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Geneva, 15 July 2008

**Briefing for members of parliament attending  
the opening of the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly  
New York, Friday, 26 September 2008**

Madam President,  
Mr. President,

As you know, it is becoming increasingly common practice for members of parliament to be part of their country's national delegation to the opening session of the General Assembly. This offers them an opportunity to exchange experiences with delegates from all corners of the world and to follow the debate that takes place every year on the major challenges and opportunities facing the international community.

This year's debate takes place from 23 September to 3 October. It coincides with two high-level discussions on Africa's development needs (Monday, 22 September) and the Millennium Development Goals (Thursday, 25 September). While the discussion on Africa will focus on the special needs of that continent in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, the high-level event on the MDGs will take stock of progress achieved in meeting these goals half-way towards the target date of 2015. Both events will feature roundtables and side events and will be open to observer organizations such as the IPU. Background information on the high-level discussions can be downloaded from the website of the United Nations at [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).

I have pleasure in inviting members of your parliament attending the General Assembly to a lunch time discussion on Friday, 26 September. This will take place in Conference Room 6 at UN Headquarters, from 1:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. There will be interpretation into English, French and Spanish, and a light lunch will be served during the proceedings.

Participants will have an opportunity both to exchange views with their parliamentary colleagues and to discuss the upcoming *Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU*. As you know, this biennial report sets the stage for a resolution on cooperation between the two organizations which is submitted to the General Assembly for adoption during its fall session.

I would be most grateful if you could bring this information to the attention of members of your parliament traveling to New York for the General Assembly. Those who wish to attend the lunch time discussion are kindly requested to advise our New York Office in writing by email ([ny-office@mail.ipu.org](mailto:ny-office@mail.ipu.org)) or by fax (+1 212 557 3954).

The IPU Office in New York will be happy to respond to any queries concerning this event.

Yours sincerely,

Anders B. Johnsson  
Secretary General