



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Ms. Sahar Albazar
President of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians

Opening Remarks

142nd IPU Assembly

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Speech Duration: 2 Minutes

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Dear colleagues,
Distinguished guests,

I am honoured to address you for the first time as President of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

We are meeting in what may be the most decisive decade of human history: Between the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change, the choices we make today will have a huge impact for generations to come.

Yet those who will be most affected, young people, are also the ones most left out. Only 2.6% of the world's MPs are under 30.

Transformative times call for transformative measures, and the status quo is even less acceptable than ever before. Our Forum of Young MPs have often said "no decisions about us, without us!" This is not just about fairness. It is also about harnessing the ideas and talents that young men and women have to meet the challenges that we collectively face. Our generation is raring to contribute. We just need to be let in. One first step towards this is by signing up to the brand new IPU Campaign: I SAY YES to Youth in Parliament and taking transformative action to have more young men and women in parliament!

Despite being a minority, young MPs are nevertheless answering the call. We met last month at our IPU Global Conference to examine the ingredients of a youth-responsive recovery from the pandemic. Our outcome document was endorsed by the Forum of Young MPs as the youth contribution to this Assembly.

Dear colleagues:

- During the pandemic, one in eight children could not keep up their schooling. We call on greater investment in education to leave no one behind, including online.
- Young people may have faced less severe infections than their elders, but they faced disproportionate mental health costs and many lost access to sexual reproductive rights. We call for greater attention on and access to youth health services.
- Young people are also suffering the economic consequences of Covid. We call for increased investment for youth employment, access to credit, and stronger social safety nets.

The pandemic has turned our world upside down. But change is not only a challenge, change is also an opportunity. Rebuilding stronger, more united and more resilient can only happen if the needs and interests of the young generation are maintained high on the recovery agenda, for a better tomorrow, for everyone.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to working with you all.