



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

CHECK AGAINST
DELIVERY

New York, 26 September 2013

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament

Statement by Anders B. Johnsson

Secretary General

Chairperson,

I would like to refer to the contribution that parliaments and parliamentarians can bring to global efforts to achieve a nuclear weapons-free world.

In April of 2009, the IPU member Parliaments adopted a consensus resolution entitled *Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: The role of parliaments*. That resolution unites key aspects related to nuclear disarmament: legal, political, technical and institutional. It includes a wide range of recommendations for practical measures to be taken by parliaments to ensure universal ratification of the CTBT, promote the UN Secretary-General's five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament, and support a series of concurrent measures, including start of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapons agreement.

A year later in 2010, the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament concluded with a Political Declaration, in which parliamentary leaders from over 130 countries expressed their support for the UN Secretary-General's five-point nuclear disarmament proposal, and pledged to pursue efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world".

In October 2011, the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs convened an expert panel discussion **Nuclear weapons – The road to zero**, which further explored what parliaments and their members can do specifically to advance the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda and ensure implementation of internationally agreed commitments. One of the recommendations that came out of that process was to produce a practical tool to assist MPs in implementing those nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament goals.

A Handbook for Parliamentarians, produced in cooperation with PNND with support from the Swiss Foreign Office and the World Future Council, was launched last October. The Handbook highlights a range of existing good policies and practices aimed at furthering nuclear disarmament, curbing nuclear proliferation, or safeguarding nuclear security, and explores what parliamentarians can further do to fashion the legislative agendas needed to advance these goals

Indeed, the examples quoted in the Handbook show how, from Kazakhstan to Costa Rica, Austria to Australia, Brazil to Bangladesh, India to South Africa and to the United States, more and more parliamentarians have been stepping up and promoting measures aimed at securing a nuclear weapons-free world. Their actions have taken on various forms, such as:

- establishing their countries and regions as nuclear weapons-free zones,
- passing legislation aimed at safeguarding existing nuclear stockpiles and fissile material,
- actively pursuing ratification of non-proliferation and disarmament treaties,
- deciding to curb military spending and reduce nuclear forces,
- or reviewing national security doctrines.

In partnership with PNND we continue to encourage Members to take these issues up in their respective parliaments. An expression of the growing interest is also the recent decision to have the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security formally place on its agenda for the next one-year cycle an item entitled *Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The contribution of parliaments*.

Two rapporteurs, MPs from Canada and Cuba, have been designated to prepare Reports on this issue, which will be presented and discussed when our members come together again in October for their fall Assembly. Ambassador Dengo of Costa Rica will be joining us for that event, as Chair of the UN Open-ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament.

Based on the conclusions from that debate, and taking into consideration written input received from Members, the two rapporteurs will be tasked with producing a draft resolution, to be negotiated and finalized in March 2014. Once adopted,

resolutions are circulated within the national parliaments and submitted to the attention of Governments. Several parliaments bring them for debate within the select parliamentary committees and examine modalities for implementation. There is a statutory obligation of annual reporting exercise by member parliaments, and we count on engagement with various partners for follow up at the national and local levels. Needless to say, throughout this process, cooperation between legislators, local officials, governments and civil society is critical to ensure success.

Last, but not least, I would like to mention that we have joined forces with the World Future Council and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs in designating the 2013 Future Policy Awards in the area of disarmament. Twenty-five eligible policies have been identified – both national and regional – many of them involving model legislation in area of disarmament. The winners will be announced during a ceremony here at the UN on 23 October, and we trust that this initiative will help raise awareness and encourage new initiatives in other countries and regions.

In conclusion, we are encouraged by the growing momentum towards the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons. More and more, there is the sense among legislators that ridding the world of nuclear weapons is not only their duty, but that it is actually an achievable goal. Looking ahead, we will continue to look for opportunities to engage and help bring this process forward.

Thank you.