

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO THE 114<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**  
**Nairobi, 7 May 2006**

*Delivered by Mr. Amir Dossal, Executive Director,  
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It gives me pleasure to send my greetings to all participants in this Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly. You meet at a critical time for the future of democracy, and for the future of the United Nations.

Since your last Assembly, important reforms have been put in place at the United Nations. The outcome of the 2005 World Summit has led to key developments, including the establishment of a Human Rights Council, to give the Organization a fresh start in this vital area; the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission, to assist countries emerging from conflict; the launch of a UN Democracy Fund, to reinforce the work of the UN system in democracy-building; and the introduction of wide-ranging management reforms to enable the Organization to respond to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With these and other measures, we are continuing our efforts to build a more effective instrument of service to humankind.

The Summit also called for strengthened ties between the United Nations and national and regional parliaments, in particular through the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Member States recognized that the involvement of parliaments is crucial if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and implement the Summit Outcome. As representatives of a country's people, parliaments are uniquely positioned to promote human rights and the rule of law, to safeguard the rights of minorities and to enact legislation that will empower women. As one of the arbiters of the social contract that should exist between governments and the governed, parliaments have a responsibility to ensure that social policies are both responsive and sustainable. Parliaments can also contribute meaningfully to post-conflict peace-building, in particular by fostering national dialogue and supporting reconstruction and transitional justice.

As you know, the Declaration adopted by the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, which was held at UN Headquarters just before last September's Summit, stated that "Parliament embodies democracy". The United Nations, for its part, carries out wide-ranging work to support democracy and to ensure the right of all people to choose their leaders. We help nascent democracies to conduct elections and promote transparent, accountable governance. We work with countries emerging from a violent past to build democratic institutions and strengthen civil society. In the developing world, we assist one of every three parliaments. We do this because the state of democracy in our world is everybody's business. Democracies generally act peacefully towards each other. It enables internal disputes to be resolved through political means, reducing the appeal of violent extremism. And when practiced in good faith, and without

the corruption that undermines public trust, democracy helps to ensure that governments are accountable to the people.

On this and other major global issues of common concern, I welcome the IPU's Annual Parliamentary Hearings in New York, which provide a valuable parliamentary perspective. I look forward to building a stronger partnership between our two organizations, and offer my best wishes for a productive assembly.