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**Speech of Ms. Mónika BARTOS
(HUNGARY)**

at the General Debate 145th IPU Assembly in Kigali

Honourable (Madam) President, Ladies and Gentlemen; Peer
MPs,

I would like to take this opportunity to cordially welcome you.

The topic of the general debate of our General Assembly is not a new one. We have often stressed the importance of gender equality, and that is why we have decided to do our utmost, both in our respective countries and in the international community, to ensure its prevalence.

The question is whether it is right to raise this topic again and share our achievements in this field.

Yes, it is absolutely right.

That is because the recognition of gender equality is rooted in human dignity, and is a core value of our existence.

These days, we live in a world where everything is called into question. Today, it is difficult for young people to find robust orientation points. For this reason, we, as members of the most

long-standing international organisation, have not only the opportunity but also the obligation to offer people a firm anchor. That's why we must go back and reaffirm key values such as gender equality, and state that the Inter-Parliamentary Union does everything in its power to achieve this.

In Hungary, gender equality represents a fundamental value, and stems from two ancient sources.

The first one is the family-centred culture of the Hungarian people, which goes back many centuries. The word 'wife' ('other half' – in Hungarian) clearly shows its essence. It refers to women being the fully equal 'other halves' of men, and only the two of them, together, can form a whole.

The other source is our Christian culture, which teaches that all people are equal and also equally valuable.

Honourable Peer MPs,

In order for women to be able to successfully appear in politics, it is essential to strengthen them in society as a whole. We can help this with legal instruments, education, shaping public opinion, protecting women and strengthening their self-confidence.

Please, allow me to share with you some of our successful measures.

- One of the essential components of equality is that every human being should have the chance to be born. In this spirit, Hungary has laws that protect human life from the moment of conception.

- Hungary's Fundamental Law enshrines the prohibition of discrimination as a general principle.

This provision ensures equal treatment before the law, specifically mentioning the prohibition of discrimination between the sexes.

- We believe that the well-being of both sexes and families forms the basis of social sustainability.

- Women play an essential role in family life, and therefore, women's policy is a key part of our family policy. In order to strengthen the role of women within the family and in society in general, the Government has developed an action plan for the period up until 2030, which promotes work-life balance. Thank you for your kind attention and I wish you a fruitful continuation of discussions.

- At the same time, women are often exposed to domestic violence. We provide them with legal protection. In addition, we operate special centers where victims can find shelter and receive psychological help to process what happened.

- The right to health is enshrined in our Constitution. We also ensure women's health by providing access to screening

tests and vaccination against one of the most dangerous cancers, cervical cancer. Vaccination is available to girls voluntarily and free of charge. The disease is also spread by men, so boys can also be vaccinated to protect women.

- Education is one of the key elements for someone to successfully participate in the life of society.

In Hungary, we pay special attention to education, which is accessible and obligatory to both boys and girls.

- The population of the Roma minority in Hungary is significant. We have developed special programs for their training and to support women's lifestyles.
- Women play an important role in public life. Typically, they participate in the work of local communities. 20% of mayors are women.
- In Hungary, the head of state has been a woman since the spring of this year. As Hungary's first female head of state, Katalin Novák successfully and effectively represents our country both at home and in the international community.

Deeply esteemed Peer MPs,

Thank you for your kind attention and I wish you a fruitful continuation of discussions.