

## **How to Assemble Parliamentary Assemblies**

### **Bringing international parliamentary institutions to the next level**

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“As a case study we may show that less than half African states ratified the Pan-African Parliament  
Chart.”- Ivone Soares

Allow me, honourables, to begin this theme by first saluting you and, through you, salute all peoples  
you represent.

The theme brought up here is a great challenge to a world that needs, more than ever, harmony  
among its peoples, peace and sustainable development, as well as the curbing of appetites of those  
rulers that resort to dictatorship and tyranny, which we know is the main cause for wars and people  
suffering.

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is our aim, in the long term, to establish a world parliament, one that is able to pass binding law  
and whose members are directly elected. However, at a shorter term, it is more practical to establish  
this presently proposed Parliamentary Assembly, a consultative subsidiary body that complements  
the work of the United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly.

This somewhat piecemeal procedure hopefully ensures that the appointed representatives from all different political spectrums in member countries adapt to the working environment and thereby help the proper maturing of this new body.

There are large regions, in all continents, plagued by wars, between states but often civil wars; plagued by environmental hazards like draught, floods or forest fires; plagued by famine and disease, some of which are frightening, like Ebola.

There are countries where democracy is at risk due to dictators taking over political power by means of fake elections; countries where people are denied basic rights like freedom of expression and the right to choose their own rulers; countries where people are expelled from their ancestral lands in favor of multinational companies that exploit natural resources with no respect for environmental sustainability, the result of which people live in illiteracy, with no ways of learning basic techniques in order to produce their own food, clothes, housing and security, who thereby live in perpetual extreme poverty.

These are the real reasons behind the migration to countries where the rule is by the law. In countries where rules are made by the people and underwritten by the people, that is what parliament is all about, democracy thrives and development ensues.

Are we able to perceive the expected impact of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly on those countries? Let us consider a situation where members of opposition parties, who normally are denied free political activities in their own countries, are now within an international framework and able to interact with others of different countries who share similar or common political views.

Given such conditions, we expect strengthening of political stands back home where governments deny opposition, which may change rulers' attitudes and create conditions for democracy and development. This is our belief, one that is shared by many political scientists. The conditions that we are describing here are those that we hope can be set up by the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly, in a first step, towards a World Parliament in the long run.

The idea of a World Parliament backs to the League of Nations, soon after World War I. This idea had to wait the end of the II World War and through the Cold War. It is returning to our minds now, as a response to problems and dilemmas the world is now facing, namely environmental crisis, population growth, food shortages and famine, mass diseases, migration, wars, international terrorism, democracy at risk, the overpowering multinational companies.

Allow me to recall that the Global Campaign for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly began in 2007, in order to coordinate efforts and moves to that goal at world level.

The United Nations is composed of bodies like the General Assembly and the Security Council. What we now need is a consultative body composed of parliamentarians of different political parties from all countries, within the framework of the United Nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen

World peace and sustainable development requires a World Parliamentary Assembly to ensure representation, passing of binding laws and oversight, the elements of democracy.

Europe already has a parliament at continental level, the European Parliament, which to the world is very inspiring as democratic practices.

Africa has the African Union, created in Maputo, Mozambique, in 2002. The African Union, in turn, established in 2004 the Pan-African Parliament in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. By its Charter this parliament should be passing binding laws for the African continent at the year 2010, but it is not doing so. It is only capable of checking the workings of national parliaments and leave recommendations. No obligatory rules are ever issued for respect sake of states' sovereignty.

Acknowledging that the representative democracy is the way to global peace and ecological sustainability, it is of paramount interest that the world thrashes away dictatorships and one party rule plaguing countries all over, replacing those systems by effective democracies where people really participate and oversee in local, national and international agendas.

Honourables

It is true that assemblies at any level imply loss of some measure of sovereignty. At international level multilateralism and parliamentary assemblies do certainly limit sovereignty of states. But on the other hand, the complete lack of international laws and enforcing bodies allow for exceeding anarchy or even chaos in interstates relations, which can be dangerous for international relations.

Many states adhere to protocols, agreements and conventions at international venues, but once back home the signing officials hardly ever manage to convince their governments to let the parliaments ratify such instruments. The usual result is disregard for the international order by such states, arguing they are defending sovereignty.

Therefore, a sort of compromise has to be negotiated in order to achieve international stability and full-fledged democracy worldwide. After all political science has to prove itself.

As a case study we may show that less than half African states ratified the Pan-African Parliament Charter. I herewith exhibit the list of those countries, a stern reminder that the establishing of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly is rather challenging, let alone a World Parliament!

Ladies and Gentlemen

Years go by and the United Nations structure and procedures require changes, just like any worldwide institution. The world is changing, is it not so?

One of the features that is being asked by many to change is the veto right. In fact this procedure is being questioned by the majority of the members. Allow me to recall the two main propositions that have been forwarded as solutions that will hopefully improve the United Nations image and its Security Council.

One proposal simply removes the veto right. This will hardly be accepted by the Security Council members, at least for now.

The other proposal offers more standing seats in the Council, allowing for some more members from all continents to intervene fully in the proceedings. In this case, at least two seats could be offered to Africa. Such arrangement might produce a feeling of more balance in the international arena, therefore fulfilling the San Francisco Promise of the United Nations Charter Reform.

Now, as a promoter of this Global Campaign for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly we face some basic questions which we do need to address fully to be able to picture that body in practice:

- How will the members be elected?
- How many members will compose it?
- How many representatives for each country, or region or continent?
- What is the vote weight of each country?
- A country's economic power is of any influence in decision taking?
- Will there be parliamentary benches?
- Each country has its own legislature beginning and end. How will it work in this parliamentary assembly in order to ensure workings continuity?

These are of course only some of many other questions that require answers for this project. The answers have to be debated internally by all members, for it affects any country in its inner workings.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am convinced that many more questions and solutions will come up as we go along the way to our goal, the establishing of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly, one creation that will help to lead the world population to peace and sustainable development, a better world for us all and for the next generations to come.

Thank You Very Much