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Cooperation between the United Nations and regional
and other organizations: cooperation between the United
Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union Report of the Secretary-General **

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/46 of 7 December 2001, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report it at its fifty-seventh session on the various aspects of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (UPU).

2. The report details the growing cooperation between the two organizations in bringing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations, including in the areas of peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights, democracy and gender issues.

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III. Peace and security

A. Security and cooperation in the Mediterranean

13. Despite the background of negative developments in the Middle East, IPU was able to pursue its Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean process, which complements the work of the United Nations General Assembly to promote security and cooperation in the region. The process involves all parliaments of those States bordering the Mediterranean, plus Jordan and Portugal and, as associate participants, three categories of parties, namely (a) Palestine, (b) the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America and (c) the European Parliament and the inter-parliamentary organizations concerned. The Mediterranean Women Parliamentarians' Task Force contributes to the process.

14. In March 2002, the parties to the Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean process adopted, at the initiative of Malta, an instrument on the establishment, in the long term, of a Parliamentary Assembly of Mediterranean States. They recognized, however, that politically speaking, the time was not ripe to envisage the early establishment of such an assembly, in view of the situation in the Middle East, and agreed that discussions on prospects for establishing an assembly on the basis of the instrument should continue in the future.

B. Middle East question

15. The Inter-Parliamentary Union continued to address the situation in the Middle East at its 106th and 107th Conferences. In the light of the tragic events in the region, and of various United Nations resolutions and peace initiatives, the IPU membership issued resolutions calling for the resumption of negotiations to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace by ending the Israeli occupation, establishing an independent Palestinian State with its capital in Jerusalem and solving the Palestinian refugee question equitably. The membership also called upon Israelis and Palestinians to support the ongoing bilateral and multilateral peace missions, including those of the United Nations.

16. Through its Committee on Middle East Questions IPU brings together representatives of the Knesset, the Palestinian Legislative Council and the Palestine National Council, as well as parliamentarians from the region, to broaden the dialogue in the search for peace. Efforts continue to bring together the Speakers of the Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council, under IPU auspices, in Geneva.

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