



# 3<sup>rd</sup> WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT

United Nations, Geneva, 19-21 July 2010



20 July 2010

## PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT DECLARATION

### SECURING GLOBAL DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Rapporteur: Mr. Mathurin Nago, Speaker of the National Assembly of Benin

Mr. President,  
Distinguished colleagues,

I am pleased to present to you the final declaration of this Conference. The text is contained in document SP-CONF/2010/7-DR.rev.

Over the last year, a group of Speakers convened by President Gurirab has met five times to help him prepare this conference and its outcome document. Throughout this exercise, we have made a conscientious effort to build a broad consensus among all the parliaments represented here.

The text we have produced is a declaration of intent, a political statement containing our views as political and parliamentary leaders.

The text is built around a single focussed message: our parliaments have an essential role to play in securing global democratic accountability for the common good.

The declaration starts with the premise that accountability and representation lie at the heart of democracy and that Parliament is the central institution of any democracy.

In this first part of the text we allude to the linkages between parliaments and democracy. We recognize that democratization is a continuing process for all parliaments. We pledge to make our parliaments more representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective. We are committed to assisting each other in this effort.

In the following section we address the issue of our parliaments' role on the international stage. We call for an imaginative leap of faith. Today's multilateral systems should allow for much greater consideration for the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of people everywhere whose voices go unheard.

We believe this can be done through greater parliamentary involvement in international cooperation. This involvement must be firmly rooted in the daily work of our parliaments, much of which relates to ensuring accountability.

The United Nations is the most universal, representative and authoritative international organization of sovereign States and it plays an irreplaceable role in international affairs. In the third section of the declaration we pledge our support to the Organization. We continue to extend our cooperation in keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

We commend the United Nations for enshrining the world's development objectives in the Millennium Development Goals. We endorse these goals. In this, as in so many other areas, we all stand to gain from building a closer and more powerful relationship between parliaments and the United Nations. The Millennium Development Goals will not be met without a strong sense of accountability.

The declaration recognizes the role which the IPU has played in facilitating international political cooperation and in developing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations. The last section of the declaration elaborates on what we expect of the IPU.

The declaration concludes in its final paragraph on a note of guarded optimism. There is a shared understanding that we can only address these challenges by working together and we, who have a popular mandate to represent the people, will not be found wanting. We, in our parliaments, can and will do our part in securing global democratic accountability for the common good of humankind.

Mr. President,  
Dear colleagues,

The process for preparing this document has had its advantages. It has however also made it very difficult for us to amend the text at the very last moment. When we arrived in Geneva, the Preparatory Committee was faced with a huge number of requests to amend and improve further on the text. It simply could not be done.

The Committee made one exception by adding a paragraph relating to terrorism. It does not attempt to address this issue comprehensively and does not for example deal with its root causes; it is limited to action we must take in parliament to assist in the fight against terrorism.

While we decided that we could not accept any further amendments, we were unable to reach a consensus on the last section of the declaration which deals with the IPU. We therefore announced our intention to continue consultations to see if we could reach a consensus. Yesterday evening we met and the text of section D represents the fruit of our labour.

I would have liked to announce that we reached consensus. But we did not. We had two basic positions. Some of our colleagues do not want this declaration to refer to the IPU or to its future direction in detail. They say the debate about the IPU's future strategy is taking place in the IPU and should be left to the IPU. Those who defended that position wanted to replace section D with a single sentence referring to this process in the IPU.

Others felt that the conference should express a view on the IPU; not by telling the IPU what to do, but by acknowledging the contribution the IPU makes to our common endeavour of building greater democracy and suggesting some areas where it can be helpful in the future.

It is this latter approach which gained a majority in our Committee and which is reflected in section D of the declaration. It contains the proposal we had received for a reference to the ongoing discussion in the IPU. As you can see in paragraph 34, this text is now neutral and takes no side in the debate.

We amended other elements of part D to align it with IPU's own Statutes and Rules and to wording used in United Nations resolutions. We made it clearer in the text that we have limited resources and what we say in relation to the IPU contains no assumption that resources will be increased.

Mr. President,

I am conscious of the fact that the declaration is not perfect. There are those of you who would have wanted certain parts to have been different. Whether we are talking about the world today, the major crises, the UN or the IPU, we have a divergence of opinions. It is quite natural. We are, after all, political leaders.

Let me nonetheless urge you to adopt this declaration. In the parliamentary tradition, this is maybe the best compromise we can forge at this stage.

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Following Mr. Nago's presentation of the draft declaration, the President of the IPU said:

"Thank you, Mr. President.

Dear colleagues, we have now heard from the Rapporteur. I think he has presented the declaration in a very clear manner. He has drawn our attention to the fact that this declaration is not perfect.

There is a large consensus on most of the text but we do remain with differences of opinion on some specific parts. For example, we know that there are a number of Speakers, particularly from countries in the European Union, who do not subscribe to everything that is said in Part D of the declaration.

We now need to continue our dialogue on these issues.

With that very clear understanding of the limitations of the text, I now invite you to adopt the declaration."