

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNITED NATIONS PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AND THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

At its meeting on 4-5 November 2008 in the European Parliament in Brussels, the Campaign for the Establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA) deliberated on the relation between the proposed UNPA and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the possible roles and functions of the two parliamentary bodies.

The Campaign concluded that the proposed UNPA and the IPU would be complementary institutions. A UNPA would not replace or duplicate the IPU's functions. Quite the contrary, a UNPA would provide a response to the democratic deficit in global governance which the IPU in its current structure is unable to offer.

The Campaign noted in particular:

- (1) The IPU is an association of national parliaments. One of its activities is to provide for a "parliamentary dimension to international cooperation". The IPU's goal in this context is to strengthen the ability of *national parliaments* to exercise their oversight functions at the *national level* in matters of international nature. The Campaign underlines the importance of this dimension.
- (2) The purpose of a UNPA is to exercise parliamentary functions directly *at the international level in its own right*. One of the goals is to make the UN executives and its institutions accountable to a *global parliamentary body*. The IPU has no such capacity and currently also does not aspire to develop such an oversight function.
- (3) The IPU's purpose is to be a facilitator for the work of national parliaments. In contrast, a UNPA would be composed of individual parliamentarians who would be called upon to take a global view.
- (4) The precedent of the Pan-African Parliament and the African Parliamentary Union shows that the UNPA and the IPU need not be mutually exclusive.
- (5) In the long run, a UNPA could be composed of directly elected members. The precedent of the European Parliament and the Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union shows that a largely directly elected UNPA and the IPU would be complementary and indeed both necessary.
- (6) The Campaign supports the work of the IPU and appreciates any and all active contributions from the IPU and IPU members in the efforts for the establishment of a UNPA.