



Parliamentarians for Global Action
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**NGO in general consultative status
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Dear Colleagues, Partners and Friends of PGA,

I wish to take this opportunity to welcome you to a dynamic 2012, highlighting some of the key objectives of our organisation this year and beyond.

As we move forward together I look to you for your pro-active assistance in making these objectives our realities. We shall work in our own national parliaments to further the goals of PGA, in addition to our work participating in important results-based workshops around the world. Change begins at the national level, before we can have success at a regional and international level.

Peace & Democracy Programme

This will be a crucial year for our Peace & Democracy Programme. As many of you are aware, our organisation has been working tirelessly over the past 6 years to promote improved regulation of the transfer/export of Small Arms and Light Weapons around the world. In the past four years, and closely related thereto, and together with our partners in civil society, we have been actively advocating for the negotiation of a robust Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The ATT will, among other things, better regulate the global trade in arms to prevent, or at least mitigate, the transfer of conventional weapons to countries or regions which will cause or prolong conflict and human suffering. More information on the Peace & Democracy Programme may be found on its designated webpage.

As we have done for the past three ATT Preparatory Committee meetings, PGA will send an International Delegation of MPs to the 4th ATT PrepCom that will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 13-17 February, 2012. Legislators can play a vital role in advocating for the ATT and its ratification (once it is in place). As lawmakers, it will also be our primary responsibility to draft, introduce and pass the legislation that will be necessary to implement the ATT into the domestic law of our respective countries. It is only right, therefore, that we understand the many important aspects of the ATT in advance, so we can properly discharge our different responsibilities when the time comes.

I strongly urge all PGA members and their other colleagues in parliaments worldwide to sign the Control Arms Global Parliamentary Declaration on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). This Declaration will be presented at the UN ATT Conference in July 2012 and it is important that we all 'stand up' and make our voices heard in support of it. PGA is a member of the Steering Board of Control Arms.

French, Spanish and English versions of this ATT Parliamentary Declaration together with 'sign up' sheets for MPs may be found on the Control Arms website at:

<http://controlarms.org/parliamentarian-declaration>

International Law & Human Rights Programme.

PGA's International Law & Human Rights Programme has experienced extraordinary success in facilitating and accelerating the ratification processes of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in 74 out of the current 120 countries that are party to this important international convention.

In 2012 and beyond, I ask all our Members who are working actively in this Programme, and those that are interested in doing so, to focus on moving ratification processes forward in countries in their respective regions. More information on our target countries can be found on our International Law & Human Rights page.

PGA's Campaign for the ICC also recognises the crucial importance of implementation of the Rome Statute into domestic law of States parties to the ICC. While certainly some progress has been made in this area, there is still considerable distance to go and I strongly urge all our Members to find the time to consider how they can assist in this regard - following up decisively with relevant government Ministers is one example of a practical step that can be taken, and has been met in the past with success.

Sustainable Development, Health and Population Programme

PGA's Sustainable Development, Health and Population Programme begins 2012 with a renewed and ambitious agenda focusing on two main areas: improving women's rights and maternal health in countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC); and advocating for policies that support gender equality and sustainable development within the framework of Rio+20 and beyond.

At the 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, taking place from February 27 to March 9, 2012 at UN Headquarters, we will bring together legislators from Pakistan, Ghana, Turkey, The Maldives, Nepal and Malaysia. In addition, we will hold a Side Event on "Opportunities and Challenges in Improving Rural Women's Access to Clean Water and Renewable Energy," tying in with our agenda on women's empowerment and sustainable development.

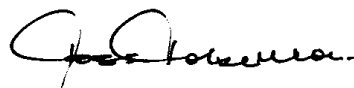
On March 8-10, we will co-host with the Government of the Republic of Tunisia a **Parliamentary Workshop on Advancing Maternal and Reproductive Health and Gender Equality in member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**. The workshop aims to equip Legislators with the tools to close gaps in the national implementation of the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW) especially on articles related to maternal and reproductive health and rights.

We will work to ensure that the 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio+20 will result in concrete action to promote equitable and environmentally-sound policies and regulations. This is our task as legislators. Prior to the Conference that will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012 we are planning a Side Event on Sustainable Cities that will look at how legislators can work to ensure urban areas are socially- inclusive and efficient in an array of systems. The SDHP Programme is also working with the Steering Committee of the Women's Major Group on improving mainstreaming of gender in sustainable development.

I am sure you will find our newly-designed website (www.pgaction.org) a real asset in helping you to promote issues that are of concern to all of us, and thank you in advance for your important activism in 2012 and beyond - individually, collectively and as concerned members of the international community.

In the true sense of the word community, together we serve, together we prosper.

With every good wish,



H.V. Ross Robertson MP
Assistant Speaker of Parliament (New Zealand)
President, Parliamentarians for Global Action