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**Majority of Swiss National Council for United Nations Parliament
Open letter to Kofi Annan presented in Swiss Capital**

Bern. At a press conference in the Swiss federal building in Bern, an open letter to UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, was presented on Wednesday. With their signature, 108 members of parliament, among them the majority of the Swiss National Council, support the idea of the establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA). Through such an assembly civil society could be better integrated into decision-making on the international level, says the joint letter of the parliamentarians. An UNPA could be suitable to increase the legitimacy, transparency, acceptance and efficiency of the United Nations. The UN Secretary General is requested to „introduce the idea of a Parliamentary Assembly at the UN into the reform debate and to forward this suggestion to the governments of the UN member states for further discussion“. The open letter was born of an initiative between the Committee for a Democratic UN (CDUN) and the Society for Threatened Peoples Switzerland (STP).

„In a first step the Parliamentary Assembly could be affiliated to the UN General Assembly as a secondary body or specialized agency with consultative status. It would thereby be able to adopt recommendations directed at the UN General Assembly“, said Hanspeter Bigler, STP Secretary-General.“ According to the example of the European Parliament, the Assembly shall be vested with genuine rights of information, participation and control. „Having witnessed such overwhelming support for the proposal in the Swiss Councils we are examining the possibility of submitting an according bill to parliament“, said Dr. Remo Gysin, member of the CDUN Advisory Council and leading coordinator of the initiative in the Swiss National Council. In Bern, CDUN chairperson, Andreas Bummel, said that the Swiss initiative is an important contribution in raising the reform proposal onto the international diplomatic agenda.

Further information:

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Full text of the open letter:

Establishment of a Parliamentary Assembly at the UN

Honourable Secretary-General,

Sixty years after its foundation, the United Nations is of more importance than ever in the face of global challenges. The fight against genocide, HIV/Aids or the spreading of weapons of mass destruction, are only a few examples of the problems the world faces today and which nation-states cannot solve successfully by themselves. The UN is the only international organization capable of effectively promoting and coordinating national efforts on a global level.

In a radically changed world, the structure of the world-organization still reflects the time of 1945. It is a top priority, therefore, that the UN and its system adapt to the changing conditions in order to fulfil their duties in the 21st century. The establishment of the High Level Panel on relations between the UN and civil society and the High Level Panel on threats, challenges and changes raises hopes that structural reform of the UN will occur in the sixtieth year of its existence.

With this initiative we, the parliamentary members of one of the youngest UN member states, would like to suggest a concrete reform proposal that is supported by us all: the establishment of a Parliamentary Assembly at the UN.

A Parliamentary Assembly at the UN would encompass a number of advantages. Representation of the population and participation of civil society within the organization would promote the faith of citizens in the UN and increase its acceptance and legitimation. Most of the solutions developed by the UN, moreover, have to be implemented by civil society. A Parliamentary Assembly at the United Nations could also be an important link with which to include civil society and use their ideas and experience constructively to find new solutions. The inclusion of members of parliament and civil society increases the efficiency of the UN and ensures that solutions remain pragmatic.

With the establishment of a Parliamentary Assembly, the present mechanisms of democratic control could be strengthened, thus achieving a greater level of transparency. In turn, the global population would gain a better understanding of the commitment of the UN.

On the international level, it is especially important to emphasise democratic principles. Since the UN functions as a role model, it is suitable to promote world wide democracy. To fulfil this duty, moreover, these structures have to be compatible with democratic principles. A Parliamentary Assembly could, therefore, make a contribution in this direction.

Furthermore, peoples and minorities could introduce their concerns more efficiently within a Parliamentary Assembly at the UN, ultimately promoting the preservation of global diversity.



Switzerland has a long humanitarian and democratic tradition. It has always promoted international law, democracy and respect for human rights. On the basis of this tradition we, the Swiss members of parliament, turn to you and encourage you to introduce the idea of a Parliamentary Assembly at the UN into the reform debate and to forward this suggestion to the governments of the UN member states for further discussion.

Yours sincerely

First signatories:

Gysin Remo (SP, BS)
Lang Josef (Grüne, ZG)
Markwalder Bär Christa (FDP, BE)
Studer Heiner (EVP, AG)
Zapfl Rosmarie (CVP, ZH)

Further signatories National Council:

Abate Fabio (FDP, TI), Aeschbacher Ruedi (EVP, ZH), Allemann Evi (SP, BE), Bader Elvira (CVP, SO), Banga Boris (SP, SO), Bäumlé Martin (Grünliberale, ZH), Berberat Didier (SP, NE), Bruderer Pascale (SP, AG), Brunschwig Graf Martine (Liberale, GE), Bühlmann Cécile (Grüne, LU), Cavalli Franco (SP, TI), Christen Yves (FDP, VD), Cuche Fernand (Grüne, NE), Daguet André (SP, BE), Darbellay Christophe (CVP, VS), de Buman Dominique (CVP, FR), Donzé Walter (EVP, BE), Dormond Béguélin Marlyse (SP, VD), Dupraz John (FDP, GE), Egerszegi Christine (FDP, AG), Fasel Hugo (CSP, FR), Fässler Hildegard (SP, SG), Fehr Hans Jürg (SP, SH), Fehr Jacqueline (SP, ZH), Fehr Mario (SP, ZH), Frösch Therese (Grüne, BE), Galladé Chantal (SP, ZH), Garbani Valérie (SP, NE), Genner Ruth (Grüne, ZH), Germanier JeanRené (FDP, VS), Glasson Jean Paul (FDP, FR), Goll Christine (SP, ZH), Graf Maya (Grüne, BL), Gross Andreas (SP, ZH), Gross Jost (SP, TG), Guisan Yves (FDP, VD), Günter Paul (SP, BE), Gutzwiller Felix (FDP, ZH), Gyr Josy (SP, SZ), Häberli Brigitte (CVP, TG), Haering Barbara (SP, ZH), Hämmerle Andrea (SP, GR), Heim Bea (SP, SO), Hochreutener Norbert (CVP, BE), Hofmann Urs (SP, AG), Hollenstein Pia (Grüne, SG), Hubmann Vreni (SP, ZH), Huguenin Marianne (PdA, VD), Humbel Näf Ruth (CVP, AG), Janiak Claude (SP, BL), Jermann Walter (CVP, BL), Jutzet Erwin (SP, FR), Kiener Nellen Margret (SP, BE), Leuenberger Ueli (Grüne, GE), Leutenegger Oberholzer Susanne (SP, BL), Leuthard Doris (CVP, AG), Levrat Christian (SP,FR), Marti Werner (SP, GL), Marty Kälin Barbara (SP, ZH), Maury Pasquier Liliane (SP, GE), Meier Schatz Lucrezia (CVP, SG), Menétrey Anne Cathérine (Grüne, VD), Meyer Thérèse (CVP, FR), Müller Geri (Grüne, AG), Müller Hemmi Vreni (SP, ZH), Nordmann Roger (SP, VD), Pedrina Fabio (SP, TI), Pelli Fulvio (FDP, TI), Randegger Johannes (FDP, BS), Rechsteiner Paul (SP, SG), Rechsteiner Rudolf (SP, BS), Recordon Luc (Grüne, VD), Rennwald Jean Claude (SP, JU), Rey Jean Noël (SP, VS), Riklin Kathy (CVP, ZH), Robbiani Meinrado (CVP, TI), Rossini Stéphane (SP, VS), Roth Bernasconi Maria (SP, GE), Sadis Laura (FDP, TI), Salvi Pierre (SP, VD), Savary Géraldine (SP, VD), Schenker Silvia (SP, BS), Simoneschi Chiara (CVP, TI), Sommaruga Carlo (SP, GE), Stöckli Hans (SP, BE), Stump Doris (SP, AG),



PRESS RELEASE

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Leuenberger Ernst (SP, SO), Sommaruga Simonetta (SP, BE), Studer Jean (SP, NE),
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Signatories National Council: 101

Signatories upper chamber: 7

Total signatories parliament: 108

