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**FOLLOW-UP TO THE SECOND PHASE OF THE
WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY**

Dear Madam Speaker,
Dear Mr. Speaker,

The second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has recently concluded with the adoption of the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society*. These documents build on the first phase of WSIS in Geneva in December 2003. They reiterate that information and communication technology (ICT) can help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They offer guidance on reducing the digital divide, and commit governments to take a series of actions to develop the Information Society.

Together, we need to ensure that parliaments are actively involved in the follow-up to WSIS. In particular, parliaments should seek to hold governments to account on the commitments they have made. Accessible and inclusive information societies represent a formidable opportunity to boost development and democracy in all countries of the world. This was the message received from the parliamentary meeting organized in parallel to WSIS by the IPU and the Tunisian Chamber of Deputies, in cooperation with UNESCO.

I strongly encourage all member parliaments to ensure that follow-up to the WSIS commitments is firmly on their agenda. This may be best achieved by assigning follow-up to an existing Standing or Select Committee in parliament or, given the multi-sectoral nature of the information society, by creating a new body specifically for this purpose. I would also like to invite all Members to inform the IPU of progress and achievements on a regular basis.

I would also like to draw your attention to the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, which was launched at WSIS. The Global Centre, jointly led by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the IPU, aims to build the capacity of parliaments to integrate ICT into their work. I look forward to being in further contact with you on this subject in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Pier Ferdinando Casini

c.c. Presidents of IPU Groups