

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE  
MEDITERRANEAN**

**Valletta, Malta, 12 October 2012**

It is a pleasure to greet the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean.

I am grateful to the Assembly for its wide-ranging efforts in support of the United Nations and your work for peace and security in the Mediterranean region and beyond.

As members of parliament, you are the direct voice of the citizens. People look to you to debate difficult issues on their behalf, to compromise when views differ, and to hold your governments accountable for integrity and results.

The events in the Middle East and North Africa demonstrate clearly that citizens expect to be heard. This message figured prominently in the addresses of world leaders before the UN's own parliament, the General Assembly, three weeks ago.

The General Assembly also held its first-ever High-Level Meeting on the Rule of Law, which acknowledged the essential role of parliaments in advancing the rule of law at the global and national levels alike.

Despite recent unrest in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, I am optimistic about the course these countries are on. They have achieved democratic transitional milestones, with elections and peaceful transfers of power.

There are, however, challenges ahead. Transitions to democracy require much more than elections. Socioeconomic progress is among the key factors in preventing a recurrence of social unrest. Citizen participation in governance is also crucial. I welcome the PAM's commitment to helping countries in transition by facilitating political dialogue and strengthening civil society.

I also thank the PAM for supporting the efforts of the UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative for Syria to end the appalling violence there. Mr. Brahimi needs the unified support of the international community to help the parties realize that the solution will not come through arms, but through a political process and dialogue that meets the legitimate aspirations of all Syrians. The spill-over into neighbouring countries is distressing and dangerous. The humanitarian situation is also deteriorating, with harsh winter weather looming. Parliamentarians have a key role in helping to de-escalate the situation.

I am also grateful for PAM's active support to the UN's work on the Middle East Peace Process. I hope that this year's resolution will continue to encourage both parties to meet their obligations under international law and to seize what may be a last chance to reach the Two-State solution.

Thank you again for your leadership, commitment and solidarity in working with the United Nations to build a better world for all. Together, we can meet today's tests and seize the opportunities of an era of great change.