

Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at the plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly on agenda item 130 titled, "Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", on May 29, 2012

Mr. President,

I am happy to participate in today's plenary meeting on the agenda item 130 titled, "Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union."

We welcome the Secretary General's report on the subject (A/66/770) which is a comprehensive catalogue of some of the modalities and examples of interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and IPU over the last two years.

We are also happy to co-sponsor the resolution A/66/L.45 on the subject which amongst other things calls for the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly the item titled, "Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union."

Let me also place on record, our appreciation for the work done by the Permanent Mission of Morocco in this regard.

Mr. President,

India is the largest democracy in the world.

The success of the democratic principle and all the institutions that it entails has defined my country and its approach to relations with the rest of the world.

No wonder then that we have placed great emphasis on the work of the General Assembly ever since we joined the United Nations. In fact, even as early as the eighth session of the Assembly in 1953, an Indian, Mrs. Vijaylakshmi Pandit had the singular honour of presiding over this august House.

Mr. President,

This year-2012-also happens to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the first sitting of the Indian Parliament.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh said, "The story of the Indian Parliament is a story of the human striving for freedom and dignity; for tolerance and equality; for peace and progress. Our Parliament has not just voiced

the concerns and aspirations of the Indian people alone, but those of all humankind, of every freedom loving person who seeks a life of dignity and peace. Our Parliament stands as a unique representation of the values that created our Republic - of Unity in Diversity, of Secularism, of Pluralism and of the Rule of Law. How we conduct ourselves, how the Parliament conducts itself, is therefore, a way of showing respect to these values and to the memory of those who created and built this symbol of freedom and dignity. Each one of us owes it to those who sent us here to not only represent their views and their interests, but to do so with dignity, compassion and decorum. Our democracy has passed through many testing times. At every turn the people of India have with great enthusiasm and hope reiterated their faith in the democratic character of our State and reaffirmed the pluralistic character of our polity and society. Among democracies around the world India has one of the highest voter turn-outs in elections."

Mr. President,

The Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU] which is the world organization of 159 national parliaments has done yeomen service over the last decade or so in promoting closer coherence and interaction with the UN and its activities. The areas in which the IPU has contributed include peace building, human rights, gender equality, economic and social development, international law, achievement of MDGs, protecting the interests of the least developed countries and the like.

Of particular relevance is the role that the IPU and its members are playing and should continue to play in the years to come and which relates to cementing a culture of multilateralism and internationalism in today's world.

As rightly pointed out by the Secretary General in his report, "Parliaments and their members have a vital role to play in ensuring respect for, and implementation of, international commitments. Parliaments have a wide range of tools at their disposal to ensure that national laws, policies, actions, programmes and budgets reflect the principles and obligations contained in various international instruments."

This has been most evident in the context of gender issues, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

We are of the view that such trends must be strengthened and encouraged.

Mr. President,

An important pillar of the on-going interaction between national parliaments and the UN is the practice of various member-states of including legislators as members of national delegations to UN meetings and events.

Many of you would have witnessed active participation by some of India's finest Parliamentarians in the Assembly, Council and the varied Committees during the

period October to November every year. We have found this tradition to be very useful both for the visiting legislators as well as for us here in New York. I am happy to note that this practice finds special mention in the resolution.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, permit me to reiterate that India attaches importance to the role of the IPU and the interaction between the IPU, national parliaments and the UN. We will play our role in pushing this interaction forward.

Thank you.

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