



## Press Release

10 September 2009

### Parliament of Namibia to Mark International Day of Democracy on 15 September

The United Nations General Assembly acknowledged the resilience and universality of the principles of democracy in November 2007 by declaring 15 September the International Day of Democracy to celebrate democracy worldwide. Highly symbolical, the date coincides with the adoption, in September 1997, of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Universal Declaration on Democracy.

This is an important opportunity to engage citizens in discussion about the meaning and future directions of democracy. In 2008, around 50 parliaments organized some form of event to mark this occasion. The Namibian Parliament will mark International Day of Democracy on 15 September 2009 for the second time. The day will be celebrated on Tuesday in the Parliament Gardens starting at 08h30 where different personalities will give presentations emphasising the importance of democracy.

The IPU has chosen to highlight the theme of 'Democracy and political tolerance' this year. Political tolerance means accepting and respecting the basic rights and civil liberties of persons and groups whose viewpoints differ from one's own. It is the foundation of democratic dialogue and political pluralism. An international public opinion survey commissioned by the IPU shows that there is strong support for political tolerance. However, there is a widespread perception of a serious lack of political tolerance in practice.

#### Please refer to the links below for detailed information:

- 'Global Poll: Widespread Perception of Serious Lack of Political Tolerance': Press release by WorldPublicOpinion.org  
<http://www.ipu.org/dem-e/idd/pressrelease09.pdf>
- Full report: World Public Opinion on Political Tolerance -A Study of 24 Nations-  
<http://www.ipu.org/dem-e/idd/report09.pdf>

Also on the occasion of the International Day of Democracy, the IPU is organizing a Parliamentary Conference on Democracy in Africa, in cooperation with the Parliament of Botswana (Gaborone, 14-16 September 2009). The purpose of the conference is to promote awareness of the International Day of Democracy, of the fundamental principles of democracy and the major issues facing the democratic community today. More specifically, it will promote parliaments' engagement with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. Hon. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Speaker of the National Assembly and President of the IPU will also attend this event joined by leaders such as Ms. Graça Machel, President, Foundation for Community Development, Lt Gen. Ian Khama Seretse Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana, Mr. Patrick Balopi, Speaker of the National Assembly of Botswana and Ms. Julia Dolly Joiner, African Union.

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