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14 December 2010

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

Yesterday the United Nations General Assembly adopted a landmark consensus Resolution on Cooperation between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU. I attach the text as circulated by the United Nations. The final version in the six official UN languages will be posted on the IPU website in the coming days.

Ninety member States (list attached) formally co-sponsored the Resolution. This would not have been possible without the very active and positive engagement by so many of the IPU Member Parliaments, and for this we would like to express our deep appreciation.

Together, and in just a little over ten years, we have been able to take the relationship between the United Nations system, parliaments and the IPU to an unprecedented level. The Resolution adopted yesterday recognizes this progress and acknowledges the crucial role and responsibility of national parliaments in regard to national plans and strategies, as well as in ensuring greater transparency and accountability at all levels. The IPU is encouraged to help develop closer cooperation between the United Nations and parliaments at the national level, including in terms of strengthening parliamentary capacities, reinforcing the rule of law and helping to align national legislation with international commitments.

The UN General Assembly once again welcomes the growing practice of including legislators as members of national delegations to major UN meetings and events, and invites member States to continue this practice in a more regular and systematic manner. The General Assembly also decides to more systematically engage with the IPU in organizing and integrating a parliamentary component of and contribution to major UN deliberative processes and the review of international commitments.

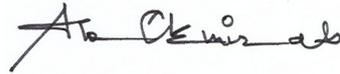
We have much work ahead in following up on the General Assembly's decisions and recommendations. In the course of next year alone, we will be working closely with the United Nations on a whole range of matters, including those relating to the promotion of peace and international security, the achievement of the MDGs, the elaboration of a new Programme of Action for the LDCs, the fight against HIV/AIDS, gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women, the achievement of an international agreement on climate change and the shaping of a new vision for sustainable development as part of the review of the Rio+20 process.

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To this end, we will need to pull together in reforming our own organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, better equipping it for the tasks ahead. The 124th IPU Assembly in Panama will provide us with an important opportunity to formulate a Strategic Plan for the IPU in the years to come. We trust that we will be able to count on your support and contribution throughout this exciting journey.

Until then, I send you my very best wishes for a happy holiday season and a good and prosperous New Year!

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Theo Ben Gurirab". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

Theo-Ben Gurirab
President of the
Inter-Parliamentary Union