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## Remarks – Session on parliamentary diplomacy

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P20 Speakers' Summit

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Honourable Speakers of Parliament,  
Distinguished parliamentarians,  
Dear colleagues,

We often talk about parliamentary diplomacy in the context of peace and security, but I believe that it can also be used to build bridges of solidarity, to work together in creating a more equal world, and to advance solutions and good practices for truly sustainable development. The G20 Speakers' Summit in particular serves as a premier forum to lead by example in demonstrating the impact of our work together. Indeed, our Summit provides us with an invaluable opportunity to share our experiences, learn from one another, identify innovative solutions, and ultimately join forces and work together to bring about positive change. Often, we know what we need to do, and the solutions are at our fingertips.

Indeed, where there is political will, we can achieve great things for our respective countries and for the broader global community. As I mentioned earlier, the questions I believe we should also ask ourselves here are the following: How do we turn our shared commitments into concrete action? How do we ensure that our resolutions and our joint statements are translated into meaningful policy and legislation? And how do we measure whether our efforts have succeeded?

I think that we need to invest more in efforts to ensure that we are accountable – to our constituents and to one another. As noted in the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians earlier this week, we should develop monitoring and evaluation tools to help us keep track of the progress that we make.

This is something that we have aimed to develop at the IPU, as part of our core strategic objective of accountability, working to ensure that our resolutions and declarations have a life after their adoption. Every year, we encourage our Member Parliaments to report on what they have done to implement the decisions that they themselves have taken. We gather and publicize best practices and share data on progress in areas such as sustainable development, women's empowerment and youth participation. And we aim to keep Members engaged all year round, not just at our major conferences and assemblies.

We congratulate South Africa for its initiative to convene a first Meeting of Young Parliamentarians at the P20, to inform the Speakers' Summit from both a gender and a youth perspective. The IPU's own youth movement was born out of a resolution adopted back in 2010 and, since then, MPs around the world have consistently worked to advance youth participation in parliaments and in politics. The young MPs themselves have kept the momentum going, helping us to identify and promote concrete actions such as the introduction of youth quotas and the establishment of youth caucuses, along with mentorship and training for young MPs and young people who aspire to become MPs. Commitments have often been translated into tangible change, as reported by our Members. For instance, Türkiye and Mexico have both recently adopted constitutional amendments lowering the age of eligibility for parliament to 18 years of age, removing a significant barrier that had long kept young people from running for office.

When it comes to gender equality, for 40 years now our Forum of Women Parliamentarians has been the engine behind a profound transformation of the IPU into a truly gender-sensitive organization. This year's Campaign on *Gender equality, action by action* is promoting 10 very specific actions aimed at achieving gender parity in parliament and politics, helping make parliaments more gender-sensitive, and combating gender-based discrimination and violence.

The more parliamentarians – both men and women – that support and implement these actions, the more chance we have of these goals becoming reality around the world. There are many examples of real and tangible action. For example, with the support of the IPU and the Parliament of Egypt, the Parliament of The Gambia recently upheld the country's ban on female genital mutilation against attempts to repeal it. Several parliaments, including those of Suriname, Bahrain, and Namibia, have also adopted new legislation to combat violence against women. At the same time, Women's Caucuses continue to gain ground across the globe, including here in our host country, South Africa.

Finally, I would like to come back to the Geneva Declaration on parliamentary diplomacy, adopted by our Member Parliaments last year, which focuses primarily on the role of parliamentary diplomacy in building peace and in ensuring compliance with the rule of law and international norms. In this regard, mechanisms are in place to facilitate regular engagement with MPs from Israel and Palestine, Russia and Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan, North and South Korea, among others. The IPU leadership has also recently conducted missions to several countries in West Africa, including Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Niger – in an effort to accompany transitional parliaments in their return to constitutional order.

The Geneva Declaration also noted the close link between peace and sustainable development – growing conflict jeopardizes the attainment of the SDGs, and stalled development exacerbates inequality, which in turn leads to radicalization and insecurity. Similarly, the IPU hearings at COP are at the forefront of parliamentary efforts to address climate change, bringing together hundreds of parliamentarians from around the world to chart a course for shared parliamentary action on our most pressing climate issues.

Parliamentary diplomacy is therefore clearly a tool for fostering justice, equality and sustainability. But again, in order to turn words into actions, we must also use it as a tool for oversight and accountability, allowing us to more effectively follow up on our pronouncements with concrete outcomes.

Thank you.