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Official Records

President: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Miculescu (Romania), Vice-President, too the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 126

Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/827)

Draft resolution (A/68/L.44)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco to introduce draft resolution A/66/L.44.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): Under agenda item 126, entitled “Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union”, I should like to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.44. The General Assembly has adopted a resolution under the same name biennially, most recently as resolution 66/261, which was adopted by consensus on 29 May 2012, at its sixty-sixth session.

The delegation of Morocco, as represented by the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, who is present with us here today, has the honour of introducing draft resolution A/68/L.44 on behalf of 48 State sponsors. The list of sponsors will remain open with the Secretariat in this Hall to any Member seeking to join. Morocco hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

The delegation of Morocco, together with the IPU delegation, has conducted extensive discussions on the draft resolution, in which all the necessary information was provided on all amendments. The draft resolution is based primarily on previous General Assembly resolutions, with amendments based on the report of the Secretary-General contained in A/68/827. The amendments are aimed at enhancing cooperation between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU, especially with respect to drawing up a new agreement among the parties to strengthen institutional relations; contributing to parliamentary work within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda; supporting the presence of legislators and allowing them to participate in the major United Nations meetings and bodies; strengthening the links between the parliamentary hearing process and the main United Nations processes; and encouraging the United Nations bodies and agencies to take advantage of the IPU’s experience in strengthening democracy and the participation of the parliamentary institutions.

Ms. Lee (United States of America): I am honoured to be addressing the Assembly on behalf of the United States delegation as a United States congressional representative to the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. My colleagues and I recognize the close ties that are shared between the United Nations, national parliaments, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Let me thank the representative of Morocco for introducing draft resolution A/68/L.44, entitled “Interaction between the United Nations, national

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parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union”, and the draft resolution’s sponsors.

The United States Congress was a founding member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and played an active and prominent role for many decades. That is why I am especially honoured and pleased that the United States supports and joins consensus on today’s adoption of the draft resolution. The draft resolution builds on previously adopted resolutions and has the important aim of promoting a stronger role for parliaments in the debates and activities held at the United Nations and in the implementation of international commitments at the national level.

The core mission of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is the promotion of parliamentary democracy, the elaboration of standards and criteria for democratic parliamentary practice, the protection of human rights, the political empowerment of women and greater transparency and accountability at the global level, which are in line with United States interests and priorities.

As a Member of Congress myself — I come from California, where I represent the thirteenth congressional district — I have participated in several delegations and meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Most recently, I had the pleasure of hosting a meeting of parliamentarians at the United States Congress during the International AIDS Conference in July 2012. Working with the Inter-Parliamentary Union over my congressional career, I have witnessed first-hand its important work in mobilizing parliamentary action towards universal access to HIV care and treatment.

I want to note the important work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in working towards meeting the 2015 Millennium Development Goals and its contributions towards the post-2015 development agenda. Governance is a key goal for the next generation of development goals, and the United States welcomes the presence of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in our shared quest to have strong governance goals.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union also helps to strengthen parliaments and increase parliamentary capacity around the world to ensure effective, accountable Governments, and the United States welcomes the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in that regard. The United States also welcomes the initiative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to convene

the fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament at the United Nations in 2015 as a contribution to the post-2015 process.

Finally, as the global community is ever so challenged contending with several complex challenges simultaneously, it is more important than ever for the Inter-Parliamentary Union and national parliaments at large to be involved in the work of the United Nations to promote peace and diplomacy, uphold international law, protect the human rights of all, support the empowerment of women and turn the tide of global climate change. My colleagues and I look forward to supporting and enhancing IPU’s activities at the United Nations.

Ms. Egoli (Italy): Italy has always had a close association with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) — a bond strengthened through the presidency of Mr. Pier Casini during his term as Speaker of the Italian Chamber of Deputies from 2005 to 2008. We commend in particular the democratic mission that the IPU pursues through the strengthening of parliaments.

As the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/827) makes clear, the IPU operates at every level to achieve that goal, often in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies. One of the points that the draft resolution (A/68/L.44) we are discussing today refers to is the fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, which will take place in New York shortly before the United Nations summit of Heads of State and Government in September 2015. The Conference will be a unique opportunity not only to lend political momentum to the sustainable development goals, but also to promote a broader reflection on the role of national parliaments in international relations, on the modalities for cooperation between parliaments and national Governments, and on the need to reform politics so that it is better able to meet the needs of citizens. And that is a very timely debate also in my country, if I may add.

Italy greatly appreciates the fact that the gender dimension is present in all the activities conducted by the IPU in the areas of support for democracy, development and peace. The question of women’s rights and equal opportunities is one of the pillars of the IPU’s action, as demonstrated by the activities carried out by the IPU to initiate reforms of election procedures and of the composition of political parties in order to increase

the presence of women. At least one third of seats must be occupied by women, according to the Beijing Declaration.

Allow me to mention that Italy has made remarkable progress in that area and is now ranked thirty-first in the world classification maintained by the IPU, with approximately 29 per cent of seats in Parliament held by women. The Speaker of the Italian Parliament today, for example, is a woman — Ms. Laura Boldrini — who is also a member of the preparatory committee of the Speakers Conference.

Italy, together with its European partners, supports the IPU's call to include a democratic governance goal in the new sustainable development goals. The consultations that the IPU has conducted with parliaments throughout the world have demonstrated the international community's strong support for that goal. The contents and modalities of those consultations are another shining example of the backing that national parliaments can provide to development and, especially, to the realization of the ideas at the focus of United Nations debates. The IPU's activities are all the more important as they contribute to achieving that end.

Ms. Ortíz González (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico acknowledges the significance of this meeting on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). In an international system based on the principles of the rule of law and democratic governance, we need stronger parliamentary participation on a global scale in order to identify possible solutions to global problems and to work on them. The parliamentary perspective in United Nations consultations and decisions strengthens them whenever it has the support of the representatives of the people of Member States. States' commitments that take parliamentarians' opinions into account are more inclusive and therefore more likely to be observed, in view of the fact that those same actors are responsible for their implementation at the national level.

The work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union has strengthened parliaments' efforts to get involved in global governance and has promoted transparency and accountability in the implementation of international commitments in various areas, such as development, democracy, cooperation, the environment, the strengthening of international law, security, peace and human rights. Mexico therefore firmly believes that this cooperation between parliamentarians, the IPU and the United Nations should be encouraged and strengthened.

The Government of Mexico supports cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN-Women with a view to incorporating gender perspectives at the institutional level and to promoting fairness, pluralism and the participation and representation of women in parliamentary politics. We have shown our commitment to this initiative through the recent enactment by our Congress of an amendment to the Constitution of the United Mexican States, introducing a requirement obliging the parties to ensure gender parity in candidacies for the federal and local legislatures.

We also recognize the IPU's efforts to increase parliamentarians' familiarity with the principal United Nations instruments in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, we would like to highlight the IPU's participation in the second International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, in February. Also worthy of note was the IPU's role in the parliamentary forum held within the framework of the first High-level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in Mexico in April, which emphasized the importance of parliaments to the international agenda on development and cooperation.

Another highlight is the Inter-Parliamentary Union's involvement in the process of forming the post-2015 development agenda, which is a fundamental issue. To that end, parliaments and their members have assumed greater responsibilities in the international arena and are playing a more active role at the national, regional and global levels in three areas of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental. Mexico's lawmakers are supporting efforts aimed at achieving an agenda for universal and transformative development that is inclusive and whose fundamental goal is dealing effectively with reducing poverty and inequality.

Parliaments are significant players in the work of putting together the international agenda. Their participation in the work of the United Nations broadens the Organization's reach by giving its intergovernmental arena a wider, more pluralist and qualitative vision of cultural and political diversity.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that, in an unprecedented step, the Government and the Congress of Mexico have agreed on a series of transformative reforms aimed at making Mexico a more productive and prosperous country for the benefit of Mexican families. The reforms we have undertaken include

policy efforts in the areas of politics and elections, education, telecommunications, competitiveness, energy, taxation and finance, aimed at creating better conditions for addressing the challenges involved in combating poverty and hunger, and at producing better living conditions for implementing an ambitious development agenda.

I would like to convey the commitment of Mexico's parliamentarians to continuing to actively contribute to advancing the agenda of this Organization in order to enrich it and make its implementation more effective.

Mrs. Jurcan (Romania): I would first like to express our gratitude for the decision to organize this useful debate — a commemorative one this year — on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). We should recall that on 30 June 1889, the participants in the first Inter-Parliamentary Conference, in Paris, decided to establish it as a permanent institution. That conference's document has been called the founding act of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference and thus, indirectly, of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Conceived at the time as an arbitration forum for resolving differences between States, the IPU of today could hardly be better characterized than by the description of one of its founding fathers, Frédéric Passy, when he said that "The world is made of achieved utopias. Today's utopia of today is tomorrow's reality." It is no wonder that this French statesman and his British counterpart, Sir William Randal Cremer, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1901 and 1903, respectively.

As a representative of a country that has been a member of the IPU since 1891, almost since its inception, I am proud to note that on its 125th anniversary the Inter-Parliamentary Union enjoys well-deserved recognition for its remarkable contribution to strengthening parliamentary institutions worldwide and promoting democratic governance. It has achieved numerous accomplishments during that journey, which is why I must limit myself to mentioning only two.

Its initial membership of 11 countries has now reached 164 States and 10 associate members. Its initial focus, on the peaceful settlement of disputes, has shifted to cover a wide range of connected topics, such as human rights, the rule of law, the rights of women and children, gender equality and non-proliferation and disarmament. At this critical point in time, it is also focused on speeding up implementation of the

Millennium Development Goals and designing the post-2015 development agenda.

I would like to convey Romania's appreciation for the Secretary-General's report (A/68/827), which represents a comprehensive review of the specific actions and political interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU. As the report notes, the IPU

"is the only parliamentary organization with a global reach. As such, and as a Permanent Observer to the United Nations, it is well positioned to channel the views of parliaments and their members directly into all major United Nations deliberative processes [and] is also a key vehicle for supporting the implementation of global commitments at the country level both by strengthening the capacities of parliaments to carry out their legislative, oversight and representative roles and by providing them with relevant information about United Nations operations and decision-making processes" (A/68/827, para. 3)

We note with satisfaction that in section IV, on parliamentary oversight of international commitments, the report contains a reference to the first regional seminar for Central and Eastern Europe, jointly organized by the Parliament of Romania and the IPU in Bucharest in February. The event brought together 70 participants, including 40 members of Parliament from 13 countries in the region. Recognizing the need to intensify efforts to promote human rights and the universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council, speakers illustrated the difficulties faced, particularly due to the lack of experience, information and resources. In order to overcome those obstacles and to fulfil the mission to protect human rights, it was recommended that such a topic take a central place on parliamentary agendas. The Secretary General of the IPU concluded that

"the seminar showed that [members of Parliament] are starting to contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council and are keen to be more supportive".

In the same vein, I would like to mention another recent development related to the topic under discussion at our debate today. Under our chairmanship-in-office, the Parliament of Romania hosted, from 9 and 11 May, the inaugural session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the South-East European Cooperation Process. In his opening remarks, the Speaker of the Chamber of

Deputies of Romania declared that what was happening in Bucharest was a historic moment for Romania and for the other countries in the region and that it was well known that that part of the Balkans had always been troubled by tensions and conflicts. He went on to say that for the first time all 12 countries in the region affirmed that they would go along the same path.

The most important message to convey was that only together can we contribute to the progress of the entire region. Only together can we promote the common interest of strengthening stability and security in the Balkans and provide a European and Euro-Atlantic perspective for all countries in South-Eastern Europe. He said that Bucharest was hosting the first Parliament of the Balkans — a Parliamentary Assembly that would have a deeper political commitment and greater responsibility to individual and specific issues in our region. A joint communiqué of the Parliamentary Assembly of the South-East European Cooperation Process was adopted at the end of the meeting.

I cannot conclude my remarks without expressing our appreciation to the Permanent Mission of Morocco for drafting the text and for successfully conducting the negotiations on draft resolution A/68/L.44, which we are discussing here today. Romania is a traditional sponsor of the resolution, and I would like to express my conviction that, this year again, it will be adopted by consensus. The main thrust of the document is that, in order to reach the future we want, all stakeholders — executive and legislative included — should continue to work together and that there are still more measures to be taken in order to achieve greater complementarities and synergies.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): We have read with great interest the report submitted by the Secretary-General under item 126 of the agenda of the sixty-eighth session, contained in document A/68/827. The document, including its informative annex, describes the specific activities undertaken in the various areas in the context of cooperation among the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). We thank the Secretary-General for the clear presentation of the report and its seven recommendations. There is no further need to underscore the extremely important role of national parliaments in their triple function of representation, legislation and oversight in such diverse and complex areas as governance, economic development, social progress, understanding and

cooperation among peoples and nations. The bicameral Parliament of Cameroon is increasingly strengthening its effectiveness in that approach.

The IPU, an institution that now comprises more than 164 member States, will celebrate its 125th anniversary in June. Throughout the years, it has demonstrated its importance, effectiveness and contribution to the conduct of international affairs and cooperation. We welcome the work of its outgoing Secretary General and congratulate and encourage the new Secretary General, Mr. Martin Chungong, our compatriot, who takes over as the first African to lead the institution in the 125 years of its existence. The IPU has already greatly benefited and contributed to our country. May that cooperation and mutual assistance continue and strengthen.

In Africa, as the report of the Secretary-General clearly shows, the IPU has played and continues to play a very important role in the dialogue at the national and international levels to strengthen peace, social cohesion and development and to promote the rule of law. We call on the new Secretary General to continue that work.

We are at a decisive moment in world development following the important United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which set out the future we want. As a result, a number of processes are under way to establish guidelines, set goals and mobilize the human, financial and technical resources for their implementation and monitoring. We share the view of the Secretary General that the IPU should make a significant contribution to that activity. It can do so by raising such awareness among its members and by gathering and sharing their opinions about the stakes and challenges and their implications for and true impact on the rule of law, well-being, benefits, disadvantages, commitments and obligations for the various peoples of the world that the IPU is meant to represent.

That is why the seven recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report, in particular the recommendation contained in paragraph 32 (c) on the role of national parliaments with regard to the sustainable development goals, are very relevant. That is also why Cameroon supports the provisions of draft resolution A/68/L.44, which, as a sponsor, it submits for consideration and adoption by all General Assembly members.

Mr. Le Hoai Trung (Viet Nam): It is an honour to speak in this plenary meeting today under agenda item

126, entitled “Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union”.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations share a common vision of peace, security, cooperation and development. The primary purpose of the United Nations, as enshrined in its Charter, is to maintain international peace and security. Similarly, the IPU was first established to promote the concepts of peace and international arbitration. The IPU focuses on fostering dialogue and cooperation, considers issues of international interest and promotes human rights, which are also the main areas of work of the United Nations.

Viet Nam welcomes the support to the United Nations by the IPU and its member parliaments, which has enhanced the United Nations stature and effectiveness, not only in the international arena but also at the national level. In that connection, we applaud the IPU’s efforts in promoting the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially those on women’s empowerment, reducing child mortality and combating HIV/AIDS, as highlighted in the Secretary-General’s report (A/68/827). We also commend the IPU’s continued commitment to provide the United Nations data on women in politics in order to track progress on MDG 3, on gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as its engagement in the relevant processes to draft the post-2015 development agenda.

The National Assembly of Viet Nam is the supreme organ of State power and represents the will and aspirations of our citizens. Through its powers in constitution-making, law-making, oversight and deciding important matters of the country, the National Assembly of Viet Nam plays an important leadership role in the country’s endeavours for peace, stability and development. The National Assembly has also been instrumental in the implementation of important international commitments, especially in the maintenance of peace and security, sustainable development and the protection and promotion of human rights.

As an active, constructive and responsible member of the IPU for the past 35 years, the National Assembly of Viet Nam has been working closely with the IPU in realizing the Union’s aspirations, principles and objectives and has continuously expanded friendly

relations with other parliaments and peoples around the world. It is against the backdrop of that commitment that Viet Nam will be proud to host the one hundred and thirty-second IPU Assembly in Hanoi in March 2015, under the theme “Parliament and the implementation of sustainable development goals beyond 2015”.

We strongly believe that parliaments have a crucial role to play in the implementation of sustainable development goals and the overall post-2015 development agenda through their powers in legislation-making, budget approval and the monitoring of development commitments. We also believe that the inputs from parliamentarians will be important elements to complement the overall United Nations process.

The complicated situations and tensions in various parts of the world today, including the ongoing tensions on the Eastern Sea in South-East Asia, underline the immense and overriding importance of preserving peace, which is a sine qua non for all peaceful endeavours. That requires the continued and determined promotion of, and constant attention to, the fundamental principles of international law, including those related to respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States, non-threat or use of force and the peaceful settlement of international disputes in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which includes the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to thank the IPU for its hard work and efforts to strengthen the important interactions with the United Nations. I also wish to thank the delegation of Morocco for introducing and facilitating draft resolution A/68/L.44, which we strongly support and are very pleased to co-sponsor.

Mr. Koncke (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay is a sponsor of draft resolution A/68/L.44 and reiterates its commitment to achieving greater and closer cooperation among national parliaments. We also underscore the work they carry out in supporting and coordinating increasingly relevant efforts with the United Nations.

Much has taken place in the world and in the joint work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations on the international agenda. A great deal has been done to strengthen the working methods of the IPU and the interaction between the two organizations since the signing of the agreement establishing their

cooperation, in 1996, in order to achieve the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the fulfilment of its goals in various areas of work.

Uruguay would like in particular to emphasize the role of those joint efforts when it comes to democratizing international relations and in seeking efficiency in addressing the challenges facing a world that continues to experience serious crises and must make use of all possible actors to achieve the efforts required by the Millennium Development Goals and, at present, to successfully draft the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. As part of that work, national parliaments play an undeniable role with the United Nations in the context of national strategies to implement the decisions agreed at the United Nations.

The draft resolution recognizes the work of the IPU in areas such as gender equality, women's empowerment and combating violence against women. It also acknowledges the close cooperation between the IPU and the various United Nations bodies with responsibility in those areas, such as the United Nations Entity for Gender and Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Uruguay shares the view that the IPU is a focal point with global reach that facilitates diplomacy and dialogue, in which all systems of the world are represented. It therefore provides a unique platform for monitoring trends and political views globally. We also believe that the IPU shares the goals of the United Nations, supports its efforts and works closely with the Organization. In that context, the elements I have outlined, as well as others that are part of day-to-day work of the IPU and the United Nations, justify the call for improving the system of working methods shared by the two organizations, including a regular annual exchange on coordination between the United Nations executive bodies and the members of the IPU's leadership, with a view to conferring greater coherence in the work between the two organizations while maximizing parliamentary support for the Organization and forging a strategic partnership between them.

Similarly, given the ongoing trend in the cooperation between the two organizations, Uruguay believes that it is necessary to sign a new cooperation agreement that reflects the progress and developments in the joint work between the two organizations over the past years and

that grants the IPU enhanced institutional status in line with the work it carries out, to which I have referred.

Finally, Uruguay supports the decision to include in the provisional agenda of the Assembly's seventieth session an item entitled "Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", as well as to request the Secretary-General to submit a report on that item owing to the unique nature of the role of national parliaments and their support for the work of the United Nations.

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina resolutely supports enhancing the interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). We therefore welcome the efforts made by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to achieve greater and sustained political support for the work of the United Nations.

The United Nations and the IPU continue to show their determination to work closely in various areas on issues as diverse as peace and security, socioeconomic development, human rights and the promotion of democracy. We must encourage closer cooperation between the two organizations, in particular to strengthen parliamentary institutions in countries emerging from conflict or transitioning to democracy.

That is why Argentina welcomes the draft resolution before us (A/68/L.44), which we have sponsored. It urges the United Nations system to develop a more structured and integrated way of interacting and to engage in more intensive joint work with the national parliaments through their participation in the work of the General Assembly, in particular with respect to national development strategies.

The path that has led to this text of the draft resolution and the adoption of previous resolutions represents an effort to forge a strategic alliance between the two organizations, which reflects the evolution of their mutual cooperation since the original agreement was signed in 1996. In that respect, I believe we should consider enhancing and probably reformulating that agreement in order to give it greater substance. Likewise, we welcome the fact that the United Nations system is engaging jointly with national parliaments through the IPU in a more systematic manner, taking into account the fact that the national parliaments have assumed a key role in reviewing and implementing the various international commitments that the countries represented at the United Nations have undertaken. In

that respect, the IPU continues to provide space for the members of national parliaments to discuss more in depth the best way of contributing to the main United Nations processes.

Argentina reiterates the importance of national parliaments participating in this Organization and fulfilling the function of representing the interests and desires of their peoples in order to disseminate and further democratize the knowledge of the instruments that are used in United Nations negotiations or that have been negotiated and to contribute to the ratification process for such international instruments and the laws for their implementation. All of that should contribute to strengthening international norms and multilateral agreements so that they are not merely rhetorical and provide the necessary regulation of norms in our countries. Such participation should also prioritize agreements reached within the context of national parliaments when such parliaments exist.

The role of national parliaments is also crucial to achieving sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda, in particular with respect to monitoring and accountability. A debate was held here at the United Nations on that issue a few days ago. The Secretary General of the IPU mentioned in particular the importance of such parliaments in monitoring and accountability in the post-2015 development agenda. My country resolutely supports the role of parliaments in that regard.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for the efforts of the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations in its role as facilitator of the negotiations on the draft resolution before the General Assembly. We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, as in previous years.

Mr. Gálvez (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Chile welcomes the convening of this debate and the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/827) on the interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). We also recognize the work of the IPU President, Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, and take this opportunity to also thank its Secretary General, Mr. Anders Johnsson, who will complete his term in a few weeks. We wish every success to his successor, Mr. Martin Chungong.

The joint action required by the current international system to address the many challenges it faces also requires the involvement of a variety of actors

in international processes. As a permanent observer to the United Nations, the IPU has a key role to play in representing parliaments and parliamentarians in those international processes. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General, parliaments are the main link between the Governments represented at the United Nations and the citizens they represent. We therefore encourage the United Nations and the IPU to continue to work together on the various challenges — peace and security, economic and social development, climate change, international law, human rights and gender issues, democracy and good governance.

Chile appreciates that draft resolution A/68/L.44 addresses issues that we believe to be important, in particular the need for a greater contribution by parliaments at the national level and the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the global level in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the contribution of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the work of the Human Rights Council. We also welcome the possibility of holding joint events for the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in tandem with the main conferences and processes of the United Nations. We also appreciate that the gender perspective continues to be enhanced in the cooperation between both organizations.

Chile's interest in strengthening parliamentary diplomacy has been manifest in its promotion of parliamentarians' participation in national delegations in bilateral official visits and various international processes. Here at Headquarters, that has been evident in recent years in the participation by Chilean parliamentarians in the annual parliamentary hearing at the United Nations, in meetings organized by the IPU and UN-Women in the context of the Commission on the Status of Women, and their participation as representatives in relevant negotiations, such as those that led to the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty. In addition, Chilean parliamentarians have participated in meetings of States parties to the bodies created pursuant to human rights treaties and other events in the United Nations system.

I would like to conclude by saying that we are pleased to sponsor the draft resolution before the Assembly today. We hope that it will be adopted by consensus and that it will make a concrete contribution to further strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I welcome draft resolution A/68/L.44, on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). My country fully supports and will sponsor the draft resolution, and believes that a relatively important step forward has been taken in terms of the cooperation between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which began back in 1996. We fully agree with the statements made by the representatives of Argentina and Chile to the effect that the draft resolution outlines a more structured cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations.

In today's world, it is essential that we improve interaction and cooperation between national parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. The challenges are completely global and the responses to them must therefore be global, too. Spain has demonstrated its support for that interaction many times and perhaps most particularly in the statement made by the Spanish delegation at the 130th meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Geneva last year. We also recall the fundamental participation in and commitment of the members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to multilateralism, support for democracy and the defence of human rights. Proof of that is the eight Nobel Peace Prize recipients who distinguished themselves in this important area, including two of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's founders, Frédéric Passy and William Randal Cremer.

Almost all speakers who preceded me emphasized the importance of achieving greater interaction between national parliaments, the United Nations and the citizenry. The United Nations should have even closer ties to national parliaments, and parliaments to their citizens, so as to ensure that the decisions made at the United Nations, whether in the Security Council, the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council, end up on the agendas of national parliaments. It is those national parliaments that ultimately have to enact and improve the decisions made here. If we can solidify this interaction between national parliaments and the United Nations, and if parliamentarians are aware beforehand of what is being done in the United Nations and its bodies, we can make multilateralism more effective. I would specifically cite the post-2015 development agenda in that respect. Right now, I believe, the United Nations is establishing the major outlines of the post-2015 development agenda, and it is essential

that national parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations work together to foster the interaction that is reflected in today's draft resolution.

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and is therefore a suitable moment for renewing the commitment to cooperation between the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and national parliaments. "Realizing the future we want for all", the report submitted to the Secretary-General by the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, emphasized the fact that participation, accountability and the rule of law make for a solid foundation for establishing inclusive paths to development.

I would like to conclude by affirming our support not only through our sponsorship of today's draft resolution, but also by acknowledging the splendid work done by the Permanent Mission of Morocco in putting it together.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): My delegation is pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/68/L.44, which is before us today. We believe that together with the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is critical to the implementation of multilateral agreements and reforms of global governance, since our current challenges are unprecedented in number and size. They transcend national borders and require multidimensional and multi-level action and synergies. International relations in a globalized world are complex and interconnected, and thus compel Governments and parliamentarians to take on greater responsibilities and duties. We would therefore like to discuss some of the major steps needed to achieve that dynamic partnership. I am very pleased that parliamentarians in the Republic of Kazakhstan are also active in these efforts.

The IPU and the United Nations can mutually strengthen their global roles by keeping national parliaments connected to topical international issues and abreast of United Nations decisions and resolutions. Parliaments are the builders of political will and the architects of future global policies through their functions of enacting national legislation, ensuring the implementation of international commitments and providing the legal foundations for and allocation of resources.

The IPU and national parliaments have addressed many issues that are on the agenda of the United Nations. The United Nations also has much to learn also from

parliaments and outstanding parliamentarians, many of whom are frequently our guests. We can facilitate the inclusion of a substantive parliamentary component in major international processes, especially when it comes to accelerating work on those Millennium Development Goal targets that have not yet been reached and on the post-2015 development agenda. With its parliament's participation, each country can formulate a development strategy that results in a decision with the potential to become law.

The entire United Nations system could gain from the development of a parliamentary dimension in the work of its agencies, funds and programmes, with country teams on the ground working closely with national and even local parliaments on national development strategies and aid effectiveness. International law, including the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian and human rights law, and the rule of law at the national level, represents the other side of the same coin, and it is a country's parliament that enables its society to benefit from all of them. These processes can be facilitated by events in which the United Nations and the IPU participate jointly.

The IPU and parliaments can make a unique contribution to the work of the Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review, and to special organs of the United Nations, providing input for national reports and receiving findings for consideration and action, thus ensuring enhanced outcomes. Parliaments can also provide the legal and fiscal environment so necessary for implementing United Nations programmes. We also believe that parliamentarians in developing countries, too, need not merely be beneficiaries of capacity-building or development aid but can themselves become strong players in the process of democratic governance through country-level dialogues.

The IPU and national parliaments can help develop democracy, fight impunity and work on many issues connected to the work of the International Criminal Court and the Security Council and its subsidiary organs. Parliamentarians, like religious leaders, can also be instrumental in promoting peace and tolerance among all cultures and religions. My country and its President, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, as an initiator of the Congress of World and Traditional Religions, continue to welcome support on behalf of our parliamentarians for implementing that noble initiative.

In closing, my delegation urges that the draft resolution before the Assembly today be supported unanimously. I reiterate Kazakhstan's readiness to strengthen the robust interaction between the United Nations and parliamentary processes in order to achieve our common global objectives.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/32 of 19 November 2002, I now give the floor to the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Abdelwahad Radi.

Mr. Radi (Inter-Parliamentary Union) (*spoke in French*): I am honoured to speak here today on strengthening interaction among the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), over which I have the pleasure and honour to preside.

With a membership of 164 national parliaments, the IPU is today the only truly global organization of parliaments. The IPU, which will soon be celebrating its one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary, is also the oldest multilateral organization. It was established in 1889 to seek peace and democracy as a way to avoid war. It was therefore a precursor of the United Nations, which emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War. We therefore undoubtedly share common ideals and goals.

The relationship between our two organizations was formally cemented in 1996 with the signing of a cooperation agreement. Since then, I am pleased to say that the United Nations and the IPU have developed a mutually beneficial relationship that, I have no doubt, will only grow stronger.

We live in a world today where peace, democracy and development have never been so close, and yet they continue to elude so many. The United Nations itself is being challenged by developments beyond its control. New forums, networks and social media are making governance a more complex endeavour than ever before, at both national and global levels. While crucial issues such as nuclear disarmament are still unresolved, other larger threats have emerged, not least of which is climate change.

Nevertheless, faced with all those upheavals, one thing is clear: the United Nations must remain at the centre of global governance. For that to be possible, national parliaments must first play an enhanced role in ensuring that what is decided in this Hall is useful to

citizens as a whole and reflects their views and deepest aspirations and, secondly, ensure that those decisions are carried out at the national level. That is the purpose of the relationship between our two organizations.

The draft resolution (A/68/L.44) that is before us today and the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/827) reflect that flourishing relationship. They demonstrate tangible progress in our relationship in just two years in virtually all areas, but also the need for much more to be done.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who spoke today in support of our common cause. I would like to give a few examples of how our work together can make a difference for citizens, particularly as we approach 2015, when a new global agenda for development will be adopted.

In closely monitoring the United Nations-led process, the IPU has brought the global debate on the future development agenda to parliaments. From those discussions, we have developed strong positions on the need for a new development model centred on human well-being, and not on all-out economic growth; on the critical need to aim for democratic governance as an element of overall development, and not just as an aspect of sustainable development; and, finally, on the need for a comprehensive goal on gender equality and women's empowerment. Each of those elements is a key to help open the door to more opportunities, greater freedom and human rights for all. We have made our case before the Open-ended Working Group of the Economic and Social Council and in other discussions that took place here in New York. We also call on our members to engage directly with the Governments of their respective countries.

Do not misunderstand me: it is not the intention of the IPU to tell the United Nations what to do. Far from it. Our goal is simply to make sure that parliaments are fully aware of what is at stake here before decisions are taken, and that they can discuss the issues among themselves and with their Government representatives so that, when the time comes, our countries can take full ownership of the choices that were made.

Furthermore, once a decision is made, on the post-2015 development agenda or any decision, it must be implemented. In that regard too the role of parliaments is essential. After all, they are the ones that hold Governments accountable for the commitments they have undertaken at the United Nations, and they adopt

the necessary legislation to make them a reality, namely, through the budget process.

Accountability is not self-evident, especially to those who are held to account and who tend to show some resistance. Yet it is the only way to ensure that commitments are honoured. It is the role of parliaments to strictly monitor Government action, and we should support them in that role. The IPU is doing its best to strengthen the capacities of parliaments around the world, and, of course, the United Nations is doing that too, particularly through the United Nations Development Programme.

But the needs of parliaments far outweigh our ability to assist them. We will need a much more concerted effort by the donor community and other partners to unleash parliaments' full potential and to enable them to perform their legislative and oversight roles everywhere. The United Nations can support that effort by asking its country teams to work more closely with parliaments — for example, by ensuring parliaments are involved in national review processes and post-conflict political dialogues.

Thanks to the increasingly widespread practice at the United Nations of carrying out national reviews — such as those done by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council and, soon, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development — it is now possible for parliaments to contribute to making accountability at the national level a reality at the global level. The practice of having parliaments discuss the reports that Governments present at the United Nations, and of allowing parliamentarians to participate in the actual reviews and then to report back thereon to their colleagues and to facilitate the monitoring and implementation of the recommendations that emerge from those reviews, may well become one of best ways to involve parliaments in the work of the United Nations.

To facilitate the work ahead and advance our relationship, the IPU has taken two important initiatives, both of which are reflected in today's draft resolution. The first initiative, which is institutional in nature, is the establishment of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs as a central coordinating body to help mainstream the United Nations agenda through the IPU and its member parliaments. That unique structure should help to

provide a critical perspective on global issues and to facilitate their discussion within national parliaments.

The second initiative is the convening of the fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, which, as the draft resolution mentions, will take place in New York next year just before the United Nations summit that will mark the start of a new era for sustainable development.

The Conference of Speakers will provide a golden opportunity to stimulate the political will for the new global agenda and, more generally, for our respective members — Governments and parliaments — to unite towards achieving our common objectives in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect. It would be useful for the Conference to be acknowledged in the modalities resolution for the United Nations summit.

This statement is very likely my last before the General Assembly as President of the IPU. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to warmly thank the Permanent Mission of my country, Morocco, for the immense support that it has given us over the past three years. I also wish to again thank the sponsors of the draft resolution and all those who have worked behind the scenes, namely, United Nations and IPU staff, my colleagues around the world and everyone who, in their own way, whether on a small or large scale, strives for the good of us all.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.44, entitled

“Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union”.

I shall give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/68/L.44: Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, China, Cyprus, El Salvador, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lichtenstein, Montenegro, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Thailand, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.44?

Draft resolution A/68/L.44 was adopted (resolution 68/272).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 126?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.