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KENYA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

TENTH PARLIAMENT – FOURTH SESSION (2012)

**REPORT OF THE KENYAN DELEGATION TO THE 126TH
ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER – PARLIAMENTARY UNION HELD
IN KAMPALA, UGANDA**

31ST MARCH – 5TH APRIL 2012

Approved
Amagy DINA
18/06/012

Clerk's Chambers

Parliament Buildings

NAIROBI

MAY 2012

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1. FOREWORD

Mr. Speaker Sir,

The Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU), the world organization of parliaments, is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue, cooperation and action. It advances democracy and assists parliaments and parliamentarians throughout the world to fulfill their mandates. The IPU facilitates political parliamentary debate, dialogue and cooperation. It promotes and defends democracy and the rule of law. It assists parliaments in coping with a growing international agenda and in contributing a Parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and similar multilateral institutions.

The IPU Assembly is the principle statutory body that expresses the views of the Inter Parliamentary Union on political issues. It brings together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations for action. The Assembly meets twice a year and is held each time in a different country, providing participants with an opportunity to see various national realities. The 127th Assembly will be held in Québec, Canada in October 2012.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

The 126th Assembly was held in, Kampala, Uganda from 31st March to 5th April 2012. The Kenyan delegation comprised the following Members;

- i. Hon. Farah Maalim ,EGH,MP –Deputy Speaker and Leader of the Delegation
- ii. Hon. Ntoitha Mithiaru, MP
- iii. Hon. Chachu Ganya, MP
- iv. Hon. Shakilla Abdalla, MP
- v. Hon. Alfred Odhiambo Bwire, MP

The Members were accompanied by;

- i. Ms Anita K. Thurania – Principal Clerk Assistant
- ii. Mr. Lawrence O. Amolo– Second Clerk Assistant
- iii. Mr. Hassan Odhwa – Personal Assistant to the Deputy Speaker

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of the delegation for bestowing upon us the important task of representing Kenya in one of the most important forums for parliamentarians. The overall theme of the IPU in 2012 was **"Parliaments and the People: Bridging the gap"**

Mr. Speaker Sir, it is therefore my pleasure to submit this report, summarizing the proceedings and resolutions of the 126th Assembly of the Inter Parliamentary Union and related meetings, in accordance with Article 7 of the Statutes of the IPU.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Farah Maalim', written in a cursive style.

Hon. Farah Maalim, EGH, MP
Leader of Delegation

2. BACKGROUND

The IPU, established in 1889, is the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy.

To that end, it:

- ▶ Fosters contacts, co-ordination, and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;
- ▶ Considers questions of international interest and concern and expresses its views on such issues in order to bring about action by parliaments and parliamentarians;
- ▶ Contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights -- an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development;
- ▶ Contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.

The IPU supports the efforts of the United Nations, whose objectives it shares, and works in close co-operation with it. The Union also co-operates with regional inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as with international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which are motivated by the same ideals.

Promoting the concepts of peace and international arbitration, the IPU provided the origins for today's form of institutionalized multilateral co-operation and advocated the establishment of corresponding institutions at the inter-governmental level, which eventually came into being as the United Nations.

The IPU was also instrumental in setting up what is now the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. The IPU has transformed itself from an association of individual parliamentarians into the international organization of the Parliaments of sovereign States. It is a centre for dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy among legislators representing every political system and all the main political leanings in the world, constituting a unique platform for observing political opinions and trends around the world.

IPU statutory Assemblies and specialized meetings serve as a testing ground for new ideas and initiatives leading to important breakthroughs in the search for peace and advancing international co-operation.

The IPU is financed primarily by its members out of public funds. It is a public organization funded in a transparent way by Member Parliaments and Associate

Members, whose annual fees are assessed in accordance with a scale of contributions approved by the Governing Council.

In addition, a growing volume of financial resources is mobilized through voluntary contributions, most of which are provided by donor governments.

1. Inaugural ceremony

The 126th IPU Assembly was inaugurated on 31 March 2012 at a ceremony held at the Speke Resort Munyonyo in Kampala with H.E. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, in attendance. Inaugural addresses were delivered by Ms. Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament, Mr. Zachary Mhuri-Muita, Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union and Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, and Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, IPU President. The ceremony concluded with a statement by the President of Uganda, who declared the 126th Assembly officially open.

2. Election of the President and keynote addresses

The 126th Assembly opened at the Kampala Serena Conference Centre in the morning of Sunday, 1 April, with the election by acclamation of Ms. R. Kadaga, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, as President of the Assembly.

The President said that it was a great honour for her to preside over the Assembly's work. She underscored the relevance of the overall theme for the Kampala Assembly, and invited all participating parliaments to share their experiences and perspectives in the General Debate on Parliaments and people: Bridging the gap.

UNICEF and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) presentations

At noon that same day, the Assembly engaged in an open debate with Dr. Anthony Lake, Executive Director of UNICEF, and Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of the UNFPA. The debate was held at a time when international attention was starting to focus on the next generation of sustainable development goals and the central role of child and maternal health.

Mr. Lake's presentation focused on three main points. He started by presenting the severe form of malnutrition known as stunting, which had a devastating impact on child health and all of society. Stunted children lagged far behind others in terms of physical growth and neurological and cognitive development. That made them less productive when they reached adulthood, placing a burden on society as a whole.

According to Mr. Lake, the remedy for that disastrous condition was to pay closer attention to the first 1,000 days in every child's life, from the prenatal period to the age of two, during which the brain developed. Good nutrition during that period was crucial. Nutrition therefore had to play a paramount role in development programmes and required investment.

Mr. Lake concluded by presenting the Scaling Up Nutrition initiative a coalition of public and private entities launched in 2010 to eradicate malnutrition by providing governments with support for the development of policies and programmes to combat malnutrition and under nutrition. He advocated the initiative's expansion and asked parliamentarians to relay his appeal to the executive authorities in their countries. Parliamentarians should encourage the initiative by promoting pro-nutrition legislation, increasing budget allocations for nutrition programmes and holding governments and partners to account for implementation of the programmes and policies developed.

Picking up where Mr. Lake had left off, Mr. Osotimehin underscored how vulnerable children were in the first few months of life, during which special attention had to be paid to their nutrition. Through the United Nations Secretary-General's initiative, Every Woman Every Child, which linked maternal to child health, UNFPA and UNICEF were mobilizing in the cause, in respect of which a high-level commission had been established the previous week.

According to Mr. Osotimehin, parliamentarians could further the cause by making sure substantial funds were allocated to maternal and child health, ensuring governments honoured their commitments and promoting gender equality partnerships. He considered it particularly important to ensure the health and education of young people, in particular girls, as those dynamics were a determining factor of progress. To that end, action was required to strengthen reproductive health and promote sex education among young people; those were crucial factors of sustainable development that had already been mentioned in 1994, in the Action Programme adopted by the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development.

Address by the Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda

In the morning of Monday, 2 April, the Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda, Mr. E. Kiwanuka Ssekandi, addressed the Assembly. He was very proud that his country was hosting a major IPU Assembly, the eighth African country to do so in over 120 years of the IPU's existence.

Sir Winston Churchill had once described Uganda as the "Pearl of Africa". Since then the country had achieved independence from Britain in 1962. The first 25 years of

Uganda's post-independence existence had been turbulent, including economic decline, social problems and political turmoil. Over the past two decades, however, democratic institutions had been established, and good governance and policies had promoted economic growth. In October 1995, a new constitution had formally established the separation of the powers of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The Government was committed to meeting challenges by promoting the interests of young people and women. Women were represented in key areas of government and held important positions in society. Uganda had a woman Speaker of Parliament and had been the first African country to have a woman Vice-President.

Parliament had worked hard to enhance citizens' engagement with its activities. It had achieved that through public meetings, workshops and hearings across the country and in a variety of locations. Uganda was also committed to playing a role on the international stage. The country had not stood by idly during the apartheid era in South Africa. In the 1990s Uganda had worked to end the genocide in Rwanda. Uganda was at the forefront of efforts by the African Union to improve the situation in Somalia. Uganda would always consider its neighbour's problems to be its own. Global challenges required coordinated solutions. Parliaments should work together effectively on the world stage and the IPU had provided a good example of what could be achieved.

3. Participation

Delegations from the parliaments of the following 120 countries took part in the work of the Assembly: Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The following Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the East African Legislative Assembly, the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States, the Latin American Parliament and the Transitional Arab Parliament.

Observers comprised representatives of:

- (i) The United Nations system: United Nations, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Millennium Campaign, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- (ii) African Union and League of Arab States;
- (iii) African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Confederation of Parliaments of the Americas (COPA), Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IPU-IGAD), Maghreb Consultative Council, Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic-Speaking Countries (TURKPA), Parliamentary Union of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Members (PUOICM), South African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum;
- (iv) Socialist International; and (v) Amnesty International, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Human Rights Watch, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International IDEA, Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), and Penal Reform International.

Of the 1,212 delegates who attended the Assembly, 607 were members of national parliaments. The parliamentarians included 40 presiding officers, 37 deputy presiding officers and 180 women (29.7%).

4. Choice of an emergency item

On 1 April, the President informed the Assembly that seven requests for the inclusion of an emergency item had been initially received. The delegations of Canada, Egypt, France, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom had subsequently decided to present a joint proposal entitled "Inter-parliamentary Union initiative for an immediate halt to the bloodshed and human rights violations in Syria, and the need to ensure access to humanitarian aid for all persons in need and to support implementation of all relevant Arab League and United Nations resolutions and peace efforts". In view of the importance of the joint proposal, the delegation of Argentina decided to withdraw its proposal before the agenda item was raised in the Assembly. That had left two proposals to be considered by the Assembly: "The need to support national reconciliation for building democratic institutions in the countries gripped by unrest and turmoil, particularly in Syria and Bahrain" proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the above-mentioned joint proposal.

After taking the floor, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran withdrew its proposal in favour of the joint one presented by Canada, Egypt, France, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom, which was adopted by acclamation and added to the agenda as Item 8.

5. Debates and decisions of the Assembly and its Standing Committees

(a) General Debate on the political, economic and social situation in the world (Item 3)

The General Debate on the political, economic and social situation in the world, under the theme of Parliaments and people: Bridging the gap, took place in the morning and afternoon of 1 and 2 April and in the morning of 4 April. A total of 113 speakers from 104 delegations took part in the debate, which was chaired by the President of the Assembly. During the sittings, the President invited several Vice-Presidents, members of the delegations of Andorra, Benin, Chile, Finland, France, Lesotho, Malawi and Mozambique to replace her in the chair.

(b) First Standing Committee (Peace and International Security)

(i) Promoting and practising good governance as a means of advancing peace and security: Drawing lessons from recent events in the Middle East and North Africa (Item 4)

The First Standing Committee held two sittings, one on 1 April and one on 3 April, with its President, Mr. S.H. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), in the chair. In addition to the report and preliminary draft resolutions prepared by the co-Rapporteurs,

Mr. M. Gyöngyösi (Hungary) and Mr. J.J. Mwiimbu (Zambia), the Standing Committee had before it amendments to the draft resolution submitted by the delegations of Argentina, Canada, China, Congo, Egypt, France, Germany, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Philippines, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.

At the start of the first sitting, the two co-Rapporteurs submitted the report and preliminary draft resolution they had drawn up together. Mr. M. Chungong, Director of the IPU Division of Programmes, also made a presentation. In all, 46 speakers from 44 parliaments took the floor. After the debate, the Standing Committee appointed a drafting committee made up of representatives of the following parliaments: Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Chile, Egypt, South Africa, Switzerland and Uganda. The co-Rapporteurs took part in the drafting committee's work in an advisory capacity.

The drafting committee met in the afternoon of 1 April and the morning of 2 April. It appointed Ms. C. Schmidt-Liermann (Argentina) as its president and Mr. L. Ramatlakane (South Africa) as its rapporteur. It examined 95 amendments submitted by 16 delegations and adopted a number of them.

The First Standing Committee considered the summary text in the afternoon of 3 April. Several delegations took the floor to express support for the text and to propose that it be adopted by acclamation. The Standing Committee accepted that proposal and adopted the draft resolution by acclamation. It also endorsed the proposal made by one delegation and its President that the drafting committee rapporteur also report to the Assembly.

The draft resolution was submitted to the Assembly plenary in the afternoon of 5 April and adopted by consensus, reservations having been expressed with regard to the resolution as a whole by one delegation (Venezuela).

(ii) Selection of subject item and co-Rapporteurs for the First Standing Committee at the 128th Assembly

The Bureau met on 3 April with the Committee President in the chair. It examined five proposals submitted by Member Parliaments for the subject item to be debated at the 128th Assembly and heard two delegations wishing to express themselves in greater depth on the subject item proposed.

The Bureau suggested that two subject items be merged and proposed a joint subject item to two delegations. However, one of the delegations having withdrawn, the Standing Committee proposed that the Assembly include on the agenda of the 128th Assembly the subject item initially proposed by the remaining

delegation, entitled: The responsibility to protect: The role of parliaments in safeguarding citizens' lives. The Assembly subsequently approved that subject item and appointed Mr. L. Ramatlakane (South Africa) as a co-Rapporteur. The President and the IPU Secretary General were invited to pursue negotiations on the appointment of a second co-Rapporteur.

(c) Second Standing Committee (Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade)

(i) Redistribution of power, not just wealth: Ownership of the international agendas (Item 5)

The Second Standing Committee held sittings on 2 and 4 April, with its President, Mr. S.E. Alhusseini (Saudi Arabia), in the chair. In addition to reports and a preliminary draft resolution prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, Lord Judd (United Kingdom) and Mr. O. Benabdallah (Morocco), the Committee had before it amendments to the draft resolution submitted by the delegations of Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Congo, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Senator Sonia Escudero of Argentina. In addition, the Committee received three amendments from the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians.

A total of 46 speakers took the floor during the plenary debate, after which the Standing Committee appointed a drafting committee composed of representatives of Australia, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ecuador, India, Italy, Mexico, Oman, Philippines, Sudan, United Kingdom and United Republic of Tanzania.

The drafting committee met on 3 April. It appointed Mr. D. Adams (Australia) as its president and Ms. S. Zubin Irani (India) as its rapporteur. It examined 93 amendments to the preliminary draft resolution, adopting some either in full or in part.

In the afternoon of 4 April, the Second Standing Committee examined the consolidated draft resolution and adopted it as a whole without making further changes.

In the afternoon of 5 April, the draft resolution was submitted to the Assembly, which adopted it unanimously.

(ii) Selection of subject item and co-Rapporteurs for the Second Standing Committee at the 128th Assembly

The Bureau of the Second Standing Committee met on 4 April with the Committee President in the chair. It examined proposals submitted by IPU Member Parliaments

for the item to be debated by the Second Standing Committee at the 128th Assembly. The Bureau approved the subject item Fair trade and innovative financing mechanisms for sustainable development, which it subsequently submitted to the Second Standing Committee. The Committee agreed with the proposal, which was subsequently approved by the Assembly for inclusion in the agenda of the 128th Assembly. The Assembly appointed Mr. F.-X. de Donnea (Belgium) and Mr. R.K. Chitotela (Zambia) as co-Rapporteurs.

(d) Third Standing Committee (Democracy and Human Rights)

(i) Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children (Item 6)

The Third Standing Committee held three sittings on 1, 2 and 4 April. The Committee President, Mr. O. Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu (Ghana), chaired all three sessions. The Committee had before it a report and preliminary draft resolution prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), Mr. F. Sardinha (India) and Ms. P. Turyahikayo, along with amendments to the draft preliminary resolution submitted by the delegations of Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Congo, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Netherlands, Philippines, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Venezuela, and by the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. In all, 52 speakers took the floor.

The Committee designated a drafting committee composed of representatives of Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Chad, Kenya, Uganda, United Kingdom, Sweden, Venezuela and Uruguay. It met on 4 April and began its work by appointing Lord R. Faulkner (United Kingdom) as president and Ms. P. Turyahikayo (Uganda) as rapporteur.

The drafting committee considered the amendments proposed by members and incorporated some of them into the draft resolution. On 4 April, the Third Standing Committee considered the consolidated text of the draft resolution presented by the drafting committee. It adopted the draft resolution by acclamation and without any reservations. The Assembly, meeting in plenary on 5 April, adopted the resolution unanimously.

At its sitting on 4 April, the Third Standing Committee elected its new Bureau.

(ii) Selection of subject item and co-Rapporteurs for the Third Standing Committee at the 128th Assembly

At its sitting on 4 April, the Third Standing Committee agreed to the subject item The use of media, including social media, to advance citizen engagement and democracy suggested by its Bureau for inclusion in the agenda of the 128th Assembly. On 5 April, the Assembly approved the subject item and appointed Ms. C. Charlton (Canada) and Ms. M.T. Kubayi (South Africa) as co-Rapporteurs.

(e) Emergency item

Inter-Parliamentary Union initiative for an immediate halt to the bloodshed and human rights violations in Syria, and the need to ensure access to humanitarian aid for all persons in need and to support implementation of all relevant Arab League and United Nations resolutions and peace efforts (Item 8)

The Assembly referred the emergency item it had adopted on 1 April to a drafting committee composed of representatives of Canada, Egypt, France, India, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom. It appointed Mr. N. Evans (United Kingdom) as president and Mr. E. El-Erian (Egypt) as rapporteur. It met on 2 April and drafted a resolution. On 5 April the Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus. The delegations of Chile, Cuba, South Africa, Uganda and Viet Nam expressed reservations on operative paragraph 12, while the Syrian Arab Republic, Islamic Republic of Iran, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Venezuela rejected the entire resolution, which, in their view, was unbalanced.

(f) Presidential Statement on Mali

At the closing session of the Assembly, the President referred to the crisis in Mali, where a military coup d'état had overthrown the legitimate authorities on 22 March 2012. The crisis had worsened in the course of the Assembly and the Executive Committee had approved the text of a presidential statement on the situation in that country. The President read out the statement to the plenary and it was endorsed by the Assembly.

PROMOTING AND PRACTISING GOOD GOVERNANCE AS A MEANS OF ADVANCING PEACE AND SECURITY: DRAWING LESSONS FROM RECENT EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Resolution adopted by consensus* by the 126th IPU Assembly (Kampala, 5 April 2012)

The 126th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Considering that there is compelling evidence to support the positive correlation between good governance and the level of peace and security in society and the world,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which are the indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world, and reiterating our determination to foster strict respect for them (paragraph 2, 2005 World Summit Outcome, A/RES/60/1),

Supporting all efforts to uphold the sovereign equality of all States and respect their territorial integrity and political independence; refrain in international relations from threatening or using force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations; settle disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law; respect the right to self-determination of peoples remaining under colonial domination and foreign occupation; uphold non-interference in the internal affairs of States; ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; guarantee respect for the equal rights of all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion; seek international cooperation when solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character; and meet in good faith the obligations assumed in accordance with the Charter (paragraph 5, 2005 World Summit Outcome, A/RES/60/1),

Recognizing that good governance is the manner of governing that aims to achieve sustainable economic, social and institutional development, while promoting a healthy balance between the State, civil society and the market economy, and that there is no way of exercising it other than by serving the interests of the people,

Mindful that the role of public authorities in creating an environment for entrepreneurs to function and in determining the distribution of benefits as well as

the nature of the relationship between governments and citizens is pivotal in promoting and practising good governance at the national and international levels,

Noting that good governance leads to efficient and accountable institutions, i.e. political, judicial, administrative, economic and corporate rules that promote development and the rule of law, protect human rights and ensure that people are free to participate and be heard in decisions that affect their lives,

Also noting that the catalysts for the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa were several and included the concentration of wealth in the hands of autocrats in power for decades, a lack of transparency in the redistribution of that wealth, corruption and, in particular, young people's refusal to accept the status quo, while spiralling food prices and famine were also determining factors,

Acknowledging that the disconnect between the demands of civil society and the response of governments, as well as a lack of government reform, might well have contributed to the protests,

Expressing its sorrow for the victims of the political processes in the Middle East and North Africa, and its solidarity with the families of those who died in their quest for freedom and justice,

Noting the undeniably positive influence of education and exposure to issues of good governance;

Recalling the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which, inter alia, provide that every citizen, regardless of gender, religion or race, has a right to take part in the conduct of public affairs directly or through freely chosen representatives, and that the will of the people should be expressed through free and fair elections based on universal and equal suffrage and secret ballots, in the full exercise of the sovereignty of the people, so as to constitute the basis for the legitimate and credible authority of government,

Also recalling the resolution on Providing a sound legislative framework aimed at preventing electoral violence, improving election monitoring and ensuring the smooth transition of power, adopted by the 124th IPU Assembly (Panama City, 2011), which calls upon parliaments, where necessary, "to undertake constitutional and legislative reform, building on international obligations and commitments and taking into account local realities, so as to provide a sound legal framework for free and fair elections that includes the adoption of electoral systems that provide for representative and inclusive outcomes, and for the smooth transfer of power"

Further recalling the above-mentioned IPU resolution, which urges parliaments "to conduct such electoral reform through a comprehensive, inclusive and open debate that fosters the broadest possible involvement of all stakeholders, authorities, political parties, media and civil society organizations in the electoral process",

Noting that the recent events in the Middle East and North Africa have provided all countries with important lessons on democracy and freedom,

Also noting that those events have shown that people everywhere need democratic and legitimate governments based on the will of the people, expressed regularly through free and fair elections,

Further noting that it is always the people who have the right to determine their own political future based on the cultural and historical characteristics of their nation,

Reaffirming that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives and that, while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy and it does not belong to any country or region;

Also reaffirming the need for due respect for sovereignty and the right of self-determination (paragraph 135, 2005 World Summit Outcome, A/RES/60/1),

Mindful that people will not view democracy in a positive light if their livelihood is at stake and that democracy and development are inextricably linked,

Acknowledging that the experiences of other regions and of the past year tend to show that the process of democratization in the Middle East and North Africa will take a significant amount of time, given that it is often a lengthy, unpredictable and complex process, which involves changing power relations in society,

Convinced that the attainment of democracy requires extensive changes that are rooted in constitutions, electoral systems, laws and regulations related to political parties, the media, the justice system, an enabling environment for civil society and, not least, a change in attitudes, including a paradigm shift regarding the place of women in political life,

Also convinced that commitment to the principles of good governance in the management of public affairs will guarantee freedoms and the rule of law, reduce corruption, ensure fair elections, help establish systems and institutions that strive to

provide the best services to all sectors of society, and be the best guarantor of political stability,

1. Invites all States and parliaments to consider the major lessons drawn from the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and the United States, as well as elsewhere in the world, on the need for democratic reform and for governments to provide their people with basic employment and economic opportunities, meet their citizens' demands and guarantee equal opportunities for all;
2. Recommends sustained investment in political reform where necessary, possibly to include the creation of independent government watchdogs, the amendment of constitutions, electoral systems, the judicial system, laws, regulations and processes related to political parties and the taking of measures to ensure the functioning of the media, the achievement of gender equality and the involvement of civil society;
3. Also recommends that particular attention be paid to security sector reform so that the police, intelligence services and armed forces act within the rule of law, fully respect the fundamental rights of citizens and are held to account for their acts to a democratically elected authority;
4. Expresses its wish, with a view to building inclusive societies, that transitional justice and the need to address the past are adequately taken into account in the transition process, in particular through the promotion of the truth, the sentencing of perpetrators, the compensation of victims and the establishment of safeguards to avoid repeating mistakes of the past;
5. Calls upon all Member Parliaments that have not done so to ratify and ensure full implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and see to it that freedom of thought, expression and association, as well as other civil and political rights, are guaranteed;
6. Also calls upon parliaments to ensure the establishment of governance systems that will lead to the improvement of people's livelihoods so as to help restore faith in democratic institutions and democracy;
7. Recommends that leaders in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as elsewhere in the world, strive to implement policies that will help reduce economic inequality and tackle everyday problems, such as corruption, poverty and the lack of access to health services;
8. Encourages IPU Member Parliaments to advocate for increased civic education, with a focus on the fundamental principles of democratic governance, while reflecting the diversity of histories and cultures;
9. Urges the international community to stand ready to help countries at their request and to support the transition process while complying with the principle of sovereignty as enshrined in the UN Charter, in order to avoid undue influence on the situation in States and the outcome of elections;
10. Calls upon the international community to promote comprehensive reform of the United Nations in order to achieve world peace, security and

- development through respect for the principles enshrined in its Charter as well as the fair representation of nations;
11. Encourages States to comply with the Millennium Declaration, which calls for the promotion of peace, security and human rights and the elimination of hunger and poverty, and stipulates the importance of and right to education in the context of sustainable growth;
 12. Invites political parties, national parliaments and governments to implement policies and mechanisms aimed at ensuring the participation of women and youth in public political and economic life;
 13. Calls upon all parliaments to enact legislation and take specific action to enhance their transparency, design information and communication technology tools to facilitate citizens' access to relevant information on parliamentary processes, exercise their oversight function over the other branches of the State and establish mechanisms enabling them regularly and vigorously to reach out to civil society and be answerable to it;
 14. Urges the IPU to lend support to the democratization process under way in the Middle East and North Africa, particularly in areas relating to the process of constitutional reform and the drafting of new electoral laws, as well as the sharing of good practices for open and inclusive electoral processes that are conducive to the establishment of representative and effective parliaments;
 15. Also urges the IPU to design and implement a programme of technical assistance and capacity-building that supports the newly elected parliaments in the Middle East and North Africa;
 16. Further urges donor countries and the multilateral financial institutions to honour their aid pledges to the Arab Spring countries in order to rescue their economies, protect them from recession and reduce their levels of unemployment;
 17. Appeals to the parliaments of the countries where stolen assets have been transferred to urge their governments and banks to recover such assets;
 18. Calls for an international parliamentary conference on the role of youth in politics in the contemporary world and current technological developments to be held under the auspices of the IPU.

The delegation of Venezuela expressed its opposition to the resolution because of the approach it took on good governance.

REDISTRIBUTION OF POWER, NOT JUST WEALTH: OWNERSHIP OF THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDAS

Resolution adopted unanimously by the 126th IPU Assembly (Kampala, 5 April 2012)

The 126th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Convinced that the governance structures of international institutions must be democratized so as to ensure that representative voices of all the world's people are heard,

Mindful that it is extremely urgent to respond effectively to acute and increasing global challenges transcending national borders, all of which threaten the future of humanity and include climate change, the sustainability and security of natural resources, the food crisis, lack of respect for human rights, the failure of financial systems and international trade arrangements, international terrorism and organized crime,

Aware that the priorities of existing multilateral institutions and forums are too often dominated by the interests of certain powerful States and their economies, and that the preoccupations of these States frequently marginalize the needs of those nations and peoples most exposed to the consequences of the economic, social, cultural and political crises with which the multilateral institutions endeavour to grapple,

Considering that the great powers disproportionately generate the very challenges that preoccupy them and affect the world as a whole,

Recognizing that lasting stability and security depend on the representative, transparent, accountable and effective nature of political systems and their institutions, and that this holds true at the neighbourhood, local, provincial, national and international levels,

Concerned that there remains a high degree of underrepresentation of women in positions of power, not only in parliaments and government, but also in international institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank, and that gender mainstreaming is greatly needed to enable women to participate in and contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Mindful that the effective participation of women in all spheres of decision-making and at all levels is crucial for relevant, successful and effective policies, and that the

ownership of the agendas of global political institutions must therefore belong to all their constituent members and reflect their different perspectives,

Considering that speedy reform is essential at all levels to provide for inclusive and democratic decision-making and problem-solving and to combat alienation and instability,

Recalling that the preamble and Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations spell out the objectives: "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, ... to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, ... to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social cultural and humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion",

1. Expresses its conviction that it is imperative for international institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, to take immediate steps to ensure that their structures and arrangements for governance - including the preparation of agendas, voting arrangements, decision-making processes, records of proceedings and methods of appointing Chief Executives - are made transparent and genuinely democratic and that all staff appointments are based on merit while seeking to achieve geographical, ethnic and gender balance;
2. Calls for the establishment alongside the G20 of an inclusive and fully representative global economic council, whose mission would be to coordinate the action of the United Nations and its Member States in the economic and social spheres, and notes that such a global economic council could result from reforms to the current UN Economic and Social Council;
3. Strongly recommends that the appointment of the United Nations Secretary-General be an open and transparent process aimed at finding the most competent and qualified person for the task;
4. Demands reform of the membership of the UN Security Council in the near future, particularly regarding its permanent members, that is adapted to the new power balances in the world and gives the Security Council the credibility and effectiveness that it needs in the 21st century to promote peace and international security, as distinct from the post-1945 era;
5. Appeals for all appointments within the United Nations system to be made transparently and on the basis of merit while striving to ensure geographical, ethnic and gender balance;

6. Calls for mandatory registers of lobbyists or accredited observers and bodies to be introduced at the national and international levels of policy- and decision-making wherever applicable and in accordance with the law in order to ensure that their actions are more transparent and citizens are better informed about them;
7. Believes that, notwithstanding the current financial and economic concerns, climate change, by far the greatest challenge facing humanity, should be consistently and effectively addressed through a fair, transparent and equitable process, fully engaging all sections of civil society and respecting the principles of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, in particular equity and common but differentiated responsibilities;
8. Calls for sustainable development to be given the highest political priority and welcomes the proposal of the Global Sustainability Panel in the context of Rio+20 to create a global sustainable development council;
9. Strongly encourages compliance with the requirements of equity and renewal of political commitment to sustainable development based on the Rio principles, both of which should be key objectives of Rio+20 and vital components of legitimate global governance;
10. Calls upon parliamentarians to advocate strongly these priorities and work for immediate action by their governments to ensure their rapid implementation;
11. Also calls upon parliamentarians to advocate special measures and incentives to facilitate the inclusion of women from all walks of life in decision-making and agenda-setting processes at the local, national, regional and international levels;
12. Further calls upon parliamentarians to encourage international institutions to revitalize the women's agenda globally and to mainstream gender in their objectives, structures and work;
13. Appeals to parliamentarians to strive to generate widespread public understanding of why these priorities are essential and why any delay in implementing them can no longer be tolerated;
14. Resolves to ensure that the IPU undertake an annual review of progress worldwide in the areas of integrity, accountability, inclusiveness and fully representative democracy at all levels of power.

ACCESS TO HEALTH AS A BASIC RIGHT: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN ADDRESSING KEY CHALLENGES TO SECURING THE HEALTH OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Resolution adopted unanimously by the 126th IPU Assembly (Kampala, 5 April 2012)

The 126th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Recognizing the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000), which established eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Underscoring that a human-rights approach is fundamental to achieving these MDGs,

Noting that MDG 4 aims to reduce the under-five child mortality rate by two thirds between 1990 and 2015 and that MDG 5 aims to reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters between 1990 and 2015,

Concerned that the funding gap to ensure universal access to reproductive health remains unacceptably high and that donor and developing countries need to step up their commitments to achieve the MDGs, in particular MDG 5,

Drawing attention to the fact that improvements in maternal and child health require progress related to poverty and hunger (MDG 1), access to education (MDG 2), gender equality and the empowerment of women (MDG 3), and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and malaria (MDG 6),

Underscoring that the international community has committed to achieving the MDGs by 2015,

Concerned that in 2008 an estimated 358,000 women worldwide died from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth, and underscoring that 99 per cent of these deaths occurred in developing countries,

Also concerned that in 2010 an estimated 7.6 million children died before reaching their fifth birthday, with 41 per cent dying in their first month, and that over 170 million children under five worldwide are affected by stunting,

Deeply concerned that maternal and child mortality rates remain unacceptably high globally and that many countries are not on track to achieve MDGs 4 and 5,

Recognizing that less than half of all pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa and only half of all pregnant women in Southern Asia are attended to by skilled health

professionals, including midwives, during labour and delivery, which is one of the major factors contributing to maternal and newborn deaths; that midwives are in short supply in many developing countries; and that there is an urgent need, particularly in countries with high maternal mortality rates, to provide assistance in the recruitment, training and support of professional midwives,

Also recognizing that lack of access to quality sexual and reproductive health services and supplies, in particular family planning services, which include contraceptives, is a major contributing factor to maternal mortality,

Noting that ineffective and poorly-resourced health systems, particularly the lack of human resources for health and inaccessible health care facilities, are key impediments to improved health outcomes,

Also noting that the burden on health professionals in many developing countries could be lightened by improvements in health governance, including measures to expand and improve access to skilled birth attendant services,

Reiterating that universal access to reproductive health is one of the targets of MDG 5b,

Concerned that contraceptive prevalence rates are low and the need for family planning and level of unwanted pregnancies are high in many countries with worrisome maternal mortality rates, particularly among adolescents, and that international assistance for family planning has diminished significantly since the year 2000,

Considering that unwanted pregnancies are disproportionately high among young unmarried girls, who also run the highest risk of pregnancy-related morbidity and mortality,

Noting that unsafe abortions account for 13 per cent of maternal deaths,

Also noting that although maternal mortality is the leading cause of death among adolescent girls in most developing countries, adolescent girls are most likely to give birth without skilled birth attendants,

Further noting that young people remain disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, accounting for 41 per cent of all new infections among 15 to 49 year-olds, and that young women between the ages of 15 and 19 are particularly vulnerable because of gender inequalities, sexual violence, early marriage, intergenerational relationships and more limited access to education,

Aware of the importance of providing information, education and services that are appropriate to people's age and needs throughout the life cycle,

Affirming that comprehensive sex education that is age-appropriate, gender-sensitive and evidence-based is crucial if young people are to be provided with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions about their sexuality and given the means to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS,

Aware that a critical window to improve children's health and secure their prospects for life-long development through adequate nutrition exists between pregnancy and a child's second birthday, so as to guarantee them an appropriate role in the country's long-term development with the capacity to assimilate what they learn through the education system,

Affirming the commitment to uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

Considering the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995),

Recalling the political declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly in June 2011, which committed to working towards the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS by 2015 and to substantially reducing AIDS-related maternal deaths,

Also recalling Resolution 11/8 on Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on 17 June 2009,

Welcoming the resolution on Eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women, adopted by consensus at the 54th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women,

Appreciating the commitment made at the G8 Summit held in Canada in June 2010 to allocate US\$ 7.3 billion to carry out initiatives in the least developed countries (LDCs), to contribute to implementing the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health launched by the UN Secretary-General, and the commitment made at the 15th African Union Heads of State Summit (Uganda 2010) to fulfil the

pledges taken at the Abuja Summit by allocating 15 per cent of the overall State budget to health,

Mindful of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, as well as the 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation,

Considering previous IPU resolutions, in particular those pertaining to the MDGs, women's and children's health, and gender equality and human rights, and the outcome document of the Sixth Annual Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament held in 2010,

Affirming that enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is an internationally recognized human right,

Aware that gender is a key determinant of health and that the causes of many of the differences and inequalities between women's and men's health status are social, economic and cultural,

Underscoring that the enhancement of women's and children's health is much more than a policy goal and that States have an obligation to respect, promote, protect and fulfil women's, children's and adolescents' right to health on a non-discriminatory basis,

Committed to realizing the goals of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, and the recommendations of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health, and underscoring the centrality of parliamentary action therein,

Encouraged by the increasing parliamentary attention in the national, regional and international spheres, and resources being devoted to reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health,

Noting, however, that progress in reducing maternal and child mortality has been uneven across regions and within countries, and that this must be addressed as a matter of urgency,

Stressing that special attention must be given to the health needs and rights of women, newborns, children and adolescents who belong to one or multiple vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including those in the poorest households, living in rural and remote areas, and affected by HIV/AIDS, adolescent girls, indigenous women and children, migrant women and children, refugee and internally displaced women and children as well as those in humanitarian, conflict

and post-conflict situations, sex workers, and women and children with disabilities, and recognizing the importance of introducing measures to reduce inequalities and of commitment to equality of access and outcome for these disadvantaged groups,

Underscoring that equal access to quality education and sexual and reproductive education for all women, children and adolescents is a key intervention that can reduce health inequities and improve health in cases of communicable and non-communicable diseases,

Also underscoring that efforts need to be focused on young people as young men and women, married or unmarried, need access to sexual and reproductive health information and services,

Further underscoring, in keeping with the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and key actions for its further implementation, the importance of universal access to post-abortion care and access to safe abortions where they are legal,

Underlining that most maternal and child deaths are preventable and that many are the result of conditions that may be avoided through immunization or treated by well-known and cost-effective interventions,

Convinced that the rationale for prioritizing women's, newborn, children's and adolescent health in development strategies is compelling and that the need to do so is indisputable,

Emphasizing the need for parliamentarians and governments to tackle the problems of ill-health caused by the smoking of tobacco and tobacco products, to coordinate efforts to protect adults and children from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, to deplore the activities of the tobacco companies in targeting markets in LDCs and developing countries, and the need for all countries to adopt the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control,

1. Calls upon all parliamentarians, both men and women, and the IPU, to take all possible measures to generate and sustain the political will as well as the appropriate resources needed to achieve the MDGs by 2015, and to put in place the policies and commitments needed for the post-2015 period;
2. Encourages parliamentarians to collaborate and build partnerships with relevant stakeholders to achieve the health-related MDGs, working closely with governments, civil society, local communities, health care professionals, academics and research institutions, multilateral organizations, global funds and foundations, the media and the private sector;

3. Recommends that national parliaments, regional parliamentary assemblies and the IPU hold regular debates on progress towards the realization of MDGs 3, 4, 5 and 6 and target 1.C;
4. Calls upon the parliaments of States that have not yet done so to support ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as well as the relevant Optional Protocols, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and to commit to the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health;
5. Urges parliamentarians to closely monitor the domestic implementation of international, regional and national human rights instruments so as to ensure that all health-related obligations and recommendations, including those under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW, the CRC and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, are fully implemented and respected by all levels of government, and calls upon parliaments to participate in the deliberations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and to seek the support of the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians;
6. Recommends that parliaments request annual updates on the steps taken by their governments to implement international human rights instruments and programmes related to health and gender equality;
7. Encourages parliaments to include gender impact assessments with the introduction of all health-related legislation, and also encourages the IPU to facilitate exchanges among its Member Parliaments so as to build capacity in this area;
8. Invites parliaments to see to it that national health policies and strategies incorporate a gender perspective, and that education of health care workers and research take full account of the existing gender differences in health;
9. Urges parliaments to introduce or amend legislation to guarantee equal access to health services for all women and children without discrimination, and to provide free essential health services for all pregnant women and children;
10. Also urges parliaments to establish specialized parliamentary committees on women and children, to monitor progress on the implementation and ratification of resolutions and declarations on women and children, and to address women's and children's health issues more comprehensively;
11. Further urges parliaments to pass laws explicitly criminalizing all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic and sexual violence and in situations of armed conflict, and other forms of violence such as forced

- sterilization, forced and early marriage and female genital mutilation, and calls upon parliaments to enact laws to prevent violence and provide support and reparation to survivors;
12. Calls upon parliaments to use the oversight and accountability tools at their disposal throughout the budgetary process, as well as innovative financing approaches, to ensure that adequate domestic financial resources are allocated for sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, and for achieving MDGs 4, 5 and 6 at the national level;
 13. Requests parliaments to ensure that the domestic funds and aid allocated to women's and children's health are released and used for the relevant programmes;
 14. Calls upon parliamentarians to use the oversight and accountability tools at their disposal to work to ensure that all commitments made to the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health are fulfilled, and that all the recommendations of the subsequent Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health are implemented;
 15. Requests the agencies of the United Nations system, in particular the WHO, the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF, to provide countries with more of the multifaceted support they need to implement policies and programmes aimed at reducing maternal and infant mortality;
 16. Calls upon parliaments to further enhance support for education in order to improve long-term health outcomes in general and to promote individuals' contribution to society;
 17. Encourages parliaments to advocate for lines in the health budget to be earmarked for the provision of essential sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health services to vulnerable women and children, including those in the poorest households, those living in rural areas, those who are members of indigenous communities or minority groups, those with disabilities, those living with HIV/AIDS, and adolescent girls;
 18. Also encourages parliaments to support gender-sensitive budgeting as a tool for addressing women's health needs;
 19. Further encourages parliamentarians to advocate for increasing the number of midwives, assistance with the recruitment, training and support of professional midwives, and the provision of accommodation for mothers, near or in the hospital if necessary, before their delivery, in order to gain access to professional and monitored delivery;
 20. Urges parliaments to ensure that parliamentary committees entrusted with monitoring issues pertaining to health and gender equality are adequately resourced and operational;
 21. Also urges parliamentarians in African States to establish a broadly-agreed timetable for their governments to honour their commitments under the 2001 Abuja Declaration;

22. Invites the African States that have not yet done so to implement the Maputo Plan of Action for Africa, adopted by the African Union (AU) Summit in 2006, which provides inter alia for the adoption of national roadmaps to reduce maternal, newborn and infant mortality in accordance with the AU roadmap, and calls for the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA), initiated and launched by the AU in 2009, to be introduced in all countries;
23. Calls upon Member Parliaments, in particular those of the G8 countries, to use the oversight and accountability mechanisms at their disposal to monitor the fulfillment of financial commitments made towards health initiatives in the LDCs;
24. Urges parliaments and their members to take all necessary measures to enhance women's effective participation and leadership at all levels of health governance;
25. Calls upon parliamentarians in countries providing official development assistance (ODA) to work towards increasing their country's ODA for health and to hold their governments to account for honouring their commitments and for reporting – on the basis of common international indicators – on the proportion of ODA being channelled towards reproductive, women's, children's and adolescent health and the promotion of gender equality, and to ensure that these funds are audited in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness;
26. Also calls upon parliamentarians in countries that provide ODA to evaluate this spending, including through parliamentary field visits and deliberations in committees on development assistance, to ensure that it prioritizes the recipient countries, sectors, communities and programmes with the greatest demonstrated needs and vulnerabilities, and that these resources are distributed in a more equitable manner;
27. Encourages parliamentarians in countries that provide ODA to examine the degree to which their government's ODA is being coordinated with other donors and harmonized and aligned with the health systems, plans and priorities of recipient countries;
28. Also encourages parliamentarians in countries that provide ODA to verify that the aid programmes are implemented, in particular in the field of maternal and child health, that they are managed against results-based objectives, and are based on the principle of shared responsibility;
29. Calls upon parliamentarians to scrutinize all government health interventions to ensure they are, as far as possible, evidence-based, conform to international human rights standards, and are responsive to regular and transparent performance reviews;
30. Also calls upon parliamentarians to promote integrated health services, and to advocate for balanced resources to meet the needs of women and

- children in the pre-pregnancy, pre-natal, birth, post-natal, infancy and early childhood stages, particularly through the decentralization of health services;
31. Encourages parliamentarians to ensure a coordinated approach to all matters pertaining to maternal and child health, such as sanitation, access to safe drinking water, the fight against malnutrition, and gender equality;
 32. Calls upon parliamentarians to ensure free access to vaccines and medicines to protect women and children from disease;
 33. Urges parliaments to support the training of health professionals, including midwives and birth attendants, as well as universal access to reproductive health information, services and supplies, including contraceptives;
 34. Appeals to parliamentarians to promote the establishment and/or enhancement, before 2015, of accurate civil registration systems to register all births and deaths and causes of death, particularly in relation to women, children and adolescents;
 35. Urges parliaments to encourage the development of national information systems that include a gender perspective and data from all health facilities and administrative sources and surveys, which should subsequently be used to inform parliamentary debates;
 36. Encourages parliaments to take into consideration, including as part of development cooperation, the WHO recommendations on maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, such as the Guidelines for preventing early pregnancy and poor reproductive outcomes among adolescents in developing countries, and to support the implementation of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel;
 37. Also encourages parliaments to explore innovative approaches to health service design and delivery, including the use of information and communications technologies such as tele-medicine and mobile phones, in order to reach women, children and adolescents in remote areas, to facilitate emergency responses to births, and to collect and disseminate health information as widely as possible and in accessible formats to women with disabilities, and to ensure sex education;
 38. Calls upon parliaments to work with governments to consider the establishment of transparent domestic accountability mechanisms for maternal and child health, one form of which could be a multi-stakeholder national commission that reports to parliament;
 39. Requests the IPU to facilitate collaboration and exchanges among its Member Parliaments so as to build the capacity of parliamentarians to monitor all policy and programme areas, as well as the above-mentioned budgetary and legislative activities;
 40. Encourages the IPU to enhance cooperation with the specialized UN agencies and parliamentary networks engaged in the promotion of women's and children's health and rights;

41. Requests the IPU to develop an accountability mechanism - based on the 2011 report of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health, Keeping Promises, Measuring Results - to monitor the progress of Member Parliaments in implementing this resolution between the date of its adoption and 2015, and to publish the results of that review annually;
42. Urges parliamentarians to work for age-appropriate, gender-sensitive and evidence-based sex education for all young people;
43. Also urges parliamentarians, in keeping with the ICPD Programme of Action, to ensure universal access to post-abortion care and to make sure that abortions are safe where they are legal as a means of saving the lives of girls, adolescents and women.

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION INITIATIVE FOR AN IMMEDIATE HALT TO THE BLOODSHED AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SYRIA, AND THE NEED TO ENSURE ACCESS TO HUMANITARIAN AID FOR ALL PERSONS IN NEED AND TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL RELEVANT ARAB LEAGUE AND UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS AND PEACE EFFORTS

Resolution adopted by consensus* by the 126th IPU Assembly (Kampala, 5 April 2012)

The 126th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Recalling the resolution on "Strengthening democratic reform in emerging democracies, including in North Africa and the Middle East", adopted unanimously by the 124th IPU Assembly (Panama City, 2011), which urged all parties to refrain from violence and to ensure in particular that human rights are respected; called on all governments to respect the right to peaceful self-determination of peoples; and expressed concern for the humanitarian impact of the political changes in the region on vulnerable groups, particularly women and children,

Also recalling the resolution entitled "Furthering parliamentary democracy in order to protect human rights and encourage reconciliation among peoples and partnership among nations", adopted by the 110th IPU Assembly (Mexico City, 2004), in which the Assembly "underlines that the holding of truly free and fair elections based on secret balloting and universal suffrage, monitored by independent election authorities, is always of paramount importance in the establishment of parliaments reflecting national diversity and, particularly in countries emerging from violent conflict, is essential in consolidating and advancing the reconciliation

process" and "calls on parliaments to respect the political rights of opposition parties and freedom of the press",

Expressing its solidarity and sympathy for the Syrian people, whose democratic freedoms and human rights are being systematically and brutally undermined by their own government,

Noting that sustained and unjustified violence continues to be perpetrated against the Syrian people, including the killing and persecution of protestors, human rights defenders and journalists, denial of access to medical treatment, and the torture of and violence against men, women and children,

Cognizant of the serious humanitarian crisis and dismayed by the mounting loss of life and injury being caused by this violence, largely due to armed attacks perpetrated by the Syrian Government against its own population,

Alarmed by these authorities' use of heavy military equipment, including artillery and combat tanks, against towns and other population centres and their resorting to mass murder, arbitrary detentions, forced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment of detained persons, in particular children,

Noting the need to hold to account the perpetrators of human rights violations, including those that may amount to crimes against humanity,

Also noting the League of Arab States plan of 2 November 2011 and their decisions of 22 January and 12 February 2012 respectively, agreed to by the Syrian Government, which called in particular for an immediate end to violence against protestors, the release of political prisoners, the removal of all tanks and armoured vehicles from the streets and the convening of a meeting in Cairo for dialogue with the opposition,

Further noting the declaration of the League of Arab States of 29 March 2012,

Considering the repeated demands by the United Nations and the League of Arab States for the Syrian Government to honour its commitment to the Arab League plan and to permit the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the evacuation of wounded persons,

Recalling the decisions of the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva from 28 November to 1 December 2011, on strengthening international humanitarian law and domestic legislation for disaster-risk reduction, addressing regulatory barriers to providing emergency and

transitional shelter in a rapid and equitable manner after natural disasters, and humanitarian access and assistance,

Noting the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 16 February 2012, which strongly condemned "the continued widespread and systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the Syrian authorities, such as the use of force against civilians, arbitrary executions, the killing and persecution of protestors, human rights defenders and journalists, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, interference with access to medical treatment, torture, sexual violence, and ill-treatment, including against children",

Recalling the statement issued by the President of the UN Security Council on 21 March 2012, in which the Security Council expresses its full support for the efforts of Kofi Annan, the Special Joint Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, and his six-point proposal to commit to appoint an empowered interlocutor to address the aspirations of the Syrian people; a cessation of violence; the provision of humanitarian assistance in affected areas; the release of arbitrarily detained persons; freedom of movement for journalists; and freedom of association and the right to demonstrate peacefully,

Also recalling United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010) on women and peace and security,

Further recalling the resolutions of 29 April 2011, 23 August 2011, 2 December 2011 and 1 and 23 March 2012 of the UN Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, and underscoring that in its resolutions of 2 December 2011 and 1 and 23 March 2012, the Council strongly condemns the systematic and widespread violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms that the Syrian authorities continue to commit,

Underscoring its respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, and rejecting any external military intervention,

Noting that the Syrian Government held discussions with the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, and that it agreed on 27 March 2012, but has not yet implemented, his six-point proposal, which envisages a UN-supervised ceasefire and the establishment of political dialogue between government and opposition groups,

Concerned by the grave risk to regional stability and security posed by the Syrian Government's use of violence rather than dialogue to address calls for reform,

Frustrated by the continued failure of the Syrian Government to respond to or implement the decisions and resolutions of international and regional bodies,

1. Calls for an immediate cessation of the violence and human rights violations and abuses in Syria and also calls for full compliance by all parties with international human rights and international humanitarian law obligations;
2. Supports the efforts of international and regional organizations to bring about a peaceful end to the crisis in Syria;
3. Urges the United Nations and the League of Arab States to redouble their efforts to assist in bringing about an end to armed violence in Syria and to address the current humanitarian crisis;
4. Supports the unprecedented leadership and efforts of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States and his six-point proposal for resolving the situation in Syria;
5. Calls upon the Syrian Government to honour its commitment to this proposal and its earlier commitment to the Arab League Plan, including withdrawing military personnel from cities, ending the use of heavy weapons, releasing political prisoners and cooperating fully and immediately with the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to facilitate the unhindered and safe provision of humanitarian assistance and to allow the evacuation of the wounded from affected areas;
6. Urges the commencement of an inclusive political process in Syria to address the legitimate democratic aspirations and concerns of the Syrian people;
7. Underscores that this political process must be conducted in an environment free of violence, torture, fear, intimidation, discrimination and extremism;
8. Expresses the hope that this process can lead to an all-inclusive democratic political system, in which all citizens are equal;
9. Underscores the pivotal role the IPU can play in coming to the assistance of emerging democracies, fostering political reconciliation and the peaceful settlement of conflicts, and in upholding and protecting the principles of representative democracy, human rights and gender equality;
10. Requests the IPU to dispatch an international parliamentary fact-finding mission to the Syrian territories to examine the reality of the situation arising from the violence and the deliberate hampering of the activities of international and Arab relief organizations, and to issue an urgent report to the IPU membership with a view to taking the necessary measures;
11. Urges parliaments to provide all necessary humanitarian assistance to all persons in Syria affected by the violence and to participate in making immediate preparations for extending such assistance, including in neighbouring countries;
12. Supports the continuation of diplomatic and economic sanctions on the Syrian Government until such a time as the situation improves significantly;

13. Requests the IPU President to report on the implementation of this resolution at the 127th IPU Assembly and at the United Nations.

PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT ON MALI

Endorsed by the 126th IPU Assembly
(Kampala, 5 April 2012)

We, the representatives of the national parliaments meeting in Kampala at the 126th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union:

Are profoundly concerned at the military coup d'état that took place in Mali on 22 March 2012 and overthrew the legitimate authorities,

Support the negotiations undertaken by the Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and of the African Union with the military junta with a view to an immediate restoration of the Republic's institutions,

Demand that the military junta make a commitment to honour its solemn declaration of 1 April 2012 aimed at effectively restoring the Republic's institutions, and to relinquish power,

Urge all the parties to safeguard the country's cultural heritage,

Ask the IPU to lend its full support to the President of the Republic, the Parliament and people of Mali in their ordeal and in view of the worsening humanitarian crisis,

Call upon the international community to back the decisions made by the Heads of State of ECOWAS aimed at restoring peace, rule of law and democracy in Mali and the integrity of its territory.