

Assembly of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) calls for writting off Pakistan's foreign debt

Sunday 17 October 2010, by [Correspondent\(s\)](#) (Date first published: 7 October 2010).

TheNews,
October 7, 2010

Parliamentarians from across the globe urged the governments, donor countries and international financial institutions to extend full support to Pakistan to meet the challenges posed by recent floods, a fax message from Geneva said on Thursday.

They unanimously adopted a resolution that urged the international community, particularly donor countries, international financial institutions and relevant international organisations, the private sector and civil society to extend their full support and assistance to the Government of Pakistan. They further called for swift action aimed at mitigating the adverse impacts of the floods such as writing off and/or rescheduling of Pakistan's debt, providing market access to revive Pakistan's economy and invest in medium and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction projects.

The resolution adopted by parliamentarians from 121 countries, who gathered in Geneva to attend 123rd Assembly of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), praised the efforts made by the Government of Pakistan to reverse the negative impact of the recent disaster on people's lives.

The resolution has underscored the importance of a rapid response by the international community, in particular the United Nations, to meet the needs of the people of Pakistan. It called upon international financial institutions, in particular the IMF, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, and governments to further contribute to the efforts aimed at meeting the needs of the people in flood-stricken areas.

The resolution advocated that the international community should respond rapidly and appropriately by contributing to the Pakistan Emergency Fund established by the United Nations and increasing the budget allocated to UNCERF-the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund. The resolution has also called upon the United Nations to hold an international conference on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the flood-affected areas in Pakistan. It was finalised by the IPU drafting committee, which included parliamentarians from Argentina, Cambodia, Canada, Iran, India, Mexico, Pakistan, Benin, Bahrain, Uganda and Turkey.

Earlier, the Committee unanimously elected Senator Haroon Akhtar Khan to chair the proceedings of the committee. The unanimous adoption of the resolution was a result of leadership, tireless efforts and outreach of the Chairman Senate, Farooq Hamid Naek, who is heading the Pakistan's parliamentary delegation to the 123rd IPU Assembly. Prior to the commencement of IPU Assembly proceedings, Iran and the UAE tabled proposals calling for international support to Pakistan.

Naek, as part of strategy to build consensus, convinced the two brotherly countries to merge the two proposals. He then extensively lobbied with parliamentarians, which enabled the drafting committee to finalise the draft and the assembly to adopt the resolution. He nominated Senator Haroon Khan to represent Pakistan in the drafting committee. Senator Khan, under the guidance of the Senate

Chairman, very effectively conducted the proceedings of the committee and ensured that the resolution would not contain any negative reference to Pakistan and that it would envisage concrete measures.

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