



# INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

## CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**General Assembly joint debate:** Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields (item 13); Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit (item 115); Strengthening of the United Nations system (item 120).

### **STATEMENT by Ambassador Anda Filip, Permanent Observer**

United Nations, New York, 23 November 2010

Mr. President,

The subject of today's joint debate is too vast to be covered satisfactorily in a single statement. At the same time, this may not be time and place to recount in any great detail the actual, concrete work that the IPU is doing in follow up to major UN conferences, much of which we have covered in other recent statements or is reflected in the biennial Report of the UN Secretary-General on Cooperation between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU.

I will hence concentrate my remarks around one issue that, by and large, remains critical to the follow-up and implementation of global commitments emanating from major UN conferences. That is the issue of national *ownership*. Global commitments by definition are binding on governments first, but they become tangible only when all stakeholders are made to feel involved and empowered to play their role. This in turn requires that national actors comprehend what is at stake, the various ramifications of the commitments taken, the policy prescriptions that are embedded in those commitments, and the specific actions that must be undertaken to help governments make good of their promises here at the UN. Our experience over the last few years tells us that there must be more buy-in at the national level for global commitments to take hold. Parliaments provide a case in point of how necessary this is and how it is to be achieved.

The MDGs that originated with the Millennium Declaration are of course very high on our agenda; but the action of the IPU extends to other issues as well, from HIV/AIDS to LDCs, climate change and trade, to mention a few. To support parliamentary engagement in these issues, the IPU employs several modalities – some well tried and consecrated, others more innovative which we hope to put to the test in the coming years.

There is a growing practice of member States to include legislators in national delegations to major UN conferences and reviews. On such occasions, we find that there is value in bringing those MPs together, to exchange ideas and experiences and identify avenues for follow-up action within parliament. A recent illustration of this was a parliamentary meeting at the MDG Summit, where some 70 MPs from the relevant select committees met to examine the Summit outcome document and to compare notes on their own work in relation to the MDGs. Similarly, IPU will be holding a one day parliamentary meeting on climate change on 6 December in Cancun, building on the positive and substantive exercise last year in Copenhagen, on the occasion of COP15.

Within IPU's regular program of work, briefings and panel discussions are held at IPU conferences or assemblies, where MPs engage with UN officials and among themselves in preparation for or in follow up to major UN processes. A recent example of this is a thematic session held last month at the 123<sup>rd</sup> IPU Assembly in Geneva, within the Committee on UN Affairs and with the participation of the UN High Representative for the LDCs, which sought to elicit the views of parliamentarians on their concerns and priorities with respect to a new Programme of Action (PoA) for the Least Developed Countries. The outcome of that debate, also circulated among UN member States, will help inform the IPU contribution to the process leading up to the Istanbul Summit next year.

Another modality whereby the IPU seeks to advance the implementation of major global commitments is directed at enhancing the capacity and institutional mechanisms for parliaments to mainstream the outcome of international conferences and related commitments. Earlier this year, for example, the IPU conducted a comparative study on how parliaments deal with the MDGs. The results varied greatly, from parliaments that have no particular follow up mechanism to parliaments that have set up specialized MDG committees or caucuses. One of the findings of the study is that huge global agendas such as the MDGs, which cut across many policy areas, are best pursued through the established committees of parliaments (health, education, environment etc.), and that these committees must be equipped with the necessary information and expertise. The parliamentary committees are a home for the MDGs provided that they do not work in isolation from one another. If a specialized committee or caucus for the MDGs needs to be established, one of its main functions is precisely to help ensure coherence and coordination throughout the parliamentary system when developing an integrated approach to the MDGs.

Another area of particular importance for the IPU has to do with the type of role parliaments can and should play in the review of implementation of existing international commitments. Whether it's the national review of progress towards meeting the MDG's or international commitments in the area of the LDCs or HIV and AIDS, it is helpful when progress reports are also placed on the agenda of parliament. Perhaps one of the most successful mechanisms we have been able to develop so far is in the case of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, and in particular the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The IPU works with the parliaments of the countries under review so that they can take part in the review process, provide input to the national report, attend the session of the CEDAW Committee and receive the UN findings for further consideration and action by parliament. This is an exercise that can be replicated in other areas as well.

Mr. President,

From our perspective, another way to look at the question of follow up to UN conferences is through the larger prism of cooperation between the UN, national parliaments and the IPU. What we have described now is just one dimension of a much larger debate which we can expect in this hall in just a couple of weeks' time. Please allow me to take this opportunity to remind delegations that a draft resolution on cooperation between our two organizations has been tabled on the basis of a very substantive report of the UN Secretary-General. We invite you all to consider that report for a more comprehensive overview of how we are working to support the implementation of global commitments at both policy and operational levels.

I thank you for your attention.