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ASSOCIATION OF SECRETARIES
GENERAL OF PARLIAMENTS

COMMUNICATION

by

Mr Ahmed MANNA
Secretary General of the House of Representatives of Egypt

on

**“The attendance of Ministers of State to Parliament, to report and give explanations
about their management of government business”**

Geneva Session
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My dear brother, Hon. Najib Al-Khadi, President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

Dear colleagues,

At the outset of my speech, allow me to express my utmost happiness and proudness of our regular meetings, which created a unique and high-level dialogue aimed at exchanging all of our experiences regarding ways to raise the efficiency of the general secretariats of our national parliaments in a way that helps them achieve their noble goals since parliaments are deemed as the platform and the free voice of our peoples.

Ladies and gentlemen,

You will undoubtedly agree with me that parliamentary control of the performance of the executive authority is truly an integral pillar and a hallmark of democratic systems, as it is closely linked to the principle of separation of powers and represents the main tool through which the members of parliament monitor the general policy of the government in terms of attesting the soundness of various ministerial decisions and procedures taken by ministers either within their ministries or they take to implement the government program. Parliamentary control is not based only on attesting the conformity of government procedures and policies with the due process of law, but also in terms of their suitability to the circumstances in which they were issued, and the extent of their compatibility with the public interest. Thus, the parliamentary control represents the largest and most prominent weight among other forms of control in the face of state executive institutions, in terms of authorization and accountability due to its broad scope, comprehensiveness, and the diversity of its tools being practised by members of Parliament.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Throughout the ancient Egyptian parliamentary history which exceeds 150 years, the Egyptian constitutions have always ensured that the Egyptian parliament is entitled to a large and diverse package of parliamentary control tools in order to enhance the role of parliament in performing its sublime function as being the voice of the people, and to ensure keeping pace with the latest democratic systems so as to achieve the ultimate goal, which is

ensuring the participation of the people in the decision-making process. The parliamentary control tools of the Egyptian House of Representatives takes multiple forms, the most prominent of which can be summarized as stated in the Egyptian Constitution and the House's Rules of Procedure as follows:

- **Question**, where a member of parliament may inquire into a matter unknown to him/her or to ascertain a matter already known to him/her or clarify a government's decision on a given matter.
- **Request for Information**, where any member may submit a request for information to the Prime Minister, to a government minister, or to a deputy of either, on an important public matter falling within their competence.
- **Urgent Statements**, where a member of the House of Representatives delivers an urgent statement to the Prime Minister, or a member of the government on a matter not included on the agenda if the matter concerned is of urgent importance.
- **Interpellation**, where any member may address interpellations to the Prime Minister, a government minister, or the deputies of either to hold them accountable on matters falling within their competence. This interpellation may result in the House's member submitting a proposal to withdraw confidence from the Prime Minister, a government minister, or a deputy of either.
- **Requests for General Debate**, where general debate may be requested on a public matter by at least 20 members for the purpose of clarifying a government policy.

Added to this, there are other tools such as Motions for a Wish, the fact-finding committees, and the right of the House members to indict the Prime Minister, and the government members. The House of Representatives and its members also have the right to discuss the government program and grant confidence to the government where the Prime Minister in charge presents the government program to the House within 20 days of the Cabinet's formation, or if the House is not in session, at its first meeting. The House shall discuss the Prime Minister's presentation and refer it to an ad hoc committee to be chaired by one of the Deputy Speakers and composed with regard to the representation of opposition and independent members. The ad hoc committee shall study the government program and prepare a report on it within 10 days. The report shall be presented to the House at its

next sitting following the 10-day period. The Rules of Procedure of the House regulates whether or not the government gains the confidence of the majority of the House members.

On another level, and in addition to what we mentioned previously regarding the forms of parliamentary control tools of the Egyptian House of Representatives within the framework of its control role, the Egyptian Constitution explicitly obligates in Article (136) the Prime Minister, government ministers, and the deputies of either to attend the sittings of either the House of Representatives or any of its committees. Their attendance is obligatory if requested by the House. The Egyptian House of Representatives has always been keen on the regularity and activation of this control mechanism to maintain constant communication between ministers and members of parliament, which allows the members to be well-acquainted with the government policies and decisions before the public opinion and also enhances governmental commitment before the people and their representatives, which is the essence of the aspired parliamentary control.

In conclusion, the unprecedented and successive changes and challenges facing our world make it inevitable to develop parliamentary tools and mechanisms to ensure involving people through their representatives in the decision-making process and monitoring all government actions to achieve transparency. Therefore, our regular meetings, with their constructive and meaningful dialogue and sharing experiences constitute a major source for the development of parliamentary work and its governance in order that the general secretariats of parliaments remain a great help to parliaments and parliaments in turn remain the haven and impregnable fortress for the peoples.

Thank you for your kind attention