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New York, 19 November 2009 - Remarks to the Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations

The Honourable Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Excellencies,

Honourable Members of Parliament,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to take part in this Parliamentary hearing. I highly value your role as Parliamentarians.

As lawmakers, you take the work that is done in these halls and help make it real on the ground.

You translate international standards and agreements into domestic legislation and regulations.

You have your finger on the pulse of pressing issues of global concern.

Your focus here today demonstrates all of that. I thank you for highlighting effective responses to the global economic crisis.

This challenge strikes at the heart of people's everyday concerns.

The global recession is hitting every society, threatening achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and undermining security.

Markets may be going up, but so, too, is unemployment. An additional one hundred million people could fall into poverty by the end of this year.

This is compounded by other challenges we face – the food crisis, pandemic flu, and, of course, climate change.

We all know that the impact of the economic and financial crisis is most severe on the most vulnerable. They are among those who are most affected yet least

responsible.

I have consistently spoken out for their needs -- here at the United Nations, at the G-20 and many other fora.

This was also a main driver for the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development held here in June.

It is also my rationale in mobilizing the entire United Nations network to respond in a broad and coordinated way to the global economic crisis.

We have embarked on a coordinated program that covers many fronts. Let me touch on some of them.

First, we are focusing on the vulnerable. The UN system is providing additional assistance to those who have been hardest-hit by the economic crisis. We are bringing together funding and operational capacities to develop a concrete approach tailored to each country's needs.

Earlier this year, I also called for a truly global stimulus—a \$1 trillion effort to advance the interests of all nations, especially developing nations. The G-20 agreed on a substantial package of financial support, but it is only a beginning. It falls upon us, collectively, to make sure that good intentions translate into effective action.

We are also creating a Global Impact Vulnerability Alert System to help illustrate in real-time what is really happening to the poorest and most vulnerable allowing us to take action more quickly.

Second, recovery through green growth. We are now just days away from the Copenhagen Climate Conference. Copenhagen can be a catalyst for powering green growth. We know that investing in green sectors improves chances for recovery and sustainable growth while preserving the environment.

Green growth investments will generate enormous benefits for development as well as our planet. Let us continue to work together to invest in green.

Third, food security. I have just returned from the Food Security Summit in Rome. As I said, there our job is not just to feed the hungry, but to empower the hungry to feed themselves. The UN's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis has moved substantially in addressing both the urgent needs and longer-term efforts to develop sustainable food systems.

Fourth, trade. The UN Trade Initiative is working to counter protectionism, promote transparency and the sharing of best practices on trade finance markets,

and reach a successful conclusion of the Doha Round.

Fifth and fundamentally, jobs. The Global Jobs Pact aims to focus the attention of decision-makers on employment and decent work as the foundation for long-term recovery.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to meet these challenges, your continued engagement is critical.

It is even more imperative as we approach next year's United Nations summit on the Millennium Development Goals.

The Summit will be a timely opportunity to recommit to the MDGs and all it will take to meet them.

Your voice and vote will be vital – particularly in keeping our commitments to the most vulnerable. In past economic crises, development assistance has been cut at the very time it is most needed. The global recession cannot be an excuse to abandon pledges. On the contrary, there is an urgent need to increase the volume, quality and reliability of aid flows. This is central to a coordinated global recovery plan.

We also need to work together to reform global rules and institutions. Greater transparency and accountability is a basic issue of effectiveness, legitimacy and public faith. We must work to expand the voice and participation of developing countries -- in decision-making in general. And in particular in the Bretton Woods Institutions.

Inclusive growth requires inclusive institutions.

The global frameworks and bodies created generations ago must be made more accountable, more representative and more effective.

With concerted action, we can move from recession to recovery to renewal.

Thank you again for your leadership and support to realizing these goals.

I look forward to our continued work together.