

The Speech H.E professor Ahmed Fathi Sorour

The Speaker of the Peoples Assembly of Egypt

In the Inauguration of the World e-Parliament 2009

Washington DC.,

November 3rd, 2009

Distinguished Ms. Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S House of Representatives

Distinguished Speakers of the Parliaments

Distinguished Mr. Zukang, Undersecretary General of the United Nations

Distinguished Mr. Johnson, the Secretary General of the IPU Fellow Parliamentarians

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me a great pleasure to be here today to inaugurate with you the World e-parliament conference of 2009 in Washington DC, the capital of the USA....one of today's pillars of democracy. At the outset, I sincerely wish thank Ms. Pelosi for hosting this conference and I truly applaud the tireless effort of the UN, the Global center, IPU, and the congress staff in organizing this event.....an event that I always wait for not only to meet dear colleagues in the struggle for democracy and in serving the welfare of our people..... but also to monitor progress and share experiences in this vital and rapidly growing domain of ICT in parliament.

Dear Friends.....it was four years ago, when we inaugurated the global center for ICT in parliament.....A center that is dedicated to fostering healthy implementation of ICT towards a better performance and a wider outreach for our parliaments. This step represented a turning point in the realization of the need and the demand for employing ICT in our chambers.....a center that lends

itself to the awareness on the powerful tools of technology that extends to all aspects of our contemporary lives.

Glancing through our agenda, we are to explore means and best practices for connecting Parliaments and citizens through the use of technology. We will aim to genuinely foster openness among the peoples of our nations. We will work towards enhancing the transparency and the visibility as a means to strengthen our credibility and allow channels of communication to establish accountability as a deeply rooted concept in our parliamentary work. Indeed, we have to capitalize on the privilege that we all have as parliamentarians who can connect with one another without the need for setting agreements and seeking approvals when we simply want to cooperate. By this means we can promote intercultural dialogue and tackle some of the challenges that impact our peoples. It is the sincere welfare of our peoples that drives our engines. Dear Colleagues, we will continue to renew the oath that we proudly took as representatives for our people.

Coming to this beautiful gathering, I particularly want to discuss not only the concepts but rather address the implementation and the impact. I often ask myself.....could a better communication have reduced the negative impact of the financial crisis could it have advanced our common understanding about the environment in which we live and would have thus promoted the exchange of views to ensure the welfare of our peoples and achieve the balance

between human rights and security?.....Would it have helped in setting quick; yet effective legislation or regulatory actions to minimize the suffering of the people worldwide?. Dear Friends, when problems become complex and massive, solutions can only be comprehensive and global. Then we should ask.....How fast can we react and how efficient can that be? Certainly, one of the key answers lies in a better communication amongst our parliaments, our representatives and senators.....thus our people by in large.

As a lawyer, professor and parliamentarian, I spent a great deal of my life working for justice to prevail.....Well, live in a world that confronts organized crime and corruption...a world that awaits stronger actions from our parliaments and our governments Hence a closer working relation needs to be established on various levels. And by that I mean a cooperation that is tangible and does not only hinge itself to conferences or a set of events. Thus our conference should aim at establishing a sustainable means for cooperation in implementing ICT in parliaments and in a meaningful exchange of information that supports our work. We need our deputies as well as our staff to be continuously informed and updated to serve and perform.

We strongly believe that the parliamentarians worldwide when they unify themselves through better communication networks to face the global issues, they indeed rise to their peoples' hopes, the

poor and the rich, aiming for peace, security and development. My colleagues, the communication provided by e-parliament is a testimony that we have selected the path of dialogue as means for understanding and that we believed in the democracy of the international relations in order for all of us to live in peace. My friends, if mountains and oceans created a barrier that limit our unity, yet the space of technology provided by e-parliament is capable to bind us despite any cultural or ethnic diversity in order for us to agree on a single language which is serving our people.

I guess I also speak for many of you when I say that the need for such knowledge may be greater in growing democracies to narrow the gap and to establish a common platform for cooperation with the rest of the world. And as such, our conference should renew a commitment to assist one another and to share the wealth of information that we can all have. A support of the North to the South....The developed to the developing.

When we address ICT in Parliaments, we traditionally focus on three areas:

- First to improve the performance of our parliaments in an economic manner and minimize the abuse of the resources of this planet.... A planet that we did not inherit from our grandparents but we indeed are borrowing it from our grandchildren.

- Second, we aim at enhancing the indispensable communications between our Chambers and our people. Unfortunately, no matter how much time we spend in our electoral districts, we are often physically elsewhere. And ICT emerge to make us always present to listen, to view and to share. What is more of an honor for parliamentarians than speaking up from the heart to express the fears, the joy and the hopes of those who entrusted us with their votes the rich and the poor...the powerful and the needy. Thirdly, with ICT we should create better linkage among our.....parliaments towards combating our common threats be it poverty, crime..... illiteracy....or illness.... towards achieving developmentfor the poor to benefit before the rich and for the developing countries to overcome problems, many of which are induced by globalization and the economic challenges that the soft-boned economies of developing nations have merged in. And in general for mankind to enjoy security in its global sense that engulfs social and economic security as well as confronting violence and crime. And in here, I have to state that over the past decade the world had debates on interactions between our civilizations....An interaction that I always choose to call "*The Dialogue of Civilizations*" not "*The Clash of Civilizations*".....After all....it is one planet that we all live in.

Dear participants.....as a co-chair of the global center,I want to draw your attention that in February of last year, the World

first e-parliament report was launched in the UN headquarter in New York City. A report that demonstrates the cooperation between over one hundred parliaments, the UN, the Global Center, the IPU and the civil society. It is a sincere invitation for you to read it and share it with your community. As we all know, the profound knowledge is not one to be possessed....rather, it is the one to be disseminated. In the early part of 2010, a new updated report will be issued with the input of parliaments from all over the world. I will invite you then once more to observe the progress, document the lessons learned and pinpoint any deficiencies in applying ICT in our parliaments.....Like any other group, the overall strength of a coherent chain is determined by the strength of its weakest ring.

Ladies and Gentlemen as we have a good assessment of the state of ICT in our parliaments, I wish that this conference will bring the following:

- 1- More specific recommendations in fostering ICT in parliament particularly in developing countries.
- 2- A realistic plan for the capacity building in this field for our representatives as well as staff.
- 3- A vision for effective communication between our parliaments on routine basis that can be translated into sound legislations particularly those that address global issues and concerns.

Dear Participants there is much work to be done....and a longer journey is yet to be travelled. Make this conference an opportunity not an occasion Reach out and know more from others and let others benefit from your experiences Tame technology to serve you and let us continue to keep the welfare of our people deep in our hearts.

Dear Friends, I wish you all a fruitful conference.

Professor Ahmed Fathi Sorour