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## Address by the IPU Secretary General, Mr. Chungong, on the occasion of the UNODC Regional Workshop for Parliamentarians

**Aswan, 31 January 2017**

Honourable Speaker of the Egyptian Parliament,  
Honourable President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the  
Mediterranean  
Honourable Members of Parliament from the region participating in this  
seminar,  
Regional Representative of UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East  
and North Africa,  
Dear colleague Mauro Miedico, from UNODC headquarters,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be with you today at this very important workshop. I am particularly pleased that it is taking place in Aswan, one of the high places of ancient Egyptian, and I would say, world civilization. I would like to thank you Mr Speaker Professor Ali Abdel Aal Sayed Ahmed, for your gracious hospitality in hosting this event here in Aswan. We deeply appreciate this and I am sure the setting and the arrangements that have been made by the Egyptian parliament will allow for a successful workshop.

I wish to thank the UNODC for associating the IPU in this event. We are united and committed in our common endeavour to contribute to the world-wide effort to root out the scourge of terrorism. This workshop is certainly an expression of that commitment and the IPU is only too happy to contribute to it.

Indeed, some people may wonder – and rightfully so – what role parliaments can play in combating terrorism?

I hope you will not be surprised to learn that terrorism and extremism have been on the agenda of the world's legislatures for some time now as they pose a direct threat to democratic values, development and human rights - the very pillars upon which the IPU was founded in 1889. In fact, over the past two decades alone, IPU Assemblies have adopted no fewer than 12 major resolutions related to terrorism and extremism, which have laid the groundwork for an IPU Member-driven plan of action.

As we embark on our deliberations on the challenges the global community faces in combatting terrorism, I think it would be helpful to state the IPU's position which it shares with the United Nations: terrorism cannot and should not be associated with or attributed to any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. I believe strongly that terrorism should be countered with legitimacy and justice.

The IPU resolutions I have just referred to have highlighted the need for parliaments to cooperate with the United Nations on the implementation of its counter-terrorism resolutions and strategies. Those resolutions have laid the foundations for a comprehensive and integrated response to terrorism at the global and domestic levels, while underlining the role of legislative bodies in their implementation. The 4th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2015 in New York called for effective parliamentary cooperation and support for implementation of all UN resolutions, conventions and agreement to combat terrorism.

Parliaments certainly play an important role in ratifying conventions and other international instruments and in ensuring their incorporation in their national legislative architecture. But I hasten to point out that parliaments should not be limited to this ratifying function. Indeed, they are also called upon to adopt specific legislative measures, to exchange timely and accurate information and knowledge, as well as to promote capacity-building measures.

Ladies and gentlemen,

You will agree with me that there is clearly more value in preventing criminal terrorist acts than in countering them through repressive action and that is one of the reasons why we are here today. Exactly one year ago, the UN Secretary-General presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, in which the importance of parliaments' role is highlighted in each of its seven priority areas. The success of preventive measures depends, among other factors, on the extent to which societies are fully represented by their parliaments, and on the ability of parliaments to help weed out conditions that are conducive to violent extremism.

Through their legislative prerogatives and their key oversight role in implementation, parliaments and parliamentarians are the appropriate vehicle for transmitting knowledge on violent extremism; they are at the forefront of its prevention and understand the conditions that lead to threats on the national and global levels. Parliament can also, for instance, legislate to combat pro-terror websites.

Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community is committed to fostering peaceful, just and

inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence. Indeed, there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. I am sure we will all resolve to prosecute the implementation of Goal 16 and to promote effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels as a means of fighting inequality and violence which are key enablers of extremism. In this regard, I wish to underscore the importance of gender equality and youth empowerment. The IPU is committed to rejuvenating democracy wherein voice is given to the youth and their creative potential harnessed for the good of society as a whole.

As a global problem, terrorism and extremism require a comprehensive and coordinated global response involving all relevant stakeholders. Yet despite the many UN and IPU resolutions which call for greater coordination, implementation gaps still persist. There is a gap in coordination between the executive and legislative branches at both the national and international levels, as well as in the national enactment of the relevant IPU and UN resolutions. These gaps hinder international efforts to counter terrorism and prevent extremism, and are of grave concern to the global parliamentary community.

The need for efficient global coordination against terrorism is therefore clearly reflected in the IPU's Strategy for 2017-2021. The Strategy underscores the IPU's role in contributing to peace building, conflict prevention and security. The strategy aims to ensure that parliaments are no longer sidelined from international efforts. The IPU's Member Parliaments have mandated me, as IPU Secretary General, to cooperate in this regard more closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Dear participants,

Building on IPU and UN resolutions, the IPU and UNODC have developed a joint initiative in the form of a plan of action with national, regional and international objectives. On the national level, the initiative aims to assist national parliaments with technical and capacity building programmes, fostering cooperation between the legislative and executive arms of government in the adoption of counter-terrorism national plans, and exchange of practices and experiences on the incorporation of international resolutions into domestic legislation.

At the regional level, supporting regional parliamentary cooperation and enhancing the exchange of relevant experience and practices is crucial. The IPU can play a key role by mobilizing its Members in the different regions on this issue through a regional lens, including the financing of terrorism or the regional mobilization of foreign terrorist fighters.

At the international level, the IPU can be instrumental by bringing the relevant concerns, practices and experiences of national parliaments to the attention of relevant IPU and UN bodies for developing best practices, guidelines and other documents to facilitate implementation of international resolutions at the national level.

To achieve these objectives, it would be necessary to: (1) institutionalize IPU support for UN efforts, through the establishment of a High-Level Parliamentary Working Group (HLPWG), as a coordination structure that would bring together the representatives of the world's legislative bodies directly with the CTED and UNODC; (2) establish a Global Parliamentary Network to exchange expertise and knowledge on legal frameworks and relevant international resolutions; (3) deliver parliamentary capacity-building programmes; and (4) publish an annual national parliamentary report/survey on the implementation of the UN Strategy and Plan of Action, ratification of international treaties, prevention policies, for the elaboration of guidelines and best practices.

A first step could be to organize the first Global Parliamentary Conference on Counter-Terrorism.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
We have all the ingredients we need to make this partnership work to bring a necessary parliamentary dimension to the fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

It is my sincere hope that we can take our joint initiative forward with your goodwill and assistance.

Thank you.