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ASSOCIATION OF SECRETARIES
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COMMUNICATION

by

Mr Sharifi BARZEGAR
Secretary General of the Islamic Parliament of Iran

on

**“Enhancing transparency and accountability through better institutional
communication in parliaments”**

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"Enhancing transparency and accountability through better institutional communication in parliaments

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my pleasure to attend this meeting and extend my warm thanks to the Angolan Parliament for their gracious hospitality and organizing this important conference in a dignified manner. I would also like to express my gratitude to the honorable President of the General Secretaries of Parliaments for their valuable efforts in holding this session.

Democracy is widely accepted as a way of better governance in today's world. In societies where people enjoy independence, freedom, and the protection of law, they must play a role in determining their own destiny. Good governance implies a careful, correct, and efficient administration and management of society, within the framework of the rule of law, rational and fair decision-making, along with responsiveness and accountability, public participation, and embracing political diversity and strategies that encourage interaction between citizens and civil society political and social forces with the government.

Thus, in good governance, not only the government is responsible, but democracy involves interaction between government, civil society actors, the private sector, influential groups, media, and citizens working together to realize it and achieve development; Because the boundaries of society (the political and social system) are permeable, intersecting, and interacting with each other. Good governance cannot be realized without the proper interaction of citizens, civil society and political and social associations with the government, and the cornerstone of good governance includes high-quality service delivery, an efficient and effective response system, easy access to essential resources, and civil commitment and equality of all before the law.

Accountability is one of the challenges that governments are facing today, and it is one of the most common criteria for evaluating "democracy", public services and responsiveness. The relationship between the government and citizens shapes the accountability system that allows government organizations to perform their duties and allows citizens to authorize these duties to be performed, provided they do not exceed their limits and are accountable. The essence of democracy or the democratic system is the principle of accountability. Government organizations are created by the people and for the people and must be accountable to them.

Therefore, the accountability of the parliament can also be considered as an indicator of good governance. In other words, the parliament will be accountable for its performance by evaluating its actions and performance in various areas before the public's opinion, which has the power to authorize them. Furthermore, this institution can take a fundamental step in correcting past actions by evaluating its performance, in other words, moving towards improving its future performance. Therefore, the concept of parliament evaluation will also be based on this idea.

In general, it can be said that decision-making by institutions associated with political power has significant and noteworthy effects on all aspects of people's lives in different societies. Therefore, these institutions must always work towards ensuring the collective interests of societies. Thus, the performance of these institutions should always be evaluated to ensure both the collective interests of society and the transparency and accountability of institutions associated with political power.

In this regard, the parliament is always recognized as a significant decision-making institution in the political structure of societies. Since the parliament is an institution that affects the lives of the general population with its decisions, the necessity of improving the performance of this institution is considered important, as it can lead to the achievement of common goals in societies. In this context, the development of necessary mechanisms to achieve this goal deserves attention, and the parliament can take an important practical step in this direction by using these mechanisms.

Dear colleagues,

In a general sense, the interaction between the executive, judiciary, and legislative branches in the constitution of most countries is often mentioned and, in a way, guaranteed. Joint decision-making among the three branches is a key feature of modern democracies, and the legislative branch cooperates and interacts with other branches in enacting laws in order to be able to perform its roles and responsibilities effectively and to achieve political interests. The role of parliament varies due to various factors. This role has always gained significant importance, especially in the past decade, due to the democratization of the political systems of most countries worldwide.

The Islamic Parliament of Iran, based on the same foundation, serves as the most prominent symbol of democracy in the country, which is the closest administrative level to the people and acts as a link between the government and civil society. Representatives from various parts of the country are there to advocate for the rights, needs, and various issues of the people. They can play a constructive role in good governance and sustainable development in the country; therefore, more than any other institution, the need for transparency and accountability of representatives is felt due to the two-way interaction. Iran, for sustainable development and the transition to developed status, requires sustainable development management through good governance methods.

With these explanations, the foundations of accountability can be stated in the following three principles:

1- Supervision: The first and most important foundation for accountability is supervision. Without supervision, accountability loses its meaning, and in practice, it cannot call individuals and institutions to account.

2- Transparency: The second foundation of accountability is transparency. Without transparency in all matters, accountability cannot result in positive effects and outcomes. Transparency in administrative and financial systems plays a significant role in establishing proper management.

3- Complaint: The third foundation of accountability that can bring the accountability system to fruition and ensure its continuity and accuracy is addressing complaints. After establishing the accountability system, violations must be seriously pursued, and assurance must be given to the rights of those who have been neglected that the wrongdoers will be punished.

Accountability can be divided into vertical and horizontal accountability, depending on whether the supervising authority is citizens or other governing bodies. Vertical accountability refers to citizens' supervision of the authorities elected by the people in elections. In this type of supervision, citizens monitor the conduct of their representatives through various means, the most important and central of which in representative democracies is the election.

Elections provide the opportunity for constituents to evaluate their representatives within specified time intervals and, if satisfied, re-elect them, or, conversely, dismiss them if dissatisfied. However, this type of oversight is original and fundamental, but has limitations, such as being bound to specific time periods and often being lengthy, not being continuous or immediate, and being very general and sometimes lacking sufficient accuracy, since election bodies usually cannot delve into details or evaluate specialized issues.

Another type of accountability is commonly used among institutions and government branches, rooted in the theory of the separation of powers. In other words, horizontal accountability is the competence and ability of government institutions to oversee the conduct and behavior of other branches and agencies in other branches of government.

In other words, despite the fact that parliamentary elections provide the basis for the exercise of sovereignty by the people, it does not guarantee whether the fellow citizens are able to effectively benefit from this right or not. Real democracy requires that the elected representatives of the people have the necessary political power and will to carry out their specific responsibilities according to the constitution. Facing with challenges such as declining public trust and executive dominance, parliaments around the world must ensure that they enjoy the necessary powers and resources to carry out their representation, legislative and supervision duties. Therefore, today many parliaments are trying to improve their

performance and become more independent and responsive. Every parliament is a product of its country's history and culture, and there is no magic formula for creating an effective parliament.

On the other hand, parliamentary committees are important bodies that play a significant role in parliamentary processes. These committees create mechanisms to carry out their desired roles in the parliament and examine matters of public importance. Parliamentary committees lead to greater accountability of the government in policies and administrative functions. They also encourage the participation of parliament members in decision-making and government supervision and facilitate greater public access to the parliament. Moreover, the non-partisan nature of parliamentary committees provides an environment for parliament members to engage in discussions and offer recommendations without overtly focusing on political considerations.

Dear Colleagues,

In conclusion, considering the principle of the separation of powers, each of the political institutions has specific responsibilities within a state. These institutions make decisions in line with their duties. These decisions have significant and undeniable effects on all aspects of people's lives. Therefore, the correctness of these decisions should always be subject to evaluation. The performance of the parliament, as one of the key decision-making institutions in the political structure of societies, should always be subject to assessment, and since one of the outcomes of supervision and evaluation is accountability of the institution under scrutiny, thus increasing the supervision of government institutions leads to their increased accountability. Because accountability is a social relationship in which the institution under evaluation commits to providing a suitable justification to individuals and supervisory entities.

In fact, the parliament has three major roles: legislation, supervision, and representation, and the evaluation of each of these roles can contribute to the enhancement of this institution. To this end, the parliament can assess its

performance by creating necessary mechanisms. The proposed mechanisms include self-assessment of the parliament, which is carried out by internal entities, evaluating the performance of the parliament according to standards provided by international organizations active in the field of parliaments, and finally, evaluating the performance of parliament members. It is obvious that with the proper adoption of these mechanisms, the improvement of the parliament's performance can be witnessed, and subsequently, the satisfaction of the collective interests of individuals in society can be ensured.

I thank you for your attention.