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Social development

General and complete disarmament

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Note verbale dated 10 December 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the Secretary-General and, in its capacity as Chair of the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, has the honour to forward herewith the text of the following documents and resolutions adopted by the 129th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Geneva from 7 to 9 October 2013, to the General Assembly:

The list of documents, under items 27 (Social development), 99 (General and complete disarmament), 106 (Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction), 125 (United Nations reform: measures and proposals), 126 (Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union) of the agenda of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, is as follows:

- Report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Committee on United Nations Affairs (debates on interaction between parliaments and United Nations country teams, least developed countries, disarmament and weapons of mass destruction, people with disabilities and indigenous peoples) (see annex I)
- Report on the Inter-Parliamentary Union mission to Côte d'Ivoire to review interaction between the Parliament and the United Nations system field operation (see annex II)



- Inter-Parliamentary Union resolution on the role of parliaments in supervising the destruction of chemical weapons and the ban on their use (see annex III)

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations kindly requests the Office of the Secretary-General to circulate the present note verbale and the annexes thereto as documents of the General Assembly.

Annex I to the note verbale dated 10 December 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Committee on United Nations Affairs

**Noted by the 129th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly
(Geneva, 9 October 2013)**

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Committee on United Nations Affairs met in Geneva on 7 and 9 October 2013, during the 129th IPU Assembly and had a full and comprehensive agenda before it.

During its first session, on the morning of 7 October, the Committee discussed interaction between national parliaments and United Nations country teams. It also examined, specifically, the work conducted in national parliaments to follow up the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

The discussion was informed by the report of the latest mission of the Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs to Côte d'Ivoire, in June 2013, which sought to assess cooperation between the Parliament and the United Nations in support of peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts there. Previous field missions to the United Republic of Tanzania (2008), Viet Nam (2009), Sierra Leone and Ghana (2011), and Albania and Montenegro (2012) had assessed progress in the implementation of "One United Nations" reform in those countries, in particular in terms of greater coherence and effectiveness of United Nations interventions.

Organized as an interactive debate with the head of the United Nations country team in Burkina Faso, the discussion started with the first subject, with the participants sharing their experience with the United Nations teams in their respective countries and making recommendations with a view to improving their cooperation with them.

Turning to the action of United Nations country teams in the field, the participants pointed out that the teams were not evenly distributed geographically. In some countries they had a significant presence; in others they were practically non-existent. This made it difficult for the national parliament in those countries to interact with them. To remedy that problem, the participants advocated that United Nations country teams be present in every country.

United Nations programmes and policies were designed for people, who were represented by parliamentarians. Parliamentarians were therefore well placed to know people's real needs and to define their priorities. By the same token, in line with their prerogatives as the people's elected representatives, parliamentarians could ensure respect for international commitments, notably those undertaken in the context of the United Nations. They played an equally decisive part in the implementation of the major resolutions and decisions produced by international meetings, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015

development agenda. Their contribution could take the form of action to arrange the legislative framework in such a way as to reflect the relevant provisions.

This crucial parliamentary contribution notwithstanding, the participants deplored the fact that members of parliament were neither informed nor consulted about the various activities undertaken by the United Nations in their countries. They also deplored the fact that United Nations programmes were often predefined and did not reflect the population's real needs and priorities.

The participants stressed that, in order to remedy that shortcoming, the United Nations had to inform parliamentarians of its activities by sending national parliaments annual reports and important decisions and resolutions. In the same vein, the participants recommended that the United Nations consult with parliamentarians earlier in the programme development process. In that regard, the United Nations could prepare an annual summary of its objectives. Because they were in constant contact with their constituents, parliamentarians could convey their needs to the United Nations, which in turn could incorporate them into its programmes. In addition, the population's concerns had to be taken into account from the outset and reflected in the decisions taken by international bodies.

While it was true that United Nations country teams had to interact with national parliaments, parliaments, for their part, had to take steps to facilitate such interaction.

As a preliminary step, the participants suggested that the internal dialogue between parliament and government be improved, with a view to facilitating the flow of information between the two.

In addition, the participants pointed to the need for the national parliament, the executive branch and the United Nations to have a vision. Combining those visions would allow parliament to play its role and adopt a methodological approach to the preparation of an appropriate strategy for interaction with United Nations country teams.

The participants recommended that the strategy comprise the following components:

(a) Establishment within national parliaments of bodies tasked with coordinating the work of the committees dealing with United Nations affairs; to that end, they proposed that IPU draw up an inventory of existing bodies of that kind so as to facilitate the exchange of best practices;

(b) Appointment of a parliamentary focal point entrusted with conveying United Nations decisions and resolutions;

(c) Elaboration of guidelines that could help to structure interaction between national parliaments and United Nations country teams;

(d) Institutionalization of an annual reporting exercise by United Nations country teams to the national parliament of the country in which they were operating, which would include an overview of United Nations operations conducted in the country during the year and plans for the year ahead.

The Committee also took stock of the progress made in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, in a discussion in which the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island

Developing States, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Coordinator in Burkina Faso and the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations Office at Geneva all participated.

There were 49 least developed countries: roughly two thirds in Africa, one third in Asia, and one — Haiti — in the Caribbean. The population of approximately 900 million was affected by low income, poor social development and high vulnerability; they were essentially at the bottom of the development ladder. The very ambitious goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action was to lift half of the least developed countries out of that category by 2021.

Going forward, parliaments would have a critical role to play in advancing the Istanbul Programme of Action through national development plans while at the same time continuing to provide input to the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. While the process should focus on real action at the national level, it should also remain bidirectional, i.e. national input should be provided for global discussions and consultations, and vice versa.

The Committee underscored the need for parliaments to take the Istanbul Programme of Action into consideration when debating investment laws. It also highlighted the difficulties faced by donor countries, particularly in the current climate of financial crisis. It suggested that greater efficiency and transparency on the part of United Nations agencies would foster more trust among donors. The Committee proposed that a set of indicators be developed specifically for the Programme, as had been for the Millennium Development Goals. What was important now was what all stakeholders were willing to do both to implement the Programme and to take it to the next level and ensure that the least developed countries had every opportunity to graduate from that category.

At its second session, in the afternoon of 7 October, the Committee focused on important developments at the United Nations in the area of non-proliferation, in particular the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in April 2013 and efforts aimed at enhancing the implementation of Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, an issue of particular relevance in the context of the dramatic situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

As the panellists highlighted during the session, the Arms Trade Treaty was a landmark agreement adopted by an overwhelming majority (154 States in favour, 3 against, 23 abstentions). It sought to regulate the international trade in conventional weapons and establish common standards to assess international weapons transfers. In practice, the Treaty aimed to prevent weapons transfers in situations where there was evidence that they would lead to grave violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law, or would adversely affect sustainable development. In so doing, the Treaty aimed to provide a new multilateral framework for transparency and accountability in the arms trade.

Over 75 countries had signed the Treaty in the first month after it was opened for signature in early June (113 by 1 October), with the first ratification by Iceland on 2 July. The Treaty would come into force 90 days after it was ratified by the fiftieth signatory State, which it was believed would occur sometime in the latter

part of 2014. All parliaments were called upon to play a pivotal role in both ratification and implementation, adapting national legislation as required, allocating resources and monitoring progress in meeting the commitments undertaken.

As highlighted during the debate, the potential impact of the Arms Trade Treaty was far-reaching: fostering peace and security by regulating arms flows to conflict regions, preventing human rights and international humanitarian law abusers from being supplied with arms, and keeping warlords, pirates and gangs from acquiring weapons. The Treaty would therefore significantly boost efforts to protect women and children in situations of armed conflict or widespread armed violence. Monitoring mechanisms would also be put in place, accompanied by an annual reporting exercise. Several Governments were already contributing to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, a funding mechanism for assistance programmes to help develop new policy and legislation.

The participants discussed the good practices that could be implemented to reinforce the aim of the Treaty, create clear accountability mechanisms and ensure greater transparency of arms transfers. They referred to the establishment of national control processes, official administrative guidelines, national inspectorates and practical enforcement measures, including punitive measures for those that did not comply with regulations on the transfer of arms.

Despite its limitations, including the fact that it did not go as far as might have been hoped and that a small group of countries contested its adoption in the absence of unanimous support, the Treaty filled an obvious gap in the global conventional arms control system, and that was preferable by far to the current lack of regulation.

Many delegations expressed the hope that the new Arms Trade Treaty would help curb the immense suffering caused by what until now had been a poorly regulated arms trade. As noted by the President of the Senate of Kenya, the huge quantities available of unregulated guns had represented true weapons of mass destruction for the African continent, a situation that had to change. All States, and all parliaments, had a responsibility to make sure the new Arms Trade Treaty became an effective and workable tool for achieving that shared objective.

The Committee also welcomed the participation at its session of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) and of prominent experts from the academic world and civil society, who presented Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, the context in which the resolution had come about, its main provisions and implications, and the benefits of implementation.

First adopted in 2004 and then renewed in 2011, the resolution in essence obliged all United Nations Member States to: (a) refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempted to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery; (b) adopt and enforce appropriate and effective laws to prohibit and prosecute such activities by non-State actors; and (c) establish domestic controls over materials, equipment and technology which could be used for the design, development, production or use of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Given the transnational nature of organized crime, action to counter the proliferation of such weapons was only as strong as its weakest link.

During the presentations and discussion, the Committee underscored the key role that legislators were called upon to play in ensuring that the necessary legal instruments were in place to help protect their citizens from terrorism with potentially devastating effects. Resolution 1540 (2004) had a strong legislative component, as it called for the establishment of national legal frameworks to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery. Several areas of national legislation were concerned, including criminal law, export-import laws, strategic goods and transfers control, regulatory systems for dual-use materials, and the requisite enforcement measures.

Under the resolution, each State could decide the type of implementing measures it required in accordance with its constitutional processes. Such measures could take various forms: the adoption of stand-alone laws on specific categories of weapons of mass destruction (as was the case in countries such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, the Russian Federation, Singapore and the United States of America in respect of the Biological Weapons Convention); the adoption of a “weapons of mass destruction law” (as was the case in Chile, India and South Africa); or the implementation of several laws and regulations (most European and civil law countries had adopted this approach, filling gaps in and amending the penal code, export control laws, safety/security provisions pertaining to weapons of mass destruction, etc.).

Irrespective of how resolution 1540 (2004) had come about and the objections of a limited number of States, ultimately it was the responsibility of all parliamentarians to do their utmost to enhance the security of their citizens. Implementing Security Council resolutions, which were legally binding on all States, was one sure way to do that. In addition, the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) presented a number of other benefits: strengthening the capacity of States to investigate and prosecute any offences (including preparatory acts) associated with nuclear, chemical and biological weapons or related materials by non-State actors; strengthening the capacity of States to monitor and supervise any activities related to weapons of mass destruction; enhancing public health and safety and national security; strengthening border control; sending a strong signal to potential investors that they were a safe and responsible place to do business; better equipping States to meet their other obligations related to weapons of mass destruction and comply effectively with international reporting requirements.

The point was that, even though resolution 1540 (2004) was a non-proliferation and counter-terrorism measure, if properly implemented it could strengthen the rule of law and foster development. The Committee therefore called on all parliaments to pay careful attention to this very important resolution and to do their utmost to ensure its effective implementation. The Committee President and the Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly also recommended that IPU and the Security Council continue to cooperate on raising awareness of the resolution at the regional level, including by convening regional events and providing support for the establishment of regional action plans.

At its last session, on the morning of 9 October, the Committee focused on promoting international commitments and defending the rights of vulnerable groups, in particular indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities.

Despite the adoption in 2007 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, indigenous peoples remained among the most vulnerable

members of society. Their level of participation and representation in decision-making, including in parliaments, remained extremely low, even though parliaments had to be truly representative of all sectors of society in order to carry out their constitutional mandate of legislating and holding government to account.

Since 2007, IPU had conducted extensive research on the presence of indigenous representatives in parliament; it had convened an international parliamentary conference in 2010 to debate those issues. The resulting Chiapas Declaration contained key recommendations for ensuring effective participation by indigenous peoples in politics.

The session underscored that it was parliament's duty to recognize the specific identity and culture of indigenous peoples and enhance understanding of the particular problems they faced, to raise awareness in society and thereby combat prejudice, and to take special measures to promote and protect indigenous people's rights. Moreover, parliaments should make sure that the right to free, prior and informed consent was observed at all stages leading up to the adoption of legislative and administrative measures potentially affecting indigenous peoples.

The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples was scheduled to take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York in September 2014, and it was important to ensure that the deliberations incorporated a parliamentary perspective. For that purpose, IPU would continue to encourage parliaments to be more inclusive both in terms of their composition and of their working modalities and would convene a parliamentary meeting in the Plurinational State of Bolivia in April 2014 to enable them to share their experiences. It was convinced that those developments could inspire other countries that had yet to take steps to ensure that the views of indigenous peoples were taken into account when developing public policies.

Similarly, protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities warranted the particular attention of parliamentarians around the world. According to the World Health Organization-World Bank 2011 *World Report on Disability*, there were about 1 billion persons with disabilities worldwide. Their rights were enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which had been ratified by over 130 States and took a human rights-based approach to disability. Article 29 guaranteed the right to participate in political and public life of all persons with disabilities.

In order to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, IPU had developed a handbook for parliamentarians in 2007, recommending the Convention's ratification and its translation into national laws and policies. In keeping with its fundamental principle of "full democratic and political participation", in 2008 IPU had adopted the "Policy to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

During the discussion, participating legislators exchanged views with the representatives of several United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (International Disability Alliance and World Future Council) and further explored the role of parliamentarians and parliaments to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, in particular the right to political participation. The participants shared their experiences, spoke of initiatives being taken in their countries, and highlighted good practices, such as:

- Rendering information about election processes, candidates and their political platforms accessible in plain language (so that persons with intellectual disabilities could make informed voting choices)
- Reserving seats in parliament for disabled candidates
- Providing the right to vote in secret with assistance from someone chosen by the disabled person
- Securing budget allocations for the political participation of persons with disabilities
- Establishing parliamentary committees on the rights of persons with disabilities and ensuring disabled persons had access to elections, both as voters and as candidates

The Committee also formulated a number of recommendations:

- Universal ratification of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol
- Abrogation of constitutional and legal provisions denying persons with disabilities the right to vote and to stand for election
- Systematic consultation of disabled persons and their representative organizations in all legislative processes
- Allocation of budgets to pursue programmes for the promotion of disability rights, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation
- Parliamentary oversight of the implementation of the Convention and of disability rights programmes
- Adoption of measures that would allow persons with disabilities to stand for election and participate in the decision-making process (“nothing about us without us”)

The Committee also endorsed the Call to Act (see enclosure) submitted by a group of parliamentarians, which identified a series of measures that could and should be adopted by IPU and by its Member Parliaments in order to ensure that persons with disabilities were better able to fulfil their potential in political and public life. That, in turn, would go a long way towards establishing truly accessible and inclusive parliaments.

At the conclusion of its deliberations, the Committee requested that its report be circulated widely among all national parliaments and within the United Nations system.

Enclosure

Call to Act

Ensuring the Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Political and Public Life

The first ever *World Report on Disability*, produced jointly by the World Health Organization and the World Bank in 2011, suggests that more than 1 billion people in the world today are living with a disability. Their rights are enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which has been ratified by over 130 States to date and takes a human rights-based approach to disability. Article 29 of the Convention guarantees the right to participation in political and public life of all persons with disabilities.

With a view to promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, IPU published a handbook for parliamentarians in 2007 in which it recommended the ratification of the Convention and its translation into national laws and policies. On the basis of its fundamental principle of “full democratic and political participation”, in 2008 IPU adopted the “Policy to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union”,^a according to which IPU will:

1. Implement practical measures to create inclusive, barrier-free environments to enable the participation of persons with disabilities in its work;
2. Encourage Member Parliaments to take action so that persons with disabilities can achieve the transition from exclusion to equality; and
3. Seek a representative secretariat that is open to persons with disabilities, where opportunities in work are based on merit and all employees feel included and valued.

With the present statement, we renew the commitment of IPU to the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life and to make sure that this principle does not remain a dead letter but is translated into action. Like women and indigenous peoples, people with disabilities should speak with their own voice and take their place in parliament: *Nothing about us without us!*

We therefore encourage IPU to:

1. Designate one or more contact points in the IPU secretariat who can act as reference persons for all parliamentarians concerning the rights of persons with disabilities;
2. Recommend to all Member Parliaments and Associate Members that they harmonize their legislation in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular article 29, and ratify the Convention, with its Optional Protocol (should they not yet have done so);
3. Draw up a questionnaire with the aim of collecting information on the participation of persons with disabilities in politics and the legislative, physical, communication, informational, technological or other barriers they face, to be answered by all Member Parliaments and Associate Members;

^a The Policy was approved by the Governing Council on 14 October 2008 and is available from <http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/183-disability.htm>.

4. Publish the data collected in a section of the IPU website dedicated to parliamentary action on the rights of persons with disabilities, which is to be conceived and programmed in such a way that it serves as a virtual meeting place and as a space where IPU's disability work, initiatives and documentation about good practices and experiences can be consulted and downloaded;

5. Undertake all necessary steps to establish and institutionalize a working group that is composed of parliamentarians engaged in the rights of persons with disabilities and includes parliamentarians with disabilities, that meets at least once a year and that has its own resources;

6. Amend the IPU statutes to ensure that parliamentary delegations include parliamentarians with disabilities;

7. Pledge to include the rights of persons with disabilities as an item on IPU's yearly agenda; and

8. Report annually about progress on the aforementioned points to all Members.

We encourage the IPU Member Parliaments to:

1. Ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (should they not yet have done so);

2. Make sure that parliamentary bodies, processes and programmes have internalized parliament's oversight role with regard to the implementation of the Convention across all committee work and constituency work;

3. Establish parliamentary disability rights committees or ensure that disability rights as an issue are integrated into parliamentary human rights committees;

4. Ensure that all new legislation is coherent with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and that legislation that is not in line with the Convention is duly amended or repealed;

5. Adopt disability-friendly budgeting;

6. Adopt positive concrete measures to become disability-inclusive parliaments, including by rendering their environment, information, communications and technologies accessible and providing reasonable accommodation so that persons with disabilities can, inter alia, participate in the work of parliaments, take part in inclusive and accessible elections as both voters and candidates, be consulted, follow parliamentary debates and hearings, and be employed on an equal basis with others;

7. Enhance cooperation among parliaments, government coordination mechanisms and focal points on disability, national human rights institutions, independent monitoring frameworks and civil society organizations, in particular organizations representing persons with disabilities, as set out in articles 4 (3) and 33 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

8. Strengthen the involvement of parliaments in the work of the United Nations human rights monitoring mechanisms, including the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council and the universal periodic review reporting procedure;

9. Forward the present recommendations to their members' respective political parties, to ensure that they enable persons with disabilities to participate in and be supported by the party, including by making available campaign resources and placing them higher on electoral lists; that they include disability-specific activities in their plans for and reports on constituency work; that they add disability issues to their oversight list; and that they have disability-specific indicators when they plan individual or collective oversight visits;

10. Report annually on progress on the aforementioned points to IPU.

Giving effect to the human rights of persons with disabilities means enabling them to participate on an equal basis with others, at all levels.

Annex II to the note verbale dated 10 December 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]
[3 September 2013]

Advisory Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Committee on United Nations Affairs

Interaction between national parliaments and United Nations country teams

Mission by the Advisory Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Committee on United Nations Affairs

Côte d'Ivoire, 17 to 19 June 2013

As part of its mandate to examine United Nations operations at the national level, the Advisory Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Committee on United Nations Affairs undertook a field mission to Côte d'Ivoire from 17 to 19 June 2013. The mission was organized in close cooperation with the Office of the Speaker of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

The initiative stemmed from the 2012 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, which had focused on "Parliamentary approaches to conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding" (see <http://www.ipu.org/Splz-e/unga12.htm>). Following the Hearing, the IPU Advisory Group had expressed an interest in conducting a field mission to examine interaction between United Nations country teams and national parliaments in support of peacebuilding and national reconciliation efforts. It was proposed that such a mission be undertaken to Côte d'Ivoire, a country where the United Nations has been playing a major role in building peace and securing long-term stability, and where IPU is currently developing a project of support to the Parliament.

As reflected in its terms of reference, the mission's main objective was to build on the findings of the 2012 Parliamentary Hearing and enhance interaction between UNOCI, the United Nations country team and the national Parliament in peacebuilding efforts. Based on the experience of previous field missions conducted by the Advisory Group since 2008, the mission to Côte d'Ivoire would examine how and to what extent United Nations efforts at the country level involve the Parliament generally, and more specifically, Parliament's role in helping secure lasting peace in the country.

The IPU delegation was led by Committee President Mr. Mélégué Traoré (Burkina Faso) and included Advisory Group members Ms. Katri Komi (Finland), Mr. José Carlos Mahía (Uruguay), Mr. Abdeslam Bouchouareb (Algeria) and Mr. Alhassan Ado Garba (Nigeria), as well as IPU staff members Ms. Anda Filip and Ms. Laurence Marzal, and Uruguayan parliamentary adviser Ms. Carina Galvalisi. Senior parliamentary experts Mr. Moise Ebondje Mve (Cameroon) and Mr. Robert Myttenaere (Belgium), present in Abidjan for a two-week audit of the parliamentary

administration conducted by IPU in support of the National Assembly, also participated in several of the delegation's talks.

Throughout the mission, the IPU delegation was accompanied by four prominent members of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire, who contributed in a significant way to the success of the mission: Ms. Emilienne Bobi Assa (President of the External Relations Committee), Mr. Augustin A. Thiam Houphouët (President of the national Inter-Parliamentary Group), Mr. Jean-Albert Agbre and Mr. K. Gnanbo (members of the national Inter-Parliamentary Group).

In preparation for the mission, the Advisory Group was guided by the special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2013/197) of 28 March 2013 — (see <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/2013/197>). The report provides a comprehensive overview of the political, security and humanitarian situation in Côte d'Ivoire, a country emerging from over a decade of political crisis and post-electoral violence in late 2011.

During its mission, the IPU delegation was received by Speaker Guillaume Soro and held discussions with the Bureau of the National Assembly, as well as a joint meeting with the members of the Committee on General and Institutional Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Affairs. At the government level, the delegation met with Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan, as well as with the Minister of Planning and Development, the Minister of Defence, and the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The IPU delegation also held meetings with the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission and with representatives of civil society organizations in Côte d'Ivoire. It visited a United Nations-sponsored operation in the field, the Anyama Centre for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, areas which are key to sustainable peace in the country. Last but not least, the delegation met with the acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Arnaud Akodjenou, and with the United Nations country team in Côte d'Ivoire.

Progress and challenges

Despite the huge challenges before it, the Government formed in 2011 by President Ouattara had demonstrated leadership and commitment to addressing immediate security challenges, accelerating economic recovery and initiating sensitive processes such as: disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; security sector reform; and dialogue, truth and reconciliation.

In turn, after more than a decade of political paralysis due to the war, the newly elected National Assembly, though still not comprising all political factions (the December 2011 elections having been boycotted by the main opposition party), had made significant efforts to become more effective, legislate on the major issues facing the country, and contribute to the overall stabilization and national reconciliation processes.

The discussions highlighted the magnitude of the challenges facing the country in the aftermath of the crisis of 2011, as well as progress being made to address them. With an estimated 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons, the vast majority of Ivorian refugees abroad have already returned to the country. The natural riches of Côte d'Ivoire, combined with significant foreign investments in the past few years and a new approach to governance, have boosted the country's

economic recovery: 9 per cent growth was recorded in 2012 and gross domestic product (GDP) growth for 2013 and 2014 is expected to exceed 10 per cent.

As the world's top exporter of cocoa, coffee and raw cashew nuts, a net exporter of oil, and with a significant manufacturing sector, Côte d'Ivoire is the largest economy in the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WEAMU). To illustrate its influence, the African Development Bank is returning to Abidjan after having been transferred to Tunis during the crisis. This is bolstered by its active political leadership role within the subregion. Since assuming the chairmanship of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2012, Côte d'Ivoire has mobilized regional leaders and resources to address a number of issues of common concern, most critically to formulate a common position on the Malian crisis. As underscored on several occasions, decisions and developments taking place in Côte d'Ivoire inevitably impact on and reverberate throughout the entire subregion.

According to its national development strategy for 2012-2015, Côte d'Ivoire aims to become an emerging market by 2020, with priority given to infrastructure, agriculture and energy. The national census that will be carried out in November 2014 represents a major undertaking that will have a huge impact on planning for the next development cycle. Throughout the process, Côte d'Ivoire relies on an important national reservoir of human talent and expertise. Ivorians with experience working in the global markets or as professionals around the world are now returning to their home country to be part of its reconstruction.

The National Assembly, under the leadership of Speaker Soro, has fast-tracked the ratification of major international instruments, including human rights treaties, and has passed significant pieces of legislation, such as the Civil Marriage Law, which grants both partners equal rights. Over 25 laws have been adopted in less than a year, although it has not always been possible to allow sufficient time for the critical examination of bills received from the Executive, mainly due to a lack of infrastructure and staff.

Important challenges identified as requiring particular attention include widespread poverty (estimated at 50 per cent), high unemployment (estimated at 5 million out of a total population of 21 million), corruption, and violence against women. Despite its economic potential, years of political and military crisis and poor governance have taken a heavy toll on the country, transforming the once-model African nation into a fragile State that continues to struggle for stability and prosperity.

As highlighted in the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/197), despite overall progress, Côte d'Ivoire also continues to face significant threats to its peace and security. Major threats include the lingering deep political divisions and the continued action by networks affiliated with the former regime to destabilize the Government; the reported presence of mercenaries, former combatants and other armed elements along the border with Liberia; the uncontrolled circulation of weapons; slow progress on reconciliation and security sector reform; the halting progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; divisions and limited trust within and among the security agencies; continued human rights violations by formal and informal security agencies and lack of accountability; inadequately trained and equipped law enforcement agencies; a lack of appropriate oversight of the armed forces; difficult national integration,

criminal activities and intercommunity violence; and of course the high rates of unemployment and poverty.

A crucially important phase, and a test for sustainable peace and development in Côte d'Ivoire, will be the 2015 general elections. Many interlocutors stressed the importance of electoral reform to ensure that these elections are fair, transparent and inclusive. Experts recommend that such reform should include updating the voters' list and reviewing the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission and the transparent drawing of electoral boundaries for the legislative elections. Some underscored that the role played in the elections by the various media outlets, many of which are affiliated with political parties, would also need to be addressed.

Dialogue, truth and reconciliation

The delegation welcomed the opportunity to meet and engage with the members of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Established in September 2011 by a decision of the President and headed by former Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny, the 11-member body includes religious leaders, regional representatives, and footballer Didier Drogba representing Ivoirians living abroad. After a "purification ceremony" in March 2012, the Commission organized itself into subcommittees to examine the root causes of the conflict and conduct consultations on seven key thematic areas: land rights, citizenship, communication, gender, security and justice, education and youth, and poverty. A report on the Commission's findings should be submitted to the President before the Commission's two year mandate expires in September.

Although it is not yet clear how the process will continue once the Commission's mandate ends, it was evident to the delegation members that more time would be required for an open and inclusive public debate on the Commission's report. All the more so since 37 local commissions were in the process of being established, with a broad and representative composition (10 members in each local Commission, to include three women, one traditional leader, two religious leaders, one youth and one civil society representative). In light of the public hearings that have yet to be held, there is scope for particularly important interaction between the local Commissions and parliamentarians. Regular and substantive interaction between the Commission and the National Assembly is also of utmost importance, particularly since Parliament will most likely have to legislate on the main outcome of the Commission.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

The IPU delegation, together with members of the Ivorian Parliament, visited a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Centre operating just outside the capital city of Abidjan. Run jointly by the Supreme Army Command and UNOCI, the Centre had processed the cases of over 7,000 former combatants (of an estimated caseload of 64,000 former combatants) since it first opened in October 2012. It is estimated that the full caseload will be processed over a two-year period. The methodology employed is conducive to confidence-building and effective reintegration. It comprises various stages, whereby former combatants are encouraged to come to the Centre, dispose of their weapons, be entered into a central database and receive an identification card, benefit from a medical check-up (including voluntary HIV/AIDS testing) and treatment if necessary, and receive

assistance (including financial and training) in order to (re)integrate into the regular workforce.

As also underscored in the discussion with the Minister of Defence, depending on prior education and training, many former combatants are reintegrated either into the army or public administration, primarily as prison guards or forest rangers, customs officers or border patrollers. It is expected that progress will accelerate more steadily based on a comprehensive strategy that is being developed by the Government with United Nations support. A sustained injection of resources will be required in order to ensure the programme's success. Managing public expectations will also be an important part of the process, including in terms of reinforcing the message that not all former combatants will go back into the regular army or find other jobs.

As a general observation, with some 150,000 civil servants in Côte d'Ivoire, public administration reform and the building of relevant administrative capacities (including in Parliament) constitute major challenges. Both the Government and the Parliament are in the process of preparing an audit of their workforce with a view to producing more efficient and inclusive public policies.

The IPU delegation had an opportunity to meet and interact with former combatants at the Centre. Both men and women, the majority are very young and present different reasons for taking up arms during the crisis: political loyalties, self-defence or to avenge the death of a friend or loved one, or unemployment. However, they were all keen to find work and reintegrate into society. In spite of claims that it was mostly former combatants affiliated with the current Government that benefited from the programme, officials at both the Defence Ministry and the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Centre underscored that no distinction was made between the two sides, and that prior political affiliation was neither asked nor recorded.

There was an overall sense that the work of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Centre should be better known by the public at large, and certainly by the Ivorian Members of Parliament as they are an indispensable relay between the policies put in place at the central level and the realities on the ground. For the Members of Parliament to play their natural role of helping build reconciliation and social cohesion within communities, it is important for the Government and international partners, including the United Nations, to be more forthcoming in submitting relevant information to Parliament and in engaging parliamentarians in discussions and consultations on such key issues. This would also greatly enhance democratic oversight of the security sector in Côte d'Ivoire.

Gender equality and violence against women

As is common practice during all missions of the Advisory Group, the delegation tried to gain a better understanding of the situation of women in Côte d'Ivoire. There are worrying reports of widespread gender-based violence, although it is generally acknowledged that the incidence of sexual violence has decreased significantly since the end of the post-election crisis.

The United Nations reports that lenient sentencing and the failure to classify sexual- and gender-based offences as crimes illustrate the systemic obstacles to combating sexual violence. The inadequacy of legal frameworks, the lack of access

to justice (resulting in large part from the high cost of medical certificates to facilitate court hearings), and the fear of stigmatization, which deters many victims from coming forward, are all significant challenges that will need to be addressed.

At the level of Parliament, and with IPU support, efforts were under way to establish a cross-party caucus of women parliamentarians. A first training and information seminar held by IPU in Côte d'Ivoire in late April 2013 for newly elected women parliamentarians (representing 10.44 per cent of the total number of Members of Parliament) highlighted both challenges and opportunities to improve the situation of women.

Despite the progress made in recent years, including the adoption of a national plan of action for women, the women Members of Parliament highlighted the need for further legislative reform, in particular in the areas of the political participation of women and gender-based violence. As a result, they have adopted their own plan of action aimed at achieving the following basic objectives: solidarity among women; participation of women in public life; education based on equality; women's awareness of their rights; the establishment of a national strategy on equality; the participation of women in national reconciliation; and combating violence against women, girls and children.

Discussions are also under way on the possibility of establishing a quota (as a temporary affirmative-action measure) for women's political participation. Although this has been a positive experience of many other African nations, including certain neighbouring countries, much work and awareness-building is still required in Côte d'Ivoire, given its traditional and deeply entrenched male-dominated political scene. Overall, there is scope for stronger cooperation between the United Nations country team and IPU in support of gender equality and the political empowerment of women in Côte d'Ivoire.

Role of the United Nations

The United Nations has undeniably played a major role in the recent history of Côte d'Ivoire. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council, through its resolution [1528 \(2004\)](#), established the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). This is a United Nations peacekeeping operation with a mandate to facilitate the implementation of the peace agreement signed by the Ivorian parties in January 2003. Following the 2010 presidential elections and the ensuing political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, UNOCI has remained on the ground to protect civilians and support the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in its reconciliation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. Given the prevailing security situation on the ground and the still-limited capacity of Ivorian institutions, there is today a United Nations field presence of some 9,000 military and police personnel.

In addition to the protection of civilians, areas of top priority for the United Nations Operation in the post-2011 period include the reform of key sectors (in particular the electoral system, the judiciary and the security sector), political dialogue, and the establishment of a platform for economic and social development with a focus on transparency, anti-corruption and inclusiveness. There is a keen sense of the need to strengthen democratic oversight in all of these areas, as a result of which the role of Parliament is particularly important.

The current United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Côte d'Ivoire (2009-2013), elaborated in close cooperation with the national authorities, identifies three main areas of focus: (a) political, economic and security governance; (b) revenues for the poor and vulnerable; and (c) social protection and services. The related United Nations interventions are aimed at enhancing institutional skills, identifying resources for food security and a safe environment, and providing services for the poor and vulnerable. As part of its integrated approach, the United Nations country team, which comprises 10 United Nations programmes, agencies and funds,^a proposes to work closely with the National Assembly with a view to consolidating its capacity to address and monitor these issues from a prevention perspective.

At the same time, however, it is evident that the United Nations is operating in a complex environment. Government officials and the parliamentary leadership credit the United Nations with certifying the results of the 2011 presidential elections (a novelty in Africa), and thus expediting the transition to a new regime. By the same token, however, supporters of the former regime view the United Nations with some scepticism and suspicion, questioning its neutrality and impartiality. This remains a major challenge in preparing the ground for free, fair and inclusive elections in 2015.

Another highly sensitive political issue that will require a resolution, including through work by Parliament, is the question of nationality. For many decades, Côte d'Ivoire has attracted millions of people from neighbouring Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Mali (an estimated 5 million from Burkina Faso and Mali alone). Nationality and property rights were, in fact, among the root causes of the internal conflict over a decade ago. How this issue will be managed will have a major impact on the transition to sustainable peace in Côte d'Ivoire.^b

The United Nations arms embargo on Côte d'Ivoire was an issue that came up systematically during the mission. At both the government and parliamentary levels, there was a strong indication that the authorities viewed this as an unjust and counterproductive measure that undermined the country's sovereignty and its ability to address its security needs. It was also clear, however, that the Parliament had not been engaged in any in-depth discussion with the United Nations country team on the specifics of the United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing the embargo (resolution 1572 (2004)).

As explained during the meeting with the acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the resolution, initially adopted in 2004 in response to frequent breaches of the ceasefire agreement and a deteriorating humanitarian situation, and extended on a yearly basis (most recently in April 2013), does in fact allow for the pre-authorized supply of arms and related materiel to the Ivorian security forces when these are intended for use in civilian protection, national defence and security

^a International Organization for Migration; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations Population Fund; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

^b The laws on nationality and rural land ownership were passed in an extraordinary session on 23 August 2013.

sector reform. The continued unregulated traffic of weapons in Côte d'Ivoire remains a major concern for the Security Council, thus warranting the extension of the arms embargo.

National Assembly and its interaction with the United Nations and other partners

Discussions with Members of Parliament, the vast majority of whom are newly elected, underscored an evolving vision of the role and responsibility of Parliament and parliamentarians.

Côte d'Ivoire is a presidential republic, with a strong tradition of concentrating power in the hands of the Head of State. As a result, there is not always sufficient space for the Parliament to fully express itself as a political player in its own right. As a recent example, in a bid to speed up decision-making on post-crisis recovery, the Parliament adopted enabling legislation authorizing the President of the Republic to take decisions by decree on a wide range of budgetary and economic matters for the 2013 financial year. Even if enabling legislation is provided for under the Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire, and despite its possible short-term benefits, in the longer term the repeated recourse to this measure undermines Parliament's own constitutional prerogatives to scrutinize and hold the Executive to account.

Members of Parliament are keenly aware of their responsibility in working at both the national and local levels to bring about national reconciliation and social cohesion. They view their role as that of mediators, engaging with citizens and communities and helping to overcome divisions and mistrust and heal wounds of the past. As such, there is much scope for Parliament to proactively engage with other national and international partners in the process.

As witnessed in previous missions by the Advisory Group, the relationship between the national Parliament and the United Nations country team is not clear. Major international commitments, such as the Millennium Development Goals, have not been thoroughly discussed in Parliament, and as a result national ownership is weak, with little engagement by Parliament in follow-up and implementation. This can be explained on the one hand by the fact that the Parliament is new and dealing with its immediate priorities, and on the other by the lingering perception in many parliaments of the region that external relations (and thus the work of the United Nations) are the exclusive prerogative of the government.

Following discussions between the Speaker of Parliament and the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General, a framework cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the National Assembly was concluded earlier this year. For the time being, however, this remains a very general document, which needs to be supplemented with content, project proposals, resources and modalities for implementation.

Once again, there appears to be a certain disconnect between how the United Nations system wishes to work with the legislature, the actual needs of the National Assembly, and initiatives carried out by other organizations and development partners. Direct discussions and consultations, nevertheless, have facilitated a better understanding of the opportunities for joint action and engagement.

For example, an organizational audit of the National Assembly conducted by IPU and a group of parliamentary experts at the request of the Parliament had highlighted a series of priority areas where assistance was required, including:

internal parliamentary procedures (rules of procedure and staff rules); circulation of information; management of human resources; legislative and budget processes; institutional communication; and training (for both Members of Parliament and staff). IPU programmes had also been initiated in the Parliament of Côte d'Ivoire with a view to providing capacity-building in the areas of reconciliation, promotion and protection of human rights, and gender equality.

Pooling the comparative advantages of both IPU with its direct access to expertise within parliaments around the world and the United Nations provided a golden opportunity to offer support to the National Assembly for productive and effective reform. It was agreed that a memorandum of understanding between IPU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-Abidjan, based on the positive experience in other countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, needed to be pursued.

Moreover, as part of the working modalities and framework for action of the new Parliament, mechanisms have yet to be put in place to allow for regular consultation and interaction with civil society organizations.

As evidenced by the discussions held by the IPU delegation with local non-governmental organizations, there is a very active and diverse civil society in Côte d'Ivoire, open and eager to engage with the national Parliament. Working in areas ranging from electoral reform to conflict prevention, transitional justice to gender equality, and deforestation to human rights, many non-governmental organizations hold expertise and knowledge of realities on the ground, which can serve parliamentarians well in exercising their mandate.

Some non-governmental organization representatives pointed to the difficulty of gaining access to the national Parliament, arguing that it is easier to meet with opposition leaders outside Parliament than to meet with Members of Parliament. It was underscored that even the current Committee system in Parliament allows for hearings with experts (as is the case, for example, in the Committee for General and Institutional Affairs) and that such mechanisms could be resorted to on a more regular basis.

Conclusions and recommendations

After three full days of meetings in and around Abidjan, the IPU delegation was keenly aware of the complex challenges facing Côte d'Ivoire, but also of its huge potential, both in terms of human and natural resources, to break the cycle of violence and build a peaceful and prosperous future for its citizens. Parliament, as the cornerstone of this transformation towards democracy and sustainable development, is called upon to play a major role in this process.

Together with the Ivorian legislators who had accompanied the IPU delegation throughout its mission, the following conclusions and recommendations were formulated:

(a) Significant efforts need to be made to ensure access by parliamentarians to relevant information that impacts their work, particularly as Parliament and its specialized committees are required to examine and adopt major pieces of legislation. The Government, civil society organizations and the United Nations country team are encouraged to provide access to such information in a timely and systematic manner;

(b) The mutual benefits of closer interaction between Parliament and civil society organizations are evident. The lack of physical space (limited meeting rooms) should not be an excuse to avoid such interaction. Efforts can and should be made by both sides to develop regular engagement. The implementation of Parliament's Strategic Development Plan for 2012-2016, which foresees enhanced exchanges with civil society, as well as higher investments in parliamentary infrastructure, are thus crucial measures;

(c) Political leaders, in both Parliament and Government, should not underestimate the contribution that women can bring to peacebuilding and national reconciliation. Measures such as the establishment of a women's caucus in Parliament (equipped with the necessary resources to function effectively) and quotas for women's political representation can go a long way in bringing about transformational change;

(d) Dialogue, truth and reconciliation, as well as an end to impunity, are the building blocks of sustainable peace. As such, the findings of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in particular on the root causes of the conflict and the way forward, will need to be brought forward for an inclusive public debate, which should include deliberations in Parliament as well as within communities at the local level;

(e) Electoral reform and representation of all political persuasions in Parliament remain key components for the peaceful transition to sustainable democracy. Parliament and the elected representatives can play a major role in engaging with all political forces, including opposition parties currently not represented in Parliament, and bringing about necessary reform;

(f) Parliamentary Committees should dispose of more time in order to meet and thoroughly examine new pieces of legislation that are sent to Parliament for adoption. The best legislation is not necessarily one that is passed quickly, but rather legislation that results from an in-depth and critical examination. This is particularly relevant in the case of politically sensitive issues, such as nationality and land ownership laws, which require broad public consultation in order to secure the best possible outcome. Implementation is also critically important, with Parliament called upon to play an important role in exercising its oversight role and monitoring implementation of major legislation;

(g) In terms of the relationship between the Executive and the Legislature, members of the Government should be available to respond rapidly to Parliament's request for information and hearings. Parliamentarians, in turn, should not shy away from questioning ministers on specific issues;

(h) Parliamentarians need to be directly exposed to major national peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives in their own country, such as the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Centre at Anyama. From this perspective, there is also scope for much closer interaction between Parliament (its Bureau and the select Parliamentary Committees) and the United Nations country team;

(i) In implementing the framework cooperation agreement between the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations country team, the United Nations should be keenly attuned to the realities, needs and expectations of the Parliament, and any decisions should be the result of in-depth two-way

consultations. When in need of parliamentary expertise and guidance, the United Nations should first tap into the knowledge and experience available within the bodies of the Ivorian Parliament, regional parliamentary organizations and the broader IPU membership;

(j) More specifically, when considering technical assistance and capacity-building programmes in support of the national Parliament, United Nations country teams should more systematically reach out to and partner with IPU. As the world organization of national parliaments, IPU is the repository of unique expertise in areas pertaining to the functioning of the Legislature;

(k) In order to fully exercise its functions, Parliament requires a corresponding infrastructure, budget and personnel. This is a key investment for the success of the current peacebuilding process in Côte d'Ivoire and should be seen as a priority by both the Government and Côte d'Ivoire's development partners, including the United Nations system.

Enclosure

Meetings in Côte d'Ivoire

National Assembly

- Mr. Guillaume Soro, Speaker of the National Assembly
- Bureau of the National Assembly
- Committee on General and Institutional Affairs, chaired by Mr. Diawara Mamadou
- Committee on External Relations, chaired by Ms. Emilienne Bobi Assa
- IPU Group in Côte d'Ivoire:
 - Mr. Augustin Abdoulaye Thiam Houphouët, President
 - Mr. K. Gnanbo
 - Mr. Jean-Albert Agbre

Government of Côte d'Ivoire

- Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan, Prime Minister, Minister of the Economy and Finance
- Mr. Claude Beke Dassys, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. Paul Koffi Koffi, Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Defence
- Mr. A. Toikeusse Mabri, State Minister of Planning and Development
- Mr. Karna Soro, Chief of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Division, Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission

- Mr. Awoulae Désiré Amon Tanoé, First Vice-President, traditional leader
- Mr. Séry Bailly, Representative of inhabitants from western Côte d'Ivoire
- Ms. Françoise Kaudhis Offoumou, Representative of inhabitants from eastern Côte d'Ivoire
- Mr. Abdoulaye Koné, Representative of inhabitants from northern Côte d'Ivoire

United Nations country team

- Mr. Arnauld Akodjenou, Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UNOCI
- Mr. Hervé Hesse, Head of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Operations, UNOCI
- Joint meeting with representatives of the United Nations country team

Civil society representatives

- Mr. Ambroise Koné, Chair of the Board of West Africa Network for Peacebuilding — Côte d'Ivoire
- Mr. Traoré Wodjo Fini, Coordinator, Coalition de société civile pour la paix et le développement démocratique en Côte d'Ivoire
- Mr. Sindou Bamba, Lead Coordinator, Regroupement des acteurs ivoiriens des droits humains
- Ms. Namizata Sangaré, National President, Femme active de Côte d'Ivoire
- Ms. Affoussiata Bamba-Lamine, Attorney-at-Law, Transparency Justice, Côte d'Ivoire

Annex III to the note verbale dated 10 December 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

The role of parliaments in supervising the destruction of chemical weapons and the ban on their use

Resolution adopted by consensus by the 129th IPU Assembly (Geneva, 9 October 2013)*

The 129th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Saddened by the latest use of chemical weapons claiming hundreds of lives,

Condemning the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons,

Welcoming the constant hard work done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention),

Concerned by the continued existence of declared stockpiles amounting to more than 13,000 metric tonnes of chemical weapons,

Stressing the need for universal adherence to the ban on the use of chemical weapons,

Recalling the Chemical Weapons Convention, to which 189 States are party, and the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare,

Noting the IPU resolution entitled “Enforcing the responsibility to protect: The role of parliament in safeguarding civilians’ lives”,

Recognizing the accession by the Syrian Arab Republic to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and stressing the need for full compliance with the provisions of the Convention,

1. *Calls upon* all parliaments to condemn the use of chemical weapons and contribute to an environment of zero tolerance for the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons;

2. *Urges* parliaments to request status reports from their national authorities responsible for the administration of the Chemical Weapons Convention;

3. *Also urges* parliaments to check their national legislation concerning chemical weapons and to exercise their oversight powers so as to ensure effective implementation;

* The delegations of Algeria, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Ecuador, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, Nicaragua, Peru, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and State of Palestine expressed reservations on the inclusion in the resolution of the reference in the seventh preambular paragraph to the IPU resolution entitled “Enforcing the responsibility to protect: The role of parliament in safeguarding civilians’ lives”.

4. *Encourages* parliaments to demand that their respective governments act to sign and ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention;

5. *Calls upon* parliaments to demand the speedy destruction of any declared stockpiles of chemical weapons, including abandoned stockpiles, and stresses the need for compliance with the deadlines stipulated in the Chemical Weapons Convention;

6. *Requests* parliaments to support and fully comply with the invaluable work being done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons;

7. *Urges* all States that are not yet party to the Chemical Weapons Convention to ratify or accede to it as a matter of urgency and without any preconditions;

8. *Encourages* the international community to look for sources of funding to be used for the safe destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons.
