

## 120<sup>th</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY TO CONSIDER THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS ON THE MOST VULNERABLE, ESPECIALLY IN AFRICA

Addis Ababa, 6 April 2009 - No. 4

The 120<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has decided to add an emergency item to its agenda entitled: *The role of parliaments in mitigating the social and political impact of the international economic and financial crisis on the most vulnerable sectors of the global community, especially in Africa.*

The item was proposed by the delegations of Venezuela and Canada (on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group).

Earlier that day, the Speaker of the Ethiopian Parliament, Mr. Teshome Toga, had been elected President of the 120<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

At the opening of the general debate entitled *Building Peace, Democracy and Development in times of crisis*, the President of Ethiopia, Mr. Girma W. Giorgis, addressed the Assembly. He said that Africa had been so marginalized in the 1980s that not many people thought it had much of a chance for the future. "Over the last few years, however, Africa has started to make real changes, which have given new hope to its peoples. The ongoing worldwide economic dislocation should not be allowed to jeopardize these gains", he added.

The President of Ethiopia said that his country is a pillar for peace and stability in this region of Africa, with goodwill and readiness to cooperate with all those committed to peace and security. "No doubt, the achievement of all this requires full and unambiguous devotion to the principles of international law governing inter-State relations. This might appear an easy task, but I can assure you it is not. This is one of those areas where the IPU can lend support to the peoples of this region, and Africa as a whole", said President Giorgis.

*Established in 1889 and with Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the IPU - the oldest multilateral political organization in the world - currently brings together 154 parliaments and eight associated regional assemblies. The world organization of parliaments also has an Office in New York, which acts as its Permanent Observer to the United Nations.*

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