



# INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

New York, 14 November 2013

**Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations:**

**Statement by the President**

**Hon. Abdelwahad Radi**

President Ashe,  
President Osorio,  
Dear colleagues,

Leonard Bernstein, the famous composer, was once asked how he was able to write such wonderful music, to which he responded: “two things are needed for great deeds, a plan, and not quite enough time to do it!”

We are here today because we have a plan that we share in common, but also because the clock is ticking and we have only about a year and a half left to get it right. The conditions appear propitious, then, for a great piece of work to emerge at the end – provided that we put our minds to it and truly apply our best efforts. The plan is that for a new generation of Sustainable Development Goals as part of an expanded vision for the future of the planet and of humanity as a whole.

The emergencies before us are all too obvious and call for resolute measures, a vision well beyond the usual, political daring, and a willingness by us politicians, diplomats, and indeed all people, to look beyond our particular narrow interests and focus instead on the common good for all.

Let me ask:

Can we continue to live it up here in the so-called developed countries when billions continue to go hungry, homeless and with basic human rights like education and health denied, while the belly of the earth is being depleted of its resources?

Can we continue to regard the planet, and our fellow human beings, as disposable, or as things to be exploited in the vain pursuit of material consumption and accumulation - as if that were all there is to life and well-being?

Can we continue to fiddle at the margin of the climate change problem as if this was not the greatest challenge in the history of humanity?

Can the fundamental rights of half of the population - women - continue to be trampled on to some extent or another virtually everywhere, perpetually hampering their deepest aspirations?

Can we continue to ignore that the world revolves around the wishes of the few, and that both at home and here in the international sphere, too many are left out of the room for their voices to be heard?

Can we continue to ignore the corrupting influence of money in our political systems, and the lack of transparency and accountability all around?

I say: No, we can't.

At bottom, these are the real questions of our meeting, and the ones we will need to address in all honesty, and in a spirit of solidarity, as we proceed toward 2015.

I have been in politics a long time, and I have seen everything. I attended several of these hearings at the UN as well as many other meetings. But let me tell you: this is by far our most important discussion at the UN in a long time. And I am excited that it is taking place right now, under my presidency. It is the most important not just because of the subject matter, but because it is linked-up perfectly to a process unfolding at the UN right now and that will continue in various stages until September 2015.

This meeting is the culmination of many things we have done this year already to get the world of parliaments aware of the post-2015 process and to garner the views of thousands of you in one way or another. It builds on the wonderful outcome of our spring Assembly, the Quito Communique, which in a few pages speaks volumes about the thirst for change and give us guidance toward a more humane and sustainable world for all.

It is also a wonderful opportunity to tell the UN that we are here to stay, not just in the lead up to the SDGs but afterwards, for the long-run that will require a commitment to implementation from all of us. A global agreement is worth nothing if it does not get the support of parliaments around the world. Who will hold governments accountable for those commitments, if not us? Where is the political debate to pass the required legislation, if not in our houses? Where will the money come from, if not the budget that we are responsible for? How will the people be represented, if not through us?

To get our support, a global agreement needs to involve us from the beginning. It can't be handed down to us after the deal is signed. So it is important that the UN hears our message and that it is taken into consideration by the relevant committees here.

I know that you, President Ashe, have decided to devote much of your presidency to this process, ensuring that it is as inclusive as possible. This meeting today is a testament to that commitment. I hope it will impress upon the rest of the UN community the need to keep parliaments engaged every step of the way, including during the more politically charged negotiations that will start in September of next year.

As for you, President Osorio, let me thank you whole-heartedly for agreeing to co-sponsor this event. ECOSOC is itself undergoing deep reforms. I know that part of

that process will open up new windows of opportunity for parliaments to contribute to the work of the Council in novel ways. We want to assist you in your endeavor to place the Council at the center of global accountability for the new agenda. And we want to make sure all parliaments are aware of its important work.

And now, without further ado, I say to you: let the music begin!