



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

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Madam President,
Honourable Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends, dear colleagues,

Thank you very much, Madam President, for giving me this opportunity to address the opening of this Assembly. Earlier this morning, I had the opportunity of extending a warm welcome to delegates attending the Assembly. Many of you who were there at the time are here but I see that this whole room has become fuller. So, allow me once again to convey to each and every one of you a most hearty welcome to the home of the IPU.

We meet at a time that is fraught with a lot of disputes, conflicts and crises. One might be tempted to be desperate, might feel hopeless in the face of these daunting challenges. But we are here to address many issues that we can rally around in order to improve our world. The President, in her speech, has just mentioned the whole issue of science and technology which, we believe, if well harnessed and utilized, can help us resolve many of the intractable crises that we are facing in the world today. We have therefore agreed to focus on the potential of science and technological innovation for the benefit of mankind.

This approach has been born out of the experience that we have had with the COVID pandemic, which I fear is receding in our memories. But allow me to remind you that there were a lot of challenges. The global community rose to these challenges. Some advancements were achieved in a very rapid fashion, to the extent that vaccines were developed with international cooperation. Working methods were improved upon, and teleworking and other forms of collaboration helped us overcome the crisis. We hope that we can continue to grapple with these developments in science and technology and come up with solutions that are outside the box, but which can help us improve upon the way we do business. As a global parliamentary community, we can help contribute to the solution of the problems that are out there.

Madam President,
Distinguished delegates,
Dear friends, dear special guests,

Allow me to use this opportunity to bring to our attention one of the highlights of this Assembly, which is part of the IPU mandate – that of equipping parliaments with tools that allow them to perform in a more efficient and effective manner.

During this Assembly, we will be launching the eighth edition of the biennial *World e Parliament Report* which is a compendium and review of how parliaments are using new technologies to improve upon their working methods. The IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament is driving the IPU response to challenges. We have devised what we call a unique “digital maturity index” to monitor the progress of this transformation. We hope that our Centre for Innovation in Parliament will continue to foster cooperation with a view to bridging the divide.

I think, Madam President, you mentioned that what we are seeing today is progress in the use of digital technologies but also inequality in access to these technologies. I would also like to use this opportunity, Madam President and Members of the IPU, to say something that is a matter of satisfaction for us.

A few weeks ago, we were in New York, Madam President, myself and many people I see here – the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, the President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and a host of other IPU office holders, such as the Chair of the Working Group on Science and Technology and the Chair of the Advisory Group on Health, who represented the IPU in the different specialized meetings that took place in the context of the Summit of the Future. I want to point out here the good work they did in representing the IPU but also in the outcome of the Summit.

I remember the last time the United Nations was very clear on its resolve to work with parliaments and the IPU was way back in 2000 when it adopted the Millennium Summit Declaration where it says that the United Nations was committed to working with national parliaments through their international organization, the IPU. Over the years, a lot has gone under the bridge, and this time during the Summit of the Future, a pact for the future was adopted which is a blueprint for how the global community intends to grapple with the challenges it is facing. It is also very clearly stated that the United Nations and its Member States, in cooperation with the IPU – the global organization of parliaments, are resolved in engaging more with parliaments in an effort to address the challenges the global community is facing.

This is, I would say, a great achievement for parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary cooperation. But I also believe that with such a mandate, it is a big challenge for us to rise to the expectations of Member States. The IPU, as the organization of parliaments, is committed to working with you in order for you to rise to that challenge. It gives me great pleasure that you are set to organize a major summit next year here in Geneva – the Summit of Speakers of Parliament. It will be a good opportunity for you, the highest authorities of parliaments around the world, to re-dedicate yourselves and resolve to deploy more robust efforts and actions in order to live to the expectations of the people for development, for peace, for security and for just welfare.

Madam President,
Distinguished participants in this Assembly,

It has been a pleasure for me to address you here. You can be sure that my colleagues and I in the IPU Headquarters Secretariat will continue to do everything according to our abilities to be deserving of the trust that you have placed in us. Will continue to help the IPU to implement its noble mandate of promoting peace and security in the world, of promoting dialogue and of promoting peaceful coexistence for the good of all. Thank you very much.