



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Welcome remarks by Mr. Martin Chungong Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

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2021 IRENA Legislators Forum

Virtual presentation, 13 January 2021

Mr. Francesco La Camera, Director-General of IRENA,
His Excellency Mr. Saqr Ghobash, Speaker of the Federal National Council of the
United Arab Emirates,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, it is a pleasure for me to be here with you today during this virtual 2021 IRENA Legislators Forum on parliamentary actions to scale up renewable investments. I would like to begin by thanking the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) for hosting this important event on the sidelines of the Eleventh Session of the IRENA Assembly.

This year's Forum is incredibly timely as countries around the globe are grappling with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic which has had far reaching social and economic consequences. At the same time, countries must still continue to work towards internationally-agreed climate and development targets outlined in Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement. Universal access to affordable and clean energy is a critical element for both sustainable development and tackling the climate crisis. However, achieving a clean energy transition requires increased political will and a substantial reallocation of resources from highly-polluting energy sources, such as fossil fuels, towards renewable energy. Such a transition requires considerable effort from a number of stakeholders, including legislators.

As countries are now resetting their priorities and reallocating resources to deal with COVID-19, there is an urgent need for recovery strategies that are aligned with sustainable development pathways that ensure human and environmental well-being. Through their legislative, budgetary, oversight and representation functions, parliaments are in a unique position to ensure that responses to the pandemic scale-up investments in renewable energy and facilitate a global energy transition. Going back to 'business as usual' is not an option if we are serious about meeting climate and development objectives.

The IPU has made supporting parliaments and parliamentarians in their efforts to achieve sustainable development and take climate action, including on clean energy, a priority. The IPU supports bilateral, regional and international parliament-parliament engagement to facilitate the sharing of good practices and lessons learned on addressing climate and development challenges.

Recently, the IPU and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have been working together to identify key approaches that parliamentarians may wish to consider in promoting a sustainable and green recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic. These approaches are outlined in a recently released joint policy note for parliamentarians. The policy note outlines a number of green economy approaches, including in relation to clean energy and green jobs, and proposes parliamentary actions within each of these areas.

For example, parliamentarians can prioritize clean energy in COVID-19 recovery packages to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Parliamentarians have the opportunity to advance laws that contribute to both short- and long-term energy policies that promote a shift to renewable energy, including by prioritizing budget allocations for low-carbon activities. This policy note also highlights how parliamentarians can introduce recovery laws that incentivize green investment and create employment in the renewable energy sectors. A shift to a greener economy, particularly through scaling up investments in renewable energy, has the potential to create millions of new jobs.

The recovery process from this pandemic is a great challenge, but it also provides a unique opportunity to follow more just and sustainable pathways and accelerate the clean energy transition. This Legislators Forum provides an important platform for critical discussion among parliamentarians on key parliamentary actions for making the clean energy transition a reality, as well as for sharing insights on the challenges and opportunities parliamentarians face in scaling-up renewable energy investments in their respective countries. I sincerely look forward to participating in the important discussions that will take place during today's Forum and wish you a successful event.

Thank you very much.