

United Nations Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

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Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly, at the Inter-parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations

Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Mr. Alonso Diaz-Caneja, Vice President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,
Mr. Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,
Her Excellency Mrs. Anda Filip, Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the United Nations,
Honorable Members of Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to open today's joint hearing with national parliamentarians and the General Assembly.

I would start by congratulating President Theo-Ben Guirirab for his successful presidency.

I would also like to recognise the newly elected president of the IPU, His Excellency Mr. Abdelwahed Radi of Morocco.

I understand that Mr. Radi is not able to join us today because of important political events in Morocco, so I welcome IPU's Vice President, Mr. Alonso Diaz-Caneja of Mexico, as today's Chair.

We have in this room today a most distinguished group of parliamentarians. Your passion, foresight and genuine leadership play a central role in ensuring that international policies in the areas of democracy, peace, and development are reflected in national debates.

With the help of IPU, parliaments provide direct input to the work of the United Nations, helping to translate global commitments into national legislation and policies. I commend the IPU Network's hard work, innovation and international partnerships, and its contribution particularly to environmental protection and to improving living standards.

Cooperation between IPU and the UN is mutually beneficial.

Parliamentarians bring to the UN their collective knowledge and expertise. The UN provides a forum to share ideas and lessons learned, which can be brought home and applied in policy-making and the development of legislation.

Turning to the main theme of this year’s hearing: political accountability. This is indeed a pertinent theme for our time. All over the world, populations are calling for more responsive government that works for the good of society as a whole.

Globally, the issue of accountability is best seen in the workings of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Assembly is the most legitimate world body. It is the only place in the world where all countries come together as equals, regardless of their power and wealth - one member, one vote!

However, in recent years the General Assembly has struggled to adapt to changing global realities.

As part of my work as President of the General Assembly, I place great emphasis on the reform and revitalization of the General Assembly, so that it retains the necessary political power and remains efficient, effective and representative.

To do so, there must be strong political will to realize the resolutions and decisions of the Assembly.

Turning to your agenda over the next two days, the first session of this hearing will consider a resolution that was adopted just this past spring, for the first time, on “Strengthening the role of mediation in peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention and resolution”.

The theme of mediation is one of my key focus areas this session. In September at the IPU Parliamentary Briefing, mediation was raised with distinguished parliamentarians from different countries. It was a useful meeting for us. As we have seen in some countries, Parliaments and their members can make meaningful contributions to mediation efforts.

I hope that by considering this particular resolution as you discuss the question of accountability, you will also have an opportunity to become familiar with the issue and – perhaps - once home will promote and encourage its implementation.

In addition to this issue, over the next two days you have on your agenda questions relating to the situation of youth, the role of civil society, and the management of public funds.

These issues are also on the agenda of the General Assembly, in one way or another.

So before us all are key questions:

What can the UN and parliaments do together to help ensure a bright future for young people?

What lessons can the UN and parliaments share on how to include civil society in decision-making?

At a time of enormous stress on public funds, and with important events like the High Level Dialogue of the General Assembly on financing for development around the corner, what can be done to make

sure that budgets – of governments, but also of international organizations - are administered transparently and in the best interest of all?

By asking these and other questions I hope that this Hearing will contribute to re-defining current notions of “accountability”, and strengthen the ways in which accountability is effected.

Before concluding I would like to highlight one important upcoming event: the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development – Rio+20. As forums for public consultations and decision-making, parliaments all over the world can play an active role in the Conference preparations. This will enrich and strengthen our global debate on how to address our increasingly unsustainable world.

Distinguished colleagues,

Every parliamentarian present here has experiences and innovations to share. Importantly, you also have at your finger tips the practical tools to realize our common goals. Each of you therefore has a critical role, and a responsibility, to play in building global prosperity.

I wish you a fruitful Hearing. Thank you.