



Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations

6-7 December 2012
United Nations Headquarters
New York



1 October 2012

Madam President,
Mr. President,

We are pleased to announce that this year's Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations will take place in New York on 6-7 December under the title ***A road less travelled: parliamentary approaches to conflict prevention, reconciliation and peace building***.

Given the many sources of instability in the world today, and with several conflict or post-conflict situations in the balance, we consider it timely and opportune to join forces for a constructive exchange of views on the three-pronged question of how to prevent conflict, promote reconciliation, and help consolidate the peace where it remains fragile.

Citizens and decision-makers around the world are generally aware of how the United Nations can help countries resolve their internal differences through such means as mediation, peace-keeping missions, high-level negotiations between warring parties, and even, when all else fails, the application of sanctions. Lost in the picture, however, is the less noticeable but indispensable role that parliaments should play, and often do play, to bring all sides of a conflict to the negotiating table, diffuse internal strife through political dialogue, or help support a peace agreement in one way or another. Also less known or appreciated is how parliaments can work in coordination with the international community to accomplish these objectives.

This is then the *road less travelled* that we would like you to explore with us at this year's hearing. We hope that with your help we can chart the course ahead and determine how parliaments and the United Nations can be better partners for peace. Needless to say, peaceful coexistence is a prerequisite of democracy. In turn, democratic decision-making at both national and international levels must underpin all peace efforts. So part of our discussions will inevitably focus on the need for both parliaments and key decision-making organs of the United Nations to adhere to the highest standards of democracy.

More background about the meeting can be found in the attached note which highlights key questions to be explored, including:

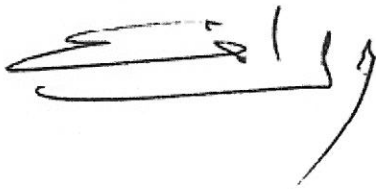
- What are the optimal conditions and institutional requirements for parliaments to effectively play a role in conflict prevention and reconciliation? How can the UN and the IPU support such conditions, where needed?
- How can parliaments (and the IPU) support the UN, its missions in the field and its Peace-Building Commission and Human Rights Council?

- How can parliamentarians help mediate conflicts alone or in cooperation with the United Nations?
- How are parliaments to relate to transitional justice mechanisms and truth and reconciliation mechanisms?
- What do parliamentarians think of key reforms needed to ensure more democratic decision-making for conflict resolution at the UN?

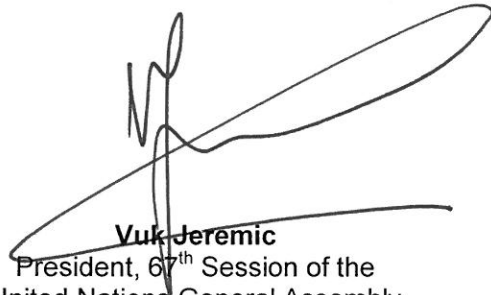
To make this event as productive and engaging as possible, we will depart from the model of past hearings by introducing new ways of interaction among participants. In an attempt to make the discussion as concrete as possible, avoiding overly theoretical disquisitions, several segments will be built around specific conflict or post-conflict scenarios from different regions of the world.

As in the past, the summary report of the hearing will be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly. We encourage all parliaments to be represented in this important discussion with participants from different sides of the political spectrum so as to contribute as many national experiences and perspectives as possible.

With our best wishes,



Abdelwahad Radi
President
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Vuk Jeremic
President, 67th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly