



**Welcoming address  
by H. E. Fausto Bertinotti, President of the Chamber of  
Deputies of Italy  
at the International Conference “African Legal Resources:  
challenges and opportunities of legislative informatics  
Abuja, Nigeria  
21 – 22 March 2007**

Dear President,

the intensity of the parliamentary work in my country did not allow me to take part to this important conference “*African Legal Resources: Challenges and Opportunities of Legislative Informatics*”, hosted by the National Assembly of Nigeria in Abuja on 21 and 22 March.

This is a very relevant event for the Nigerian National Assembly from which important outcomes are expected, as well as a special occasion for dialogue and common understandings among African Parliaments.

Your kind invitation falls under a common path that the Chamber of Deputies of Italy shared with the Pan African Parliament, UNDESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs) and several other African Parliaments, which set a milestone at the Nairobi Conference in February 2005

It is a path that the Italian Chamber of Deputies intends to take forward, by also encouraging the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy to provide continuity and support.

The growth of African assemblies can be enriched through strengthening their relationship with Parliaments of longer traditions. At the same time, the experience of African Parliaments is showing today their great capacity of initiative and of sharing of experiences and knowledge directed at benefiting from the broad opportunities offered by the new technologies.

In this area, Parliaments can also play a key role to avoid that the opportunities offered by the ICTs translate into a factor of cultural homogeneity and determine new forms of social exclusion, directing their development in the opposite direction, towards democratic participation and respect of cultural diversities. This is coherent with the outcome emerged at the Conference on the Role of Parliaments in the Information Society, recently hosted by the Chamber of Deputies of Italy in Rome on 3 and 4 March 2007.

I hope that these findings can be considered as useful insights in the deliberations of the Abuja Conference.

dear President,

I wish you and all delegates who take part in the Conference fruitful deliberations in the next two days, and I avail myself of this opportunity to express my regards to you all.

Fausto Bertinotti  
President  
Chamber of Deputies of Italy