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COMMUNICATION

by

Mr Ahmed MANNA
Secretary General of the Egyptian House
of Representatives

on

“The role of parliaments in combatting climate change”

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His Excellency Dr. Najib El Khadi

President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

Honourable colleagues,

At the beginning, I would like to express my great appreciation for your kind invitation to me to participate in this important meeting of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, which is an important platform in the framework of the Inter-Parliamentary Union aiming to consultation and coordination between the general secretaries of national parliaments and the exchange of legal and technical expertise, in a way that contributes to improving the performance of national parliaments and their work, besides to achieving more joint cooperation among them, to meet the demands and aspirations of our peoples.

Allow me to commend the great role played by the Association in order to support and develop mechanisms of cooperation and joint action among the general secretariats of national parliaments, in a way that contributes to benefiting from common experiences and strengthening the capabilities of their workers, for the sake of the development and advancement of international parliamentary work.

Honourable ladies and gentlemen,

We are meeting today under global conditions that carry with them accelerating political and economic challenges, which have forced the legislative councils to face and manage them with a high level of efficiency and professionalism. At the forefront of these challenges is what the world has been facing for years of severe climate fluctuations due to the "Global warming" crisis, that increased the emissions of harmful gases into the atmosphere. However, the repercussions and implications of this crisis are constantly increasing, which threatens the sustainability of natural resources, especially non-renewable ones, as well as the future of most living organisms on earth due to natural disasters and spread of diseases and epidemics resulting from them.

There is no doubt that the issue of climate change has become a concern for the whole world, and a lot of efforts have been made to confront it at the national, regional and international levels. Many conferences have been held to discuss ways to confront it, the most recent of which was the 27th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in the Egyptian city of Sharm el-Sheikh in last November.

The conference witnessed broad parliamentary participation, represented in the international parliamentary meeting that was held on the side-lines of COP27 in cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union on November 13th, 2022. It brought together parliamentary delegations from more than 60 countries as well as many regional, international and parliamentary organizations in addition to a number of international high-level personalities. Extensive discussions took place on ways to support

international efforts to confront climate change, reduce global warming and work to activate the role of parliamentary diplomacy in this regard.

Mr. President,

Parliaments have to play a pivotal role in confronting climate change which threaten the future of the entire world and contribute to the development of environmental policies and legislations to mitigate climate change, develop the capabilities of new and clean energy and present incentives to encourage the transformation towards green economy in a way that would contribute to achieving sustainable development.

Therefore, The Senate of Egypt had tackled twice the climate change and its effect on the environment: the first time was before COP27 last November, and the second was after the conference and discussed its outcome. The Senate called the members for the need of taking necessary measures to mitigate the effects of climate changes under the presiding role of Egypt to the summit this year until the handing of its presidency to United Arab Emirates. Moreover, The Senate discusses at the present time a comparative study of Carbon market and Carbon tax in order to shed the light on this critical part; as Carbon has effects on environment and climate change.

On the other hand, parliaments possess oversight tools that enable them to hold executive bodies accountable and monitor their compliance with environmental policies. Parliaments can hold public hearings and invite government officials to testify before the concerned committees and demand to rectify shortcomings in the performance of the executive bodies.

The Parliament can also play an active role in confronting climate change through its competence to discuss and approve the state budget as well as its oversight over various objects of expenditure. Thus, the parliament can allocate a certain percentage of this budget to develop clean energy sectors, replace polluting sectors, set specific incentives to reduce the negative effects of climate change and adopt approaches that would reduce greenhouse emissions. By means of these budget allocations, the parliament could enhance capacity-building in terms of adapting to climate change, preserving natural resources and green areas, developing infrastructure to face the effects of climate change as well as tools for disaster risk reduction and promoting scientific research and technology transfer.

Mr. President,

The recent years have revealed that the universal conventions pertaining to climate changes won't achieve its desired goals unless national decision makers realize the seriousness of the problem and the necessity of everyone's cooperation in order to be able to confront it; as we live in one planet with a common destiny. This is when the role of national parliaments becomes prominent concerning the approval of these treaties; which provide a major boost of confronting climate change in the coming years by inserting them in national legislations, confirming parliaments' commitment to these treaties' provisions and creating some kind of national consensus among governmental

institutions, effective parties, civil society organizations, business owners and all concerned stakeholders.

We now need -more than ever- to activate the mechanisms of international work and solidarity to face climate change threats and mitigate its catastrophic effects. The parliamentary diplomacy should play a crucial role in this context. Besides, it is beyond doubt that the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments is one of the effective parliamentary platforms in the context of international parliamentary union for dialogue, joint coordination and exchange of experiences among secretaries generals of national parliaments, which contribute to enhancing the parliaments' capabilities in confronting this crisis and other crises that face our contemporary world.

At the conclusion of my speech, I'm grateful for your listening and I'm confident that our meeting will achieve the desired goals and aims, specially with the participation of this distinguished elite of secretaries generals who have a long history in institutional parliamentary work.

With my sincere wishes of health and well-being for you, and I hope for your people the continuous progress and prosperity.