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Foreword

In the seventies, when the IPALMO Institute was born, its activity focused mainly on issues related to developing countries and on policies of cooperation for development through which developed countries tried to contribute to the reduction of the imbalances between the North and the South of the world.

But the situation has changed over the last forty years and the old separation between North and South is no longer valid in a world in which some of the so-called emergent economies are now able to compete with the so-called developed countries.

For this reason, IPALMO has also changed its approach in recent years, concentrating its attention on those areas of the world in which the unbalances created by the globalization process turned out to be particularly severe and where the main issue to be faced proved to be the creation of the conditions for a more effective governance of the societies affected in order to make possible the reduction, or in any case the management, of those unbalances.

Considering the location of Italy, it is understandable that we focused our attention especially on the area we defined as the enlarged Mediterranean, and extended our sphere of interest beyond policies aimed at the promotion of social and economic development, to actions capable of strengthening the capacities of democratic systems and consequently of also guaranteeing a better political governance.

This explains the inception of a collaboration with an international agency such as UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), and specifically with the program called POGAR (Programme on Governance in the Arab Region), with the objective of helping to transfer the experience built up by Italy in the field of the functioning of parliamentary institutions to the different countries of the region.

The following pages are intended to give a short description of the work related to the parliamentary institutions of Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon carried out in the first phase of the above-mentioned collaboration.

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President of IPALMO