A. Summary

In view of the UN's 75th anniversary in 2020, this resolution comes at the right time and represents an important potential contribution to the discussion on improving the UN and the international efforts for a UN Parliamentary Assembly. We welcome this draft and fully recommend its adoption.

B. General comments

1. The establishment of a UN Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA) has first been proposed in 1949 based on the example of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that was created in the same year. Today, the benefit of including elected representatives in international affairs and intergovernmental organizations is widely recognized and accepted.

2. There are numerous parliamentary bodies of intergovernmental organizations and other international parliamentary institutions (IPIs). However, the United Nations and the wider UN system that is composed of more than 30 entities, stands out because there is no formal UN body that includes members of parliament. This has been identified as a key element of the UN's democratic deficit.

3. It is good that the resolution includes the international appeal for a UNPA as an annex. In this annex important elements are described that explain the proposal. In particular, a UNPA should be vested with rights of oversight, information and participation vis-à-vis the main bodies of the UN and the entities in the UN system.

4. An important feature that is not mentioned in the appeal consists in the fact that the membership of a UNPA would include not only parliamentarians from government parties but from opposition parties as well. The work of a UNPA should be based on transnational political groups in order to depart from purely national and geopolitical perspectives.

5. A UNPA should be in a position to establish committees and sub-committees on the work of specific UN entities and other matters of global concern. For instance, if it existed, the UNPA could now establish a special inquiry committee into the effectiveness of the global response
to the coronavirus pandemic and the state of the global health system including the World
Health Organization (WHO) and put forward recommendations.

6. The UN and many UN entities collaborate with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), one of
the oldest IPIs. This collaboration is valuable and useful. However, the IPU is not a UN body
and as an independent umbrella organization of national parliaments it is not in a position to
assume the functions and roles of a UNPA vis-à-vis the UN. The IPU has not developed a profile
on matters of UN governance, reform and oversight since this is not its purpose or focus.

C. Recommendations

1. Include additional language taking note of the UN’s 75th anniversary in 2020.

2. Include additional language pointing out that a UNPA could help identify and promote
solutions and global collaboration on global challenges such as, but not limited to, the
response to global pandemics or climate change.

3. Once adopted, submit the resolution to the UN Secretary-General and his Special Advisor
on the Commemoration of the UN’s 75th anniversary as a contribution from the Icelandic
Parliament.