



## INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

### **Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies [11]**

**STATEMENT by Ambassador Anda Filip, Permanent Observer**  
UN General Assembly, 9 November 2009

Mr. President,

It gives me great pleasure to address the General Assembly on the occasion of this debate on the support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

Please allow me to begin by commending the efforts of the State of Qatar. Over the past three years, the State of Qatar has ensured a substantive follow-up to the recommendations of a successful International Conference of New and Restored Democracies (ICNRD) in Doha in 2006. Let me also express our appreciation for the Secretary-General's report on this issue (A/64/372).

The IPU is pleased to be part of the ICNRD process. As convener of the parliamentary component of the ICNRD, the IPU looks forward to working with the hosts of the next Conference, Venezuela, to ensure a strong parliamentary input.

We are supportive of the initiatives considered for the future sustainability and institutionalization of the movement. Indeed, there is a clear need to plan for and carry out work in between the NRD conferences. From this perspective, a small secretariat based in New York and with a mission to engage with and bring together all the ICNRD partners on a regular basis could be very effective.

On the occasion of the Sixth ICNRD in Doha, each of the stakeholder meetings issued a Plan of Action – by governments, parliaments and civil society – to further promote democracy nationally and internationally. All those who have signed on to these commitments should also be held to account, and there is value, we believe, in an annual review of progress not just by the ICNRD Chair, but by all members, in meeting these commitments. A small ICNRD secretariat could hence provide valuable assistance in this regard.

The tripartite configuration - governments, parliaments and civil society - of the ICNRD movement has undeniably allowed an integrated and all-encompassing approach to the promotion of democracy worldwide. We would like to see further progress towards a more systematic articulation between the three components during the seventh ICNRD conference.

Indeed, the movement draws strength from the constructive engagement of its partners and its inclusive approach. As we move ahead, we would welcome the development of enhanced modalities for more regular dialogue, exchange and joint action to enable them to come together and interact as equal partners, and we have formulated a series of recommendations in this regard.

Mr. President,

We are still witnessing public disillusionment with democracy and, as the Secretary-General's report recognizes, the perception among some that democracy has failed to improve people's lives. Recognizing this, and in an effort to explore and measure public attitudes towards democracy, the IPU commissioned a global survey this year on the critical theme of political tolerance. The overall finding was that while there is overwhelming support for political tolerance in all regions of the world, in actual practice there is a widespread perception of a serious lack of political tolerance.

The results of this survey uncovered some problematic areas that will need to be addressed with greater focus. The freedom of political expression, the role of the opposition, protecting the parliamentary mandate, and promoting greater representation of minority and indigenous groups in political life will all be mainstreamed into the IPU agenda of work for the months and years ahead. This will have an impact, we trust, at the level of national parliaments, but also of the other partners active on the democracy front.

IPU is also convinced of the huge transformational role that new information and communication technology has for the further development and promotion of democracy worldwide. We are therefore forging a robust partnership with the UN in this area, through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. Just last week, the UN and IPU joined in convening the third World e-Parliament Conference, hosted by the US House of Representatives on Capitol Hill. Certainly, modern information and communication technology can help not only to better connect parliaments and citizens, but also to strengthen democracy by rendering public institutions more open, transparent, accountable and effective, while improving the delivery of key public services. Last week's conference led to a series of recommendations which will guide work ahead.

IPU remains committed to its efforts to build capacity within parliaments – through advisory services, technical assistance and capacity-building seminars, workshops and training programs. It is also determined to continue efforts towards promoting the political participation of women, defending and promoting human rights and contributing to the setting of internationally accepted standards in the field of democracy.

IPU also remains committed to ensuring continued momentum and support for the International Day of Democracy. As the Secretary-General's report points out, "the response of member states, and particularly parliaments, to the invitation to celebrate the First International Day of Democracy was truly impressive."

Parliaments around the world are using the International Day of Democracy, 15 September, to engage citizens and particularly young people in dialogue on the achievements and challenges to democracy in their country. The IPU will continue to work with and encourage action by parliaments towards the achievement of democratic practices, principles and precepts.

Moreover, IPU is committed to its partnership with the UN, notably through the Peacebuilding Commission, to build strong parliaments in post-conflict societies. Parliaments in countries such as Sierra Leone, Burundi, Central African Republic, need to show strong leadership in efforts to achieve national healing and post-conflict reconstruction. We have a common responsibility to support them in these endeavours, as this will help people reap the dividends of peace and mitigate the public mistrust of governing institutions. Indeed, democracy should be seen to deliver to the people.

In light of the above, we look forward to our continued partnership with the United Nations system and member States in efforts to further promote and consolidate new and restored democracies.

I thank you for your attention.