

THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN STRENGTHENING THE SOLIDARITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TOWARDS THE PEOPLE OF HAITI AND CHILE IN THE WAKE OF DEVASTATING MAJOR DISASTERS, AND URGENT ACTIONS REQUIRED IN ALL DISASTER-PRONE COUNTRIES TO IMPROVE DISASTER-RISK ASSESSMENT, PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 122nd IPU Assembly
(Bangkok, 1 April 2010)*

The 122nd Inter-Parliamentary Assembly,

Acknowledging the growing evidence that both disasters and climate change hit poor nations and communities the hardest, and that disaster-risk reduction for immediate climate change adaptation is a strategic step towards sustainable development,

Considering that in recent months a devastating earthquake hit Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, and that another struck off the coast of Chile, causing considerable damage to both countries,

Further considering that more than 200,000 lives were lost in the earthquake in Haiti, which caused damage and losses amounting to an estimated US\$ 7.8 billion (US\$ 4.3 billion in physical damage and US\$ 3.5 billion in economic losses), or the equivalent of more than 120 per cent of Haiti's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2009, and that the earthquake in Chile caused damage and losses estimated at between US\$ 15 and 30 billion, or the equivalent of 15 per cent of Chile's GDP,

Considering that Haiti, the poorest nation in the western hemisphere, is also facing severe problems of food security as a consequence of the disaster,

Acknowledging that the growing frequency, intensity and impact of disasters pose a significant threat to people's lives and livelihoods, and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Mindful of the different ways such disasters can affect each country depending on its vulnerabilities, but *convinced* that international humanitarian action must reach all those who have been affected, while taking account of local initiatives to provide relief,

Recognizing that the poor account for the majority of all people killed in disasters, and that it is the combination of hazards such as floods and tropical storms, with an exposed, vulnerable and ill-prepared population or community, that causes disasters,

Stressing that the international community and governments urgently need to establish frameworks and measures to help poor countries and communities adapt to climate change while continuing to engage in debate and negotiation on climate change mitigation,

Recalling that the resolution on natural disasters adopted unanimously by the 112th IPU Assembly (Manila, 2005) proposed that nations further strengthen their cooperation in disaster-prevention efforts, and *recognizing* that the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, which was endorsed by 168 governments at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005, lays the groundwork for the implementation of disaster-risk reduction and specifically identifies the need to promote the integration of risk reduction into existing climate variability and future climate change strategies,

1. *Commends* the efforts made by the national authorities of Haiti and Chile to cope with the disasters, *welcomes* the outpouring of solidarity towards their peoples in the wake of the devastating disaster, and *requests* governments to contribute further to it and promote continued mobilization of civil society for the benefit of those countries, taking account of the needs expressed by the Chilean and Haitian authorities and, in the case of Haiti, of the added complication of the almost total destruction of the country's infrastructure;

2. *Reaffirms* the need for the disaster assistance currently being received by the Haitian Government to be followed up with aid for as long as is necessary for the long-term reconstruction of the country and establishment of a self-sufficient State that is able to provide its people with better living conditions;
3. *Calls upon* governments to take both urgent and structural measures to make disaster-risk assessment an integral part of post-earthquake recovery and reconstruction planning and for programmes to protect people from future disasters;
4. *Urges* governments to assess all their critical public facilities, such as schools and hospitals, with a view to making them resilient to earthquakes, floods and storms, and to make disaster-risk reduction a part of poverty reduction and of all planning and programmes aimed at achieving the MDGs and the ensuing long-term welfare of the people;
5. *Also urges* governments to pay close attention to the protection of women and children in post-disaster situations, which can leave them particularly vulnerable to abuse, including trafficking;
6. *Also urges* governments to further coordinate their international relief, reconstruction and recovery activities, among themselves and with humanitarian bodies, and to take concrete action to enhance people's understanding of and capacity to address the impact of climate change and disaster-risk reduction through public awareness, education and training;
7. *Also urges* all parliaments to foster the strong political will and allocate the budget funds needed to develop a national legal framework designed to ensure synergy between disaster-risk reduction and climate change adaptation, and between disaster-risk reduction and poverty reduction and socio-economic development, so as to protect the best interests of those vulnerable to geological and climate-related disasters.