right. Rich nations should honour their commitments to development and seriously tackle the issues of debt cancellation, debt conversion for financing Millennium Development Goal projects and special designation for poor countries.

7. Parliaments of 39 nations were members of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace (AAPP). Among other objectives, such as the establishment of an Asian parliamentary assembly and an Asian anti-poverty fund, AAPP had decided to draft a Charter of Human Rights for Asian Nations, which would reflect the specific characteristics of Asian civilization and cultures, while respecting the fundamental principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all relevant international conventions. Cambodia had been entrusted with the task of chairing the drafting committee, which had just unanimously adopted the draft Charter, to be submitted to

the sixth General Assembly of AAPP in November 2005. If adopted, the Charter would constitute a historical breakthrough and would represent a major contribution by Asian parliaments to the strengthening of democracy and human rights. Parliaments and their members should cooperate more vigorously and take a proactive role in bilateral and multilateral relations in order to bring lasting peace and well-being to the world.

8. **Mr. Guterres** (Timor-Leste) said that, thanks to the determination of its people and the long-standing solidarity of the international community, Timor-Leste was a new nation with its own national parliament and was striving to live in ethnic and religious harmony and to build a pluralistic and participative democracy. The role of a parliament was no longer confined to merely internal policies but embraced the function of a catalyst for the State's commitments at the regional and global levels. Capacity-building and inter-parliamentary contacts were necessary to enable parliamentarians to understand the global reality, so that they could fully represent their constituents.

9. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, equality without distinction of race, origin or social condition had become a concept evoked by all peoples, but there was still a wide gap between constitutional instruments and the human rights conventions, between the rhetoric of political parties and their practice. Parliaments should not only monitor the action of the State but should work actively — through legislation, the control mechanisms available to parliaments and continuous contact with civil society — to overcome any inertia on the part of the State in realizing civil, political, economic, social and environmental rights and any tendency to favour specific social or interest groups.

10. Conscious of a common heritage and of the Earth as a shared home where no people or individual should be treated as superfluous, parliaments should include new items of global significance on their agendas, such as environmental protection, management of water and energy resources, globalization, human rights and the fight against hunger, poverty, disease and illiteracy, and should expand their effectiveness through inter-parliamentary cooperation, including on a regional level or on the basis of a shared language.

11. **Dr. Al-Hasani** (Iraq) said that parliamentary democracy in Iraq was still in

crisis. The loyalties of Iraqis were divided along ethnic, sectarian or partisan lines. The fact that Iraqi political parties were adopting policies of revenge instead of reform, dialogue and reconciliation could be attributed to the lasting damage caused by the former Iraqi regime, whose dictatorial practices were responsible for the difficulties faced at present in introducing a democratic system in Iraq. Furthermore, some decisions taken after the fall of the former regime — such as the disbanding of the army and security forces and the exclusion of the Baath party — had undermined the process of reconstruction, led to widespread boycotting of elections and resulted in the formation of an unbalanced National Assembly. There was still hope that differences over parts of the draft Iraqi constitution could be resolved, so that all Iraq would take part in the referendum on 15 October 2005 to approve it. If the constitution was adopted, new elections could be held by the end of the year. He urged all countries and regional and international organizations to send international observers to Iraq during the referendum and elections. Despite their struggles to rebuild their country's shattered infrastructure, while at the same time combating the dark forces of terrorism, the Iraqi people had nonetheless displayed their determination not to revert to tyranny but to pursue the path to democratic government.

12. **Mr. Ousmane** (Niger) said that the conference was taking place in the context of major upheavals. Trade globalization was marked by unequal competition between the stronger and weaker economies and had led not only to multilateralism but also to multi-polarization in international relations, which were seriously threatened by the diverging opinions concerning reform of the United Nations, especially the sensitive issue of enlargement of the Security Council. The Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments provided the opportunity to review progress in implementing the commitments contained in the Declaration issued by the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments in 2000.

13. Since that first conference, the various national parliaments had shown great interest in international cooperation. The National Assembly of the Niger, for example, had made parliamentary diplomacy one of its main priorities and had re-established its cooperative relations with inter-parliamentary organizations after a suspension of some years due to political instability in the country.

14. The Second World Conference had the further aims of reflecting on how best to promote international cooperation and support the United Nations and how best to expand the involvement of parliaments in international relations. International relations could not be left solely to technicians; since representatives to parliament were elected by the people, it was high time for them to take a more active part in reflecting on key questions of international cooperation: how to strengthen democracy in international relations, and specifically in decision-making mechanisms within the United Nations; how to equip the United Nations better to meet the millennium challenges; how to deepen the role of parliamentary diplomacy in international relations; how to strengthen mechanisms for human rights protection; and how to resolve the debt problem threatening the growth and development of the poorest countries.

15. For many, the right to development meant simply the right to be clean and fed. Such was the case, for example, for the thousands of women and children of the Niger suffering from hunger and disease owing to drought, plagues of locusts and poor sanitation facilities. He wished to thank the international community for its help to the Niger in its time of need and for the solidarity shown by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his recent visit.

16. **Mr. Hughes** (Ghana) said that the United Nations was at a crossroads and was facing many challenges and threats in an increasingly complex global environment. The legislative capacity of parliaments, and in particular their treaty-making functions, gave them an important role in tackling global issues and challenges, through regular interaction among parliaments to envision common solutions. Ghana, for example, was cooperating multilaterally with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and the United Nations in dealing with civil and ethnic conflicts in the West African subregion. The Parliament of Ghana was working closely with others in the region to make good governance the cornerstone of Africa's development path. African Governments and leaders had established concrete frameworks for collaboration in resolving common problems. In other regions, too, there was an increasing trend towards the establishment of parliamentary and other types of collaborative institutions to meet common challenges, with the European Parliament being a trailblazer in that regard, and there was a

potential for cross-collaboration among such regional and subregional institutions. The answer to the challenges of the contemporary world was to be found, not in the individual strengths of nations, but in the realization that security should be sought collectively.

17. **Mr. Rawiri** (Gabon) said that the greater involvement of parliamentarians in international issues reflected progress in democracy and freedom around the world. Nonetheless, that progress had not brought with it the hoped-for development of all countries. In Africa, for example, most States faced enormous difficulties in reaching the Millennium Development Goals. In addition to the problems of worsening poverty and the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS, the health and education systems in the region remained weak. The industrialized countries needed to make good on their promises of increased development assistance, greater debt relief and real support for fairer international trade. For their part, the poorer countries recognized the need to make sustained efforts to manage available resources more effectively.

18. Gabon welcomed the draft document containing proposals for ambitious reforms of the United Nations and hoped that world leaders could reach agreement on it in the coming week. Parliamentarians intended to participate fully in that collective effort by the international community. Since peace and solidarity among peoples were important factors in securing stability and prosperity for humankind, the Senate of Gabon had thrown its support behind the initiatives of President Bongo Ondimba in favour of peaceful settlement of conflicts and promotion of fundamental rights. Aware that multilateral cooperation was necessary to promote peace, democracy and development, Gabon subscribed fully to the draft declaration to be adopted by the Conference.

19. **Mr. Ouaidou** (Chad) said the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliament provided an opportunity for delegates to review the situation of parliamentary participation in international affairs, progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and above all the contribution of parliaments to the strengthening of democracy. At the Conference of Speakers of African National Assemblies on Issues of Population and Development, held in N'Djaména on 18 and 19 May 2005, participants had noted that a lack of financial resources was hindering implementation of the outcomes of the International Conference on Population and Development and the

Millennium Development Goals, in spite of a growing willingness, including on the part of parliamentarians, to implement those objectives. Furthermore, virtually all countries in Africa needed the help of international partners to address the problems facing them. Participants had therefore stressed the need for international partners and States to implement their international commitments, including with regard to good governance; mobilize resources to support parliamentary initiatives; and strengthen the role of parliaments.

20. In view of the deteriorating social and economic situation of certain States, in particular in the Sahel region, parliaments must balance population growth and available resources to reduce pressure on national budgets and the environment. In addition, the international community as a whole should promote fair and equal redistribution of wealth, which was a prerequisite for security, democracy, development and human rights.

21. The Conference of Speakers of African National Assemblies had looked to the future and reaffirmed its commitment to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It had also approved the efforts of national parliaments to provide their peoples with an acceptable standard of living, and promote recognition of the idea that people had a right to expect that their basic needs would be met.

22. The declaration to be adopted by the Second World Conference should send a clear message to Heads of State and Government. The latter should take advantage of the opportunity provided by reform of the United Nations to facilitate the participation of parliaments in multilateral cooperation efforts, so that parliaments could work with the international community to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

23. **Mr. Suchon** (Thailand) said that parliaments, which truly represented the peoples of the world, should play a larger role in international diplomacy. Inter-parliamentary organizations, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union, provided a forum for parliamentarians to express their opinions on issues of international interest and to formulate recommendations for action by their national Governments. Inter-parliamentary organizations should develop common legislative guidelines or even draft laws to serve as a basis for national legislation on common problems such as terrorism, drugs, epidemics and others. That shared framework for national legislation would ensure coherent action at the international level.

24. Inter-parliamentary organizations should make greater effort to ensure that decision-takers at the national and international levels recognized the contribution that such organizations could make, and the importance of cooperation with them, so that executive branches, which control resource allocation, would be more inclined to implement solutions proposed by them.

25. *Mr. Majali (Jordan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

26. **Mr. Severino Cavalcanti** (Brazil) expressed protest and outrage against the decision of the Government of the United States to deny visas to the delegations of Cuba and Iran, which had wished to participate in the Conference.

27. He said that Brazil was strengthening the autonomy of parliament and the participation of citizens in the legislative process. Mechanisms had been established to give all Brazilian citizens the opportunity to express their views to members of Congress. Parliament was also playing a major role in meeting Brazil's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. Financial resources had been allocated to social programmes, and policies aimed at achieving those Goals, even before 2015, had been debated.

28. Democratic parliaments, which gave legitimacy to government action, were playing greater roles in the field of international relations. In keeping with his parliament's commitment to parliamentary diplomacy, more than 70 bilateral parliamentary groups had been established with a view to promoting peace through dialogue and cooperation among parliaments. Legislation for a plebiscite on the country's current disarmament process, to take place in October 2005, had been adopted. Small arms in particular were a major concern.

29. International peace was closely associated with economic development and the promotion of justice in trade relations. His parliament therefore closely followed negotiations on international agreements, in particular trade agreements, and was directly involved in negotiations regarding the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the creation of a MERCOSUR parliament. His delegation supported the draft declaration of the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

30. **Mr. Ali** (Djibouti) said that international efforts to promote democracy in a world facing the challenges of hunger, illness,

underdevelopment and terrorism would be more effective if parliaments, as the legitimate representatives of peoples, played a decisive role in international relations. The Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliament provided an opportunity to take stock of the work of parliaments, review the proposed reform of the United Nations and further strengthen cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. In that context, he welcomed the many cooperation initiatives between those two organizations and the excellent work done by the Office of the Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the United Nations in promoting a parliamentary perspective in international relations. A greater role for parliaments in the negotiation of international instruments which would affect the peoples they represented would improve the implementation of those instruments at the national level and guarantee that they reflected the aspirations of the peoples of the world. As was stressed in the declaration adopted in 2000 at the first conference parliaments should play a more active role. They should act as intermediaries, rather than simply allowing their respective executive branches to act without their consent. Continued cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations would be beneficial to mankind because international relations were above all inter-governmental relations, in which parliaments had an essential role to play.

31. The parliament of Djibouti had made efforts to implement the recommendations and suggestions emanating from the first conference with regard to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. For example, regulatory and legislative measure had been adopted to increase the representation of women in decision-taking at all levels. Awareness-raising measures had been taken in parliament to promote gender issues, and a quota of 10 per cent for women members of parliament had been voted and would be raised considerably in coming years. The basic issues of sustainable development, peace and security should be at the heart of discussions during the Second World Conference in order to promote concrete actions, so that development assistance, in accordance with the Millennium Declaration, the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Monterrey Consensus, would be mobilized to promote the development of the peoples of the world. The Second World Conference should also present a united front in addressing the great

challenges facing mankind and reaffirm that democracy must be founded on the rule of law and respect for human dignity; human-centred sustainable economic and social development; proportional representation for women in parliaments; and protection of the environment, which was essential for sustainable development.

32. **Mr. Mendez Herbruger** (Guatemala) said that the Second World Conference had brought together men and women who were the sovereign representatives of their peoples and of democracy in their countries. In attending the Conference, delegates reaffirmed the commitment of their parliaments to democracy and the strengthening of international relations and cooperation. It was significant that the conference was being held in the General Assembly Hall, the seat of the highest parliament of the modern world.

33. Bearing in mind the outcomes of the first conference, parliamentarians had enacted legislation to adapt their legal structures to the needs of their people and to implement the Millennium Development Goals. Steps had likewise been taken to combat terrorism, although such efforts must not affect full respect for human rights.

34. His parliament had also consolidated ties with the other Central American countries and the Dominican Republic, with whom a strategic degree of economic and political integration had been attained. A free trade agreement had also been entered into with the United States of America as part of an effort to better integrate with the process of globalization and create better opportunities for the peoples of the region.

35. In the context of the United Nations, parliaments were the standard bearers of the rule of law and respect for human rights, principles which contributed to the maintenance of international peace and security. Participation of parliamentarians in the Second World Conference was vital, so that the recommendations adopted by the Conference could become a reality in participants' respective countries. Guatemala actively supported the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the regional parliaments. Lastly, in its area, recalling the principles of equality and self-determination enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, he wished to express the solidarity of the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala with the people of Taiwan, whose aspiration to representation in international organizations had not yet been fulfilled.

36. **Mr. Mukhamejanov** (Kazakhstan) said that elected representatives had a great responsibility to address the burning issues facing mankind, including poverty eradication, discrimination, human trafficking, drug trafficking and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan had worked consistently for the prohibition of the production and testing of all weapons of mass destruction and had been the first country in the history of mankind voluntarily to renounce its nuclear weapons capability, which had been the fourth largest in the world. In 1993 the parliament of Kazakhstan had voted to ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It appealed to all the nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals, called for stricter compliance with non-proliferation regimes and stressed the need to ensure that weapons of mass destruction did not fall into hands of international terrorists.

37. Other matters of grave concern were the political and social consequences of drug trafficking and drug addiction, which were directly linked to illegal migration, organized crime and international terrorism. It was also necessary to work actively to eliminate poverty by increasing assistance to States in need and deepening regional trade and economic cooperation.

38. In the light of problems such as the gradual disappearance of the Aral Sea and the after-effects of nuclear testing in its territory, protection of the environment was a priority for his country. The sustainable development not only of Kazakhstan but of the whole of Central Asia continued to be affected by the social and economic consequences of such disasters, and he would urge the developed countries and international organizations to devote greater attention to those issues, which were global in nature.

39. Since joining the United Nations in 1992, and under the guidance of its first President, Kazakhstan had carried out social and economic reforms unprecedented in the post-Soviet countries and had become one of the most rapidly developing countries in the world, with an economic growth rate of 9 per cent a year. Numerous educational, social and health programmes had been established to promote employment of women, provide State benefits to low-income wage earners, develop small- and medium-sized business, promote universal secondary education and improve the quality of education, among other things by sending some 3,000 students a year to study abroad. In addition, a National Fund to provide for economic stability had been established.

40. Progress towards democracy and the strengthening of civil society was continuing; there were currently 10 active political parties and some 4,000 non-governmental organizations. A moratorium on the death penalty had been introduced, and the penitentiary system was to be transferred to civilian authority. Freedom of expression was guaranteed; there was no censorship, and there were more than 2,000 registered media enterprises, 80 per cent of which were private enterprises. In the context of democratic reform, the powers of parliament would be increased with regard to the formation of Governments and other constitutional bodies, and local authorities would become subject to election. The forthcoming presidential elections would be held in full compliance with international standards. As a committed member of the international community, Kazakhstan, a country of diverse ethnic groups and religions, would continue to be actively engaged in tackling the major issues facing mankind.

41. **Mr. Hrusovský** (Slovakia) recalled that the United Nations had been established in the aftermath of the Second World War, with a view to applying the lessons learned from that conflict. The current international environment was changing rapidly, but there were basic facts and moral imperatives which had not changed. Although there had been no global war since the establishment of the United Nations, which must be considered a success, there continued to be armed conflicts in which innocent civilians, including children, had died in great numbers. That situation remained unacceptable.

42. International organizations such as the United Nations could not alone resolve the problems of the world, even if the current proposed reforms of the Organization were successful. Just as national parliaments reconciled the competing interests of the communities represented in them to approve binding regulations and standards, rules governing the coexistence of nations must be based on respect for their particular interests and situations.

43. He represented a small State which had had to cope with many problems, including the effects of totalitarianism. Its citizens, nevertheless, currently enjoyed more rights and a higher standard of living than most of the world's inhabitants. It would, however, be immoral to seek to simply protect one's own advantages while ignoring the suffering of others. That was the perspective his delegation

would bring to its term on the Security Council. Central European nations still remembered that it was difficult to build and easy to destroy mutual understanding and that the problems of small regions could be the root cause of a world catastrophe. That experience could be of some benefit to the Security Council, in a world which was reminiscent of Central Europe between the First and Second World Wars.

44. Dealing with the difficult challenges facing the world would require a willingness on the part of individual States to assume their share of international responsibility. His delegation was prepared to support rapid and energetic reform of the United Nations but believed that it was important to recall the founding principles of the United Nations.

45. **Ms. Castro** (Uruguay) said that the world had slid into catastrophe, leaving behind ecological damage, depleted natural resources, unemployment, violence and poverty. The only way to combat the situation was to shift the concentration of wealth and power and end consumer wastefulness. It was also imperative that nations should work together to build a different, more caring world where human rights were respected. As a multilateral arena for debate and decision-making, the Inter-Parliamentary Union could play a significant role in generating such changes.

46. **Mr. Cukjati** (Slovenia) said that the existing international structures had proved insufficient in providing security and stability. Inter-parliamentary cooperation at the global level could help create a better world by providing a forum where tensions between nations, cultures and religions could be analysed and hopefully solved. However, a more active and concrete approach to solving international tensions was required. First, any parliament should have the chance to identify a burning issue and propose a solution. The proposer would then draw up a draft declaration and organize a debate among concerned parliaments. In the case of agreement, the Speakers of parliaments would then adopt a declaration to be ratified by national parliaments. Since the proposed manner of work required careful regulation, his delegation proposed that the new President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union appoint a core team to prepare draft rules of procedure by the next conference.

47. **Mr. Weiler** (Luxembourg) said that the Inter-Parliamentary Union's primary concern was to help nations find solutions to challenges

such as armed conflict, terrorism, poverty, human rights violations and the deterioration of the environment. Although international parliamentary forums were clearly indispensable, they served mainly as forums for dialogue. Parliaments could, however, make a significant contribution at the national level by influencing foreign policy. For many years, the Parliament of Luxembourg had pushed cooperation for development into the forefront by raising public awareness and pressuring the Government. As a result, Luxembourg now allocated nearly 1 per cent of its GDP to development aid.

48. **Mr. Somparé** (Guinea) said that the political bipolarization of the past, which had enriched the wealthiest nations, must be replaced by a world where sharing and tolerance enriched all of mankind. That aim could not be achieved without an intensive reorganization of national practices and an ambitious reform of the United Nations system. In that context, the Inter-Parliamentary Union was an asset that should be used to the fullest. It was to be hoped that parliaments would do their utmost to eliminate the ongoing crises resulting from poverty, intolerance and a dual system of justice, thereby building a more peaceful and equitable world.

49. **Mr. O'Hanlon** (Ireland) said that parliamentarians had an obligation to encourage dialogue and debate by developing bilateral and multilateral relationships. Although there had been substantial growth in cooperation in the areas of economic development, security, trade and agriculture, it was clear that much remained to be done to eradicate hunger, disease and hatred. Multilateral cooperation against terrorism, for example, was essential for success. But the challenges facing the international community must be understood in terms of their underlying causes as well as their effects. Ireland recognized that conflict, inadequate governance and lack of development characterized the daily lives of many human beings. A greater involvement of members of parliaments in debates on issues such as the ongoing crises in Africa would impact on public policies and help to keep development at the top of political agendas.

50. The decision of the United Nations to grant observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union was a positive step towards providing a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation. His delegation welcomed the draft declaration circulated to the Conference, particularly the paragraphs referring to the strengthening of the role of national

parliaments of Member States and the call for an "International Day of Parliaments".

51. **Mr. Marín** (Spain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

52. **Mr. Spiric** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that many armed conflicts could have been averted if parliamentarians, who were the legitimate representatives of the people, had had the opportunity to convene regularly and participate in negotiations and decision-making processes. In that regard, his delegation was pleased that the United Nations had granted the Inter-Parliamentary Union observer status. Bosnia and Herzegovina was of the opinion that the Conference should be institutionalized and convened on a regular basis, so that parliaments could play a more active role in international relations.

53. Although the United Nations remained the ideal forum for the solution of conflicts, it needed to be streamlined and democratized to allow for a more balanced representation of Member States. In view of the fact that the Organization had been ineffective in resolving several crises around the globe, Bosnia and Herzegovina felt that the Security Council should be given a more important role. However, the United Nations should proceed cautiously with its reform, remembering that the full consensus of all Member States must be obtained and preserving the basic principles of the Charter, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations. Bulgaria fully supported the Secretary-General's efforts to reform and strengthen the United Nations and the proposals in his report, "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005) as a basis for negotiation.

54. Achieving the objectives of the Millennium Declaration would require multilateral effort, both globally and regionally. In combating organized crime, Bosnia and Herzegovina had significantly improved cooperation among its national institutions and with other countries in the region.

55. **Mr. Pirinski** (Bulgaria) said that cooperation between parliaments had acquired new importance, given that the democracy gap was the basic factor threatening international peace and security, sustainable development and respect for human rights. National parliaments were called upon to play a central role in overcoming the challenges facing today's world. Priorities included the promotion of employment, the eradication of starvation and poverty and the need to take the social dimension of globalization into account.

56. **Mr. Hastings** (Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) said that the Inter-Parliamentary Union was the oldest international parliamentary assembly in the world, whereas the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was one of the youngest. The missions of both, to promote parliamentary diplomacy in order to bring about freedom, liberty and democracy for the people of the world, were identical and remained as important as ever.

57. When the Inter-Parliamentary Union had been founded in 1889, there was no Internet or e-mail, there were no fax machines or cellular phones, no airplanes or automobiles. Opportunities for parliamentary diplomacy were limited. In the current interconnected world, parliamentarians could communicate with their colleagues in Brussels or Bali or Bombay in a matter of seconds. With all the facilities available, history would remember parliamentarians only for how they acted and interacted to articulate the voice of the people and to make the world a freer, more secure, more prosperous place. He called on all present to act boldly, to be creative and to give not only a voice but hope to constituents. The attainment of human rights would make efforts towards other goals easier and give meaning to life in a safe and prosperous world.

58. Although he was addressing the Conference as President of the Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE, as a member of the United States Congress, he intended to push for its return to the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

59. **Mr. Dowiyogo** (Nauru) said that the Republic of Nauru had 18 single-member constituencies. There were no recognized parties and all members were independent; in the past, that had caused difficulties when a Government needed nine parliamentary votes to defeat a motion of no-confidence. In the current parliament, the Government was supported by 16 members, and that should enable the necessary economic measures to be passed to put Nauru back on its feet.

60. Owing to geographical isolation, Nauru did not face all the social challenges faced by larger countries, but its economy was weak and underdeveloped, its capacity limited and its ecological system fragile. Nauru's very existence was threatened by rising sea levels and climate change. For multilateralism to work in the twenty-first century, the special

situation of small island developing States like Nauru must be fully recognized.

61. Nauru had ratified most of the international conventions relevant to global security, human rights and world peace. Of concern to the international community was the effort made by Nauru to combat money-laundering. Parliament had passed a series of laws to deal with the problem, and Nauru hoped that those efforts of compliance would be recognized by the relevant institutions. His country was concerned about bridging the gap in decision-making in international relations and addressing areas ignored by the international community. For Nauru, the world's continued rejection of the plight of the 23 million Chinese on the island of Taiwan amounted to a shirking of international obligations. It was incumbent upon the representatives of the peoples of the world to encourage peaceful dialogue towards a lasting resolution by, as a first step, securing Taiwan's participation in the United Nations.

62. **Mr. Soomro** (Pakistan) said that national parliaments expressed and embodied the sovereign will of the people; hence the allegiance of the national parliaments to the Charter of the United Nations was not just symbolic but natural. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to the Charter and to a cooperative and inclusive approach to addressing the intractable political, economic and social challenges facing the world in the twenty-first century. Over the years, the magnitude of those challenges had grown in complexity and scope, so that parliaments had a special responsibility to synergize their efforts. Pakistan was committed to peace and dialogue and to the peaceful settlement of disputes.

63. Terrorism with extremism had emerged as one of the major security issues of the times. A comprehensive strategy needed to be implemented through multilateral means to counter that threat. The strategy pursued must address those root causes having to do with political and economic injustices and the regional asymmetries of weaponry. Accordingly, the President of Pakistan had proposed the concept of "enlightened moderation" to tackle the underlying causes of terrorism. The success of that initiative would be contingent upon the collective action of the international community.

64. Parliaments should promote just solutions to situations of grave political injustice prevailing in territories under foreign

occupation. The treatment of the occupied people should be vigilantly monitored and the realization of their inalienable right of self-determination facilitated in accordance with the Charter. Peace and development were interdependent, and parliaments should promote job creation and income generation in order to eradicate the poverty that threatened human security. Governments should be urged to explore innovative ways of strengthening international cooperation to realize the Millennium Development Goals; expedite the establishment of an equitable financial, investment and trading regime; and generate and mobilize resources to speed up development.

65. Cultural stereotyping and defamation of religions could seriously undermine all efforts to promote harmony and understanding among cultures and civilizations, which was critical for global peace and security. National parliaments should develop close partnerships to prevent pernicious attempts to link violent acts of isolated individuals with any specific religion, region or culture.

66. National parliaments were duty bound to strengthen the foundations of good governance and democracy in their societies in keeping with their specific political, social and cultural realities. Inter-parliamentary relations should be promoted to share national experiences, particularly in the fields of literacy, disease, health, education, economic and social development and the empowerment of women and minorities. Pakistan had taken steps to enhance the participation of women in the electoral process. At the local government level 33 per cent of seats were reserved for women, and their presence in the provincial and national parliaments exceeded 20 per cent. The demand of minorities for joint electorates had been accepted.

67. Pakistan attached great importance to enhancing cooperation between two people-centric organizations, the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and remained committed to the realization of global peace, universal prosperity and development. There should be full awareness of the competitive challenges of globalization and standardization. The quality of life could be universally improved on the basis of mutual respect and an understanding of the diversity that existed in the world.

68. **Mr. Elfirjani** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the first conference had reaffirmed the principles and policies adopted by the General Assembly and encouraged action by

parliaments to strengthen the parliamentary dimension in international relations, create a more stable world and secure respect for international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the diversity of peoples. The United Nations was making commendable efforts to mobilize groups and resources in support of peace and development. To create a more stable world, the culture of peace and justice must be consolidated, the use of force abandoned, and developing countries helped as they pursued progress. Weapons of mass destruction should be eliminated and a conference held to consider the phenomenon of terrorism, unify efforts to combat terrorism and identify its underlying causes. Capacities to cope with poverty, ignorance and illness must also be mobilized. The international community must shoulder its responsibility for resolving conflicts, especially those in occupied Palestine and Iraq. In the past few years his country had made considerable strides in human-centred development.

69. **Mr. Riccardi** (San Marino) said that, with the advent of the third millennium, it had been hoped that war, hatred and oppression would forever become remote threats, so that all efforts could be directed towards building a world of peace, human rights and prosperity for all peoples. In that same hope, the first conference in 2000 had reaffirmed the confidence of its participants in democratic institutions, particularly in parliamentary democracy, and their will to cooperate with one another and with the United Nations, which had acknowledged the importance of the Inter-Parliamentary Union by granting it observer status. Those hopes had been dashed by the tragic events that had marked the start of the century. San Marino believed that no effort should be spared by the international community to implement the Millennium Declaration. On the occasion of the upcoming high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, the Republic's Heads of State, who were also its Speakers of Parliament, would renew the commitment of San Marino and its institutions to the goals stated in that Declaration.

70. Participation in the Inter-Parliamentary Union had helped to guide and inspire the Government of San Marino to ratify major international legal instruments; ensure broader and more effective support for human rights; protect freedom at all levels and combat terrorism; promote democracy and independence throughout the world and affirm the rule of law; protect the environment and preserve the world's natural and cultural

heritage; implement humanitarian projects in a number of less favoured regions; and strengthen international cooperation as the crucial instrument for achieving peace. Reaffirming his country's support for the United Nations, where all States, irrespective of size, could play a significant role in strengthening and revitalizing the Organization, he expressed the hope that the Conference would make a valuable contribution to parliamentary democracy all over the world.

71. **Mr. Gaombalet** (Central African Republic) said that the Central African Republic had just instituted a new parliament, marking its return to constitutional legality and democratic normalcy. Upon achieving independence, most African countries had embraced democracy based on the separation of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, but for the most part the initial impetus had not been sustained. In his country few regimes over the past 45 years could be described as truly democratic according to universal standards. Worse still, the past decade had been marked by military interventions in politics, which had impeded development, and jeopardized security, human rights and national unity. With help from other Central and West African States and United Nations agencies, the people of Central Africa had been able to turn that page of their sad history and hold presidential and parliamentary elections in April and May 2005. Learning from the mistakes of the past, the new National Assembly had introduced innovations: the majority and opposition parties were both represented among its officers and the same principle applied to the establishment of standing committees. Gender had been taken into account, among other things, by extending the mandate of the National Human Rights Commission to population, gender, development, human rights, international humanitarian law and advocacy issues.

72. His country hoped for assistance in strengthening its new parliamentary institution and supported the United Nations proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission. It hoped that other government partners would follow that lead in assisting with development problems. The people of the Central African Republic were justly proud of having achieved the return to constitutional rule but were aware that an inadequate approach to the country's economic and financial problems would lead it once again into an impasse. On its part, the parliament of the Central African Republic

committed itself to work towards the goals set forth in the Conference declaration.

73. **Ms. Tourné** (Latin American Parliament) said that Latin America was among the most unequal of the world's regions, and that created a structural barrier to the achievement of the objectives of the Millennium Declaration. It was imperative to provide stronger support and to rethink the development strategies for Latin America and the Caribbean, since in most countries of the region progress towards the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger had been insignificant.

74. The Latin American Parliament had proclaimed 2005 as the Year of the Latin American and Caribbean Woman and was stressing the need for a gender perspective. In Latin America and the Caribbean, extreme poverty had a female face and to avoid a gender analysis was to fail to address the reproduction of poverty. Social inclusion must be extended to the thousands of women without social security, education or a decent job. Providing modern birth control methods would help prevent 52 million unwanted pregnancies, 142,000 maternal deaths and 1.4 million infant deaths each year. In Latin America, where 21 per cent of maternal deaths were caused by high-risk abortions, it had become imperative for sexual and reproductive health to become an integral part of national development planning and to be included in country reporting on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, more than 60 per cent of those between 15 and 24 years of age with HIV/AIDS were young women. Only if regional and global agendas were updated to reflect a gender perspective could sustainable development be achieved.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

Inter-Parliamentary Union Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments

Summary record of the 5th meeting

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 9 September 2005, at 3 p.m.

President: Ms. Burdjanadze (Vice-President) (Georgia)
Later: Mr. Paéz Verdugo (President) (Chile)

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General debate on parliaments and multilateral cooperation: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century (*continued*)

Adoption of the Declaration

Closure of the Conference

Ms. Burdjanadze (Georgia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

General debate on parliaments and multilateral cooperation: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Liburd** (Saint Kitts and Nevis) said that exchanges of views at international conferences must be carried over into legitimate policy prescriptions long after those conferences were over. Faced with the task of implementing the Millennium Development Goals and dealing with human conflict and natural disaster in every corner of the globe, elected representatives must dedicate themselves to controlling unrest and turmoil within their national borders and beyond, while preserving the principles of democracy.

2. Saint Kitts and Nevis, the smallest independent nation in the Western Hemisphere, was forging alliances with more prosperous nations in an effort to buttress its own national initiatives and achieve its development goals. In a mutually reinforcing dynamic, parliaments and parliamentarians must create an enabling democratic environment for the successful implementation of United Nations peace and development activities while United Nations institutions reformed anachronistic features that impeded the advancement of democracy. In that connection, she called on the United Nations to take a proactive stance in maintaining peace in the Taiwan Strait and to uphold the principle of universality by giving a voice to the 23 million people of Taiwan, who had espoused the principles of democracy.

3. Cooperation, not cooption, based on a two-way flow of information and insights, must characterize the multilateralism of the future. Parliamentarians from small countries like Saint Kitts and Nevis had a valuable store of essential and unique insights that could spare countries large and small from unintended consequences and help to formulate policies that truly benefited the common man working in the factory and the sugar cane fields. She called for greater cooperation by multilateral agencies and institutions, and for greater understanding, in a truly integrated approach to addressing the major problems of the twenty-first century, from combating HIV/AIDS to eradicating poverty and hunger, to guaranteeing human rights and good governance. The English-speaking nations of the Caribbean had a proud tradition of stable, parliamentary democracy and stood ready to cooperate with other nations of the world to support that new form of multilateralism.

4. **Mr. Tomeing** (Marshall Islands) said that in order to effectively discharge their duties — law-making, representing the interests of their constituents and holding the executive branch of government accountable for its actions — parliamentarians must first have the necessary capacity. Sadly, many parliaments continued to face great challenges and were in need of assistance from the international community. The parliament of the Marshall Islands had been fortunate to receive assistance from the Pacific Islands Forum Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference and was currently working with development partners to begin the first phase of its capacity-building projects. Parliaments with inadequate capacity were in very real need of practical assistance in order to address the pressing problems of the times, particularly terrorism and HIV/AIDS.

5. He also appealed to the Inter-Parliamentary Union to consider the application by Taiwan, whose 23 million people represented too significant a portion of the world's population to be denied a voice in international affairs.

6. **Mr. Zaoralek** (Czech Republic) said that his country cherished the freedom and democracy it had been able to build in the past 15 years, having been occupied by the Nazis and a satellite of the Soviet régime throughout much of the twentieth century. The pressing issues of poverty and development and the unpredictability of natural disaster and terrorist attacks highlighted the continuing need for the United Nations, the establishment of shared goals among nations and respect for the principle of compromise and negotiations. Although the United Nations had been a recent target of criticism, the reality was that it was only as imperfect as each of its Member States. It made no sense to recreate a different institution; rather, there was an urgent need to reform the Organization and to increase solidarity among the countries of the world.

7. **Mr. Marini-Bodho** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that parliamentarians could provide vital support to international cooperation and the United Nations through international, regional, subregional and national parliamentary organizations. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union was a positive development and should be reinforced through a clear division of labour and the establishment of a structure for ongoing dialogue between them.

8. Parliamentarians were called upon to support international cooperation through the adoption of sound legislation and the establishment of specialized commissions within their organizational structures. The Government and Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo cooperated and consulted regularly with the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the United Nations Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). The Congolese Parliament had ratified international agreements on multilateral cooperation, whose implementation by its sectoral ministries was monitored by a permanent commission on foreign affairs within the Senate. Parliaments should also disseminate the Millennium Development Goals and support the project to reform the United Nations and make it more participatory and more representative of the world's peoples.

9. **Mr. Lupu** (Republic of Moldova) said that it was incumbent on parliaments to play a stronger role in international affairs, and that the Inter-Parliamentary Union was the most appropriate framework for that purpose. Parliaments were expanding their focus beyond the specific concerns of their own countries to global issues in a world characterized by globalization and regional integration, a trend reflected in the granting of observer status by the United Nations to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The involvement of parliamentarians brought legitimacy to efforts to address such major issues as international security, arms proliferation, failed States, terrorism and separatism.

10. Younger democracies should be intent on strengthening the democratic process by protecting and promoting human rights and maintaining constructive dialogue with civil society. In Moldova, parliamentarians had become increasingly involved in strengthening democracy and security in the region. In the summer, the Moldovan Parliament had supported a Ukrainian plan for settling the conflict in the eastern region of Moldova, with emphasis on the need for democratization and demilitarization. For the first time in history, the Moldovan Parliament was seeking to cooperate with non-governmental organizations and to maintain a dialogue with civil society. It was also deepening its cooperation with United Nations agencies in order to implement such national projects as the Human Rights National Action Plan and the Strategy for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction.

11. **Mr. Sobotka** (Czech Republic) said that, owing to their consensual nature, parliaments were often criticized for being ineffective and did not enjoy the respect they deserved. Sometimes they were undermined by the very executive branch that depended on their confidence, or by lobbyist groups intent on promoting their own narrow causes. If parliaments were to be strengthened, no one must be allowed to usurp their role as the watchdog of power.

12. Because it was also consensual and collective in character, the United Nations was often subjected to the same type of criticism. United Nations support for the initiatives of the Inter-Parliamentary Union would be an excellent starting point for a strategic partnership between the two organizations. The enforcement of democracy around the world should be a key mandate of a reformed United Nations, and the experience of

democratic parliaments could be of assistance. Reform should not be aimed at the endless expansion of the Organization's functions, or transforming it into a world Government — which it could never be — but rather on clearly defined and realistic goals, such as providing unconditional support for, and protection of, democracy.

13. **Mr. Ranabhat** (Nepal) said that enthusiasm for general and complete disarmament in the world, a prerequisite for peace and cooperation, appeared to be lacking. The Inter-Parliamentary Union should call for total disarmament, peace and cooperation among nations. The continuing economic imbalance between developed and developing countries was another serious obstacle to world peace. There was an urgent need for action in favour of the developing world, particularly the least developed countries, including the cancellation of the huge foreign debt burden of the least developed countries and a reversal of the declining trend in official development assistance.

14. There was no alternative to multi-party democracy as a guarantor of equal opportunity, basic freedoms and the fulfilment of basic needs for all in society. However, democracy in many parts of the world had not been able to put down deep roots.

15. In recent years, Maoist extremists had sown violence and destruction in Nepal, terrorizing innocent civilians, sabotaging the national economy, and derailing the democratic process and the Constitution introduced after the restoration of multi-party democracy 15 years earlier. Elections for parliament and the local councils had not been held in three years, and the absence of elected bodies had undermined government structures. The temporary unilateral ceasefire announced by the Maoists was a welcome development. National reconciliation among the legitimate political forces was crucial and could be brought about with help from the international community.

16. **Ms. Mason-Francis** (Antigua and Barbuda) said that her Government supported the agenda of the Conference and the ideas contained in the draft declaration, and noted that the constitutions of parliamentary democracies recognized a symbiotic relationship between Parliament and the Executive. While Parliament was designed to act as a check against abuse of executive authority and administrative power, in a

number of Caribbean countries, the Executive appeared to regard Parliament as an irritant and an impediment to the exercise of executive power. Such exercise of executive power was often anchored in the "winner-takes-all" syndrome, a dominant feature of the first-past-the-post system. Among the socially detrimental consequences of the situation, particularly in small countries, was the polarization of intellectual capital and a resulting brain drain that impoverished small States. Faced with government largely by executive fiat, few members of minority parties made sufficient use of the option to direct written questions to ministers, nor was government conduct questioned in select committees of Parliament. However, neither of those options was an acceptable substitute for strict adherence to the constitutionally mandated role of Parliament as the source of the Executive's ongoing legitimacy and authority.

17. Noting the urgency of the need for every Executive to accord to Parliament its essential status as the forum to which the Executive was at all times answerable, she expressed the hope that the current Conference could catalyse throughout the world a dedication to the principle that the Executive should be accountable to the people through Parliament, and called for a dedicated programme to elevate, in functional terms, the role of Parliament envisioned by the framers of the constitutions of the parliamentary democracies.

18. **Ms. Marshall-Burnett** (Jamaica) said that Jamaica supported the continued cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. Jamaica fully respected the rule of law and the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and had embarked on a comprehensive programme to complete the domestic legislation relevant to implementing the international conventions to which Jamaica was a party. Most recently, it had enacted counter-terrorism legislation to fulfil its obligations under Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). Its role as a staunch defender and promoter of human rights was exemplified by the increasing access of women to parliament and the growing number of female parliamentarians.

19. As current Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, Jamaica was helping to provide a voice to developing countries on such important issues as development, eliminating poverty, protecting the rights of women and children, and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It firmly believed that

active cooperation between North and South was the best basis for tackling such complex challenges as food security, natural disasters and HIV/AIDS, and called on all parliamentarians to work actively on those issues.

20. **Ms. Boyd-Knights** (Dominica) said that Dominica fully supported the strengthening of multilateral cooperation in the interests of enabling mankind to face the challenges of fighting poverty, promoting democracy, securing peace and ensuring human rights for all. She noted that small States such as her own had been rendered vulnerable by the trade liberalization process, but no matter how small or how strong, no State could prosper without cooperative linkages with others. It was crucial for parliamentarians worldwide to urge their Governments to support reforms to strengthen the United Nations and make it a more influential body. Multilateralism was essential for the realization of the development goals to which the global community had committed itself at the Millennium Summit.

21. As parliaments were charged with the duty of giving legislative effect to treaties and conventions, parliamentarians should be encouraged to familiarize themselves with international conventions and protocols in order to promote greater dialogue and multilateral cooperation, thereby enabling the ordinary citizens they represented to become active participants in the formulation of foreign policy. In order to address the perceived lack of public input in institutional decision-making, parliamentarians should hold ministers to higher standards of accountability. Through the dissemination of accurate information by the media, citizens must be made to feel connected to a process whose outcome they were able to influence. IPU was ideally positioned to persuade Governments through their parliaments that multilateral cooperation would become more relevant to the citizenry when the executive and legislative branches of their Governments acted in unison in their interest.

22. **Mr. Tausi** (Tuvalu) said that the interdependency of countries driven by globalization forces required a stronger role for parliaments in international relations on a range of issues beyond democracy and good governance. His delegation supported the draft declaration of the Conference where it discussed the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations reforms, but would also like to stress the importance of the threat of climate change and the urgent necessity to

mitigate and adapt to its impacts. Small island developing States like Tuvalu urgently needed financial and technical support to adapt to the impact of climate change from those who had contributed to its cause. There was an urgent global need to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by switching to renewable energy sources. Doing so made sound economic and social sense and could contribute to poverty eradication. However, such action required strong individual and collective leadership, so far lacking. Lastly, his delegation strongly supported proper consideration for Taiwan's representation in international bodies such as the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

23. **Mr. Lucero** (Ecuador) said that democracy as a system could not be separated from the activities and desires of the people and acquired strength, recognition and legitimacy as a tool for enhancing them. Democracy referred not only to the political system of relations between the citizenry and those who held power, but to the integral popular development entailed in the quest for justice as a solid foundation for peace. The great challenge of the twenty-first century was finding ways to humanize power, technology and money for the greater good of humanity and to take the best and most reliable policy decisions in light of their importance for humanity's very existence. When the greater part of humanity suffered from poverty, disease and ignorance, meaningful borders could no longer exist. In preparation for war, expansionist policies and arms races, science, civilization, technology and human intelligence were being put at the service of the destruction of all that humanity had worked to develop and build. He stressed the need to turn aside from that path and called on all countries to join together and work to achieve a better world, one dominated by democracy, equality, peace, security and full respect for human rights.

24. **Mr. Pawanteh** (Malaysia) said that the function of the Conference, only the second such to be held in five years, was to ask for a more meaningful role for legislators in international affairs. In its primary objectives, the Conference appeared to have the support of career and professional diplomats in the service of their respective countries as well as from within the United Nations Organization itself. The Conference did not seek to usurp from the executive branches of Governments their central and primary role in the conduct of diplomacy and foreign policy, nor did it

threaten the principle of the sovereignty of nation-States. He therefore confessed inability to understand the need to wait a further five years for the next Conference, and urged instead that it be held sooner.

25. **Mr. de Venecia** (Philippines) said his country's hopes for long-lasting peace in the Asia-Pacific region hinged on the founding of a "federation of nations" incorporating both shores of the Pacific Ocean. To that end, the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace had already decided, as the Philippines had proposed, to convert itself into an Asian Parliamentary Assembly on the model of other regional European, Latin American and African parliaments.

26. His delegation proposed that the United Nations should immediately initiate inter-faith dialogues, rejecting the so-called "clash of civilizations", in order to heal schisms and isolate the extremists who advocated terrorism in the name of religion. Such dialogues could help to heal conflicts among religious groups in many areas throughout the world; a unit to initiate, oversee and monitor such dialogues could be created within the United Nations system as part of the United Nations reforms.

27. His delegation also proposed that, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, 50 per cent of the debt-service payments received by creditor countries should be ploughed back into the economies of the debtor countries as equity investments in such areas as reforestation, water systems, schools, infrastructure projects and anti-poverty programmes. The proposal constituted neither debt-forgiveness, debt-cancellation, debt moratoriums nor debt discounts; it required no new monies from parliaments or governments of rich countries, nor did it entail any reduction in the creditors' financial assets. Participation by creditors would be voluntary, with creditors able to choose which projects to support in a specific debtor country. The proposal had already been welcomed by the Governments of Italy and Germany; it was being reviewed by a technical committee set up by the Paris Club and with the collaboration of the poverty reduction and debt relief sections of the British Treasury, and had aroused the interest of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as well as the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The time had come to defeat the poverty of nations and help change the world.

28. **Mr. Bio-Bigou** (Benin) said that the Parliament of Benin was working to foster

democracy in the country and throughout Africa. It was deeply involved in international and regional affairs through its active participation in institutions and mechanisms put in place by the African Union and other organizations. In the context of realizing the Millennium Development Goals, the Parliament of Benin had set up a mechanism called "the deputy on the road to the village", affording deputies constant contact with the realities of people's lives in order to better reflect them in policymaking.

29. The challenges facing countries in responding to the pressing needs of their peoples were too numerous for any one country to deal with by itself. They called for the pooling of the efforts of all elements of the international community, including Governments, parliaments, academia, civil society and non-governmental organizations. The sole and irreplaceable framework for that global alliance was the United Nations, whose Secretary-General had launched a fundamental reform of the system in order to enable it to better meet the needs of the world's countries and peoples. The opportunity to provide humanity with a chance of survival must not be missed. The current divergence of viewpoints on such issues as Security Council expansion, the transformation of the Commission on Human Rights and so on must be surmounted in order to arrive at a consensus. All parties to the current discussion on United Nations reform must come to agreement on the concept of a threat to peace, the conditions for resorting to force within a collective security framework, and the right and duty to protect.

30. **Mr. Blöndal** (Iceland) said that parliaments could not fulfil their roles in isolation, but must play an active role in international relations and develop relationships among themselves. One result of the ongoing Conference was a decision taken that very morning by the small States of Europe to develop cooperation and discussion on issues of common interest. Among the problems that could only be solved through global effort, climate change was of particular concern. The warming of the Arctic would have global effects, which parliaments must address and must place at the top of the international agenda.

31. Althingi, the Parliament of Iceland, had been founded in the year 930, and parliamentary tradition had shaped the country's history and culture. In a global context, it was through democratic parliaments, fair and free elections and truly

representative assemblies that humanity would at last reach its goals of freedom, human rights and brotherhood for all.

32. **Ms. Junejo** (Pakistan) said that the parliamentarians of the world had an important responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Innocent civilians had unfortunately been the principal victims and targets of the ever-mutating threat of terrorism, and a united front was required to defeat that evil. That would require agreement on a legal definition of terrorism and a comprehensive strategy to address its root causes. There should be an end to the maligning and defamation of Islam and Muslim peoples and nations, such as Palestinians and Kashmiris, who were subject to political and military repression. Her President's two-pronged strategy of "enlightened moderation" was predicated on global solidarity in fighting extremism and terrorism; it deserved international support.

33. Parliaments had an important role to play in ensuring equality and human dignity by encouraging and facilitating the ratification of international human rights instruments and monitoring their implementation. The United Nations reform was comprehensive, and was not just about adding a few new members to the Security Council. The reforms should make that body more relevant to the interests of all nations. The current discontent between United Nations conference rooms and national parliament chambers must be rectified so that cooperation with the United Nations would foster global peace, security and development.

34. **Mr. Nkomo** (Zimbabwe) said that, as Africa sought to deepen democracy and a democratic culture, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) had recently adopted principles and guidelines for the conduct of democratic elections. The peaceful settlement of conflicts in the Sudan and Angola and the commitment by the countries of the Great Lakes region to peaceful resolution of conflicts was also encouraging. However, he noted with regret the continuing inadequacy of international efforts to deal effectively with conflicts in Member States; broad statements of good intent were not translated into practical policies. Current global security initiatives tended to be directed by certain developed countries, and United Nations involvement in peace initiatives was thus compromised. While he condemned the increasing number of terrorist attacks, he urged the powerful States to avoid unilateral action outside the United Nations framework. All nations, big or small,

must respect the international agreements to which they were signatories.

35. Globalization had emerged as a dominant ideology binding nations, yet the concepts of human rights and good governance that it entailed had sometimes been manipulated by the dominant forces in the world to punish States not under Western influence. Globalization was not a panacea and could only be meaningful if it brought sustainable development to the poorest countries. It should not be envisaged merely as a process creating free movement of capital.

36. The United Nations Member States had agreed to the Millennium Development Goals aimed at poverty eradication, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) had also pledged to eradicate poverty and place countries on the path of sustainable growth and development. Unfortunately, it seemed that the world's powerful nations were applying the notion of the "deserving poor" as a condition for the granting of assistance.

37. On the eve of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, he hoped that a reformed United Nations would pay greater attention to the role of parliaments as representative democratic institutions.

38. *Mr. Páez Verdugo (Chile) took the Chair.*

Adoption of the Declaration

39. **Ms. Udre** (Latvia), Rapporteur, presenting the draft declaration, said that the text was the result of a long and careful process of consultation in an effort to build a broad consensus among parliamentarians represented. The core message of the draft declaration was that parliaments had an essential role to play to bridge the democracy gap in international relations. Starting from the premise that parliaments embodied democracy, the draft declaration acknowledged daunting challenges but also saw opportunities for the world community, which would succeed in facing those challenges only by acting together.

40. The draft reaffirmed the United Nations as the cornerstone of global cooperation, and stated that the proposed reforms of the Organization must recognize the link between democracy, security, development and human rights. In response to comments received, a new paragraph 6 bis covering human rights had been added to the draft. Language had also been added to paragraph 4 calling for effective management reform.

41. In the section of the draft concerning the relationship between parliaments and the United Nations, it was emphasized that parliaments must contribute to and monitor international negotiations, oversee the enforcement of government commitments and ensure national compliance with international norms. IPU could be considered a unique global parliamentary counterpart of the United Nations. Among possible future tasks, it could ensure that national parliaments were better informed about United Nations activities, hold more parliamentary hearings and specialized meetings at the United Nations and cooperate more closely with regional parliamentary assemblies with a view to enhancing coherence in parliamentary cooperation. The text also proposed to consolidate the ability of IPU to promote democracy, defend human rights and improve equitable gender representation.

42. In the debate on how best to organize inter-parliamentary cooperation, some would like to create new international and regional structures to work with multilateral institutions, while others felt that there was no need to create new entities, but there was a need to work differently. The declaration called on IPU to avail itself of the expertise of standing and select committees of national parliaments in dealing with specific issues requiring international cooperation.

43. Suggestions made during the debate which could not be reflected in the draft declaration included holding more frequent conferences and setting up a parliamentary partnership for the Millennium Development Goals. These suggestions had been noted and would be followed up. She would now submit the draft declaration to the Conference for adoption by consensus.

44. **Mr. Weisglas** (Netherlands) said that, in his parliamentary system his role as Speaker of the House was non-political, and thus he was not authorized to endorse the political aspects of the draft declaration. He did, however, wish to express a reservation: in his view, IPU in its current form was not yet equipped to be the one and only body to exercise democratic control of the United Nations. National parliaments should focus on monitoring their own Governments.

45. *The Declaration of the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments was adopted.*

46. *The President declared the Conference closed.*

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

Closure of the Conference

