



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

**Resolution adopted unanimously by the 113th Assembly
(Geneva, 19 October 2005)**

**NATURAL DISASTERS: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN PREVENTION,
REHABILITATION, RECONSTRUCTION AND THE PROTECTION OF
VULNERABLE GROUPS**

The 113th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Expressing deep concern at the recurrence of natural disasters and their increasing impact in recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term adverse social, economic and environmental consequences throughout the world,

Recalling the resolutions adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on natural disasters at its 108th Conference, held in Santiago, Chile and at its 112th Assembly, held in Manila, the Philippines,

Aware that it is essential to ensure human safety, and also that there is an urgent need to continue developing and using existing scientific and technical knowledge to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, and *emphasizing* the need for developing countries to have access to related technologies so that they are able to deal effectively with natural disasters,

Distressed that over 50,000 people were killed in South Asia as a result of a major earthquake which took place on 8 October 2005, and which has left thousands with serious injuries and has resulted in massive loss of property,

Also distressed at the loss of life and destruction of property in the wake of the hurricanes that hit several states of the United States of America and the typhoons that affected Japan in August and September 2005, and the hurricanes that ravaged Mexico and some countries in Central America in early October 2005,

Also distressed at the loss of life and destruction caused by famine and other natural disasters in parts of Africa,

Expressing sincere condolences to the bereaved families as well as to the people, parliaments and governments of the affected countries,

Appreciating the efforts of the affected nations to respond to the destruction caused by the earthquake, and the cooperation extended by the international community in relief and rescue efforts,

Also appreciating the role of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and international organizations in providing humanitarian assistance to the victims,

Emphasizing that disaster preparedness and management, including the reduction of vulnerability to natural disasters, is an important element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

Stressing the importance of the Hyogo Declaration and Framework for Action 2005 - 2015 of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Japan from 18 to 22 January 2005, in developing effective disaster reduction strategies at the national level, and *also stressing* the importance of capacity-building to achieve this objective,

Recognizing that women, children and other vulnerable groups are seriously affected by natural disasters, and that there is a need to pay special attention to alleviating the pain and suffering of these persons in post-disaster situations,

Emphasizing the need for psychological assistance and counselling to eliminate mental trauma, particularly among children affected by natural disasters, through various kinds of support provided by governments, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs),

Also emphasizing that the commitment of the international community, including States and international organizations, is vital in helping States to build their disaster management capacities and is crucial in rehabilitation and reconstruction in post-disaster situations,

Stressing the need for continued commitment by the international community to provide assistance for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of areas and communities in South Asia affected by the earthquake,

1. *Expresses* its solidarity with the people and communities affected by natural disasters, particularly those affected by the devastating earthquake that struck South Asia on 8 October 2005;
2. *Affirms* the need for an effective international disaster reduction strategy, as well as for commitment and efforts to assist in rescue, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in post-disaster situations;
3. *Calls upon* all Member Parliaments of the IPU and relevant international organizations to consider establishing databases of the human and material resources that are available to countries to effectively deal with natural disasters;
4. *Calls upon* parliaments to urge their governments to build capacity through the establishment of early warning systems, setting up evacuation centres and disaster prevention measures to facilitate quick and efficient disaster reporting mechanisms;
5. *Stresses* the need for timely, concerted and focused rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of disasters to mitigate the suffering of the affected populations;

6. *Emphasizes* that parliaments can play an important role in mobilizing national resources for reconstruction and development efforts in disaster-affected areas;
7. *Also emphasizes* that international assistance can effectively supplement national resources in rehabilitation, reconstruction and development efforts in disaster-affected areas;
8. *Emphasizes* that relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts should place particular emphasis on projects devoted to the care and development of women, children and other vulnerable groups;
9. *Appreciates* the important contribution made by NGOs in relief and rescue work, as well as in the long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction phase in disaster-affected areas;
10. *Calls upon* States to recognize the interrelationship between the various climatic phenomena throughout the world and environmental protection, and the responsibility of all countries to carry out actions and global programmes to reduce environmental impacts such as those caused by high emissions and the release of pollutants into the atmosphere and water bodies, deforestation and the wasteful use of natural resources;
11. *Expresses support* for the endeavours of the Senior United Nations System Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza, and *urges* Member Parliaments to play their part in ensuring that the necessary funds are made available and that information and guidance is adequately disseminated among populations;
12. *Also calls upon* States to recognize the importance of developing an international framework to govern the provision of humanitarian assistance in accordance with the principles of neutrality and impartiality, and with full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States;
13. *Invites* all Member Parliaments of the IPU to take urgent action to follow up on the recommendations contained in this resolution.