



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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## IPU Address

**Ms Gabriela Cuevas Barron  
President**

**High Level Political Forum on  
sustainable development  
United Nations  
New York, 17 July 2018**

President,

It is a great honour for me to represent the IPU, its 178 members, and the world's 46,000 parliamentarians from across the globe. Multilateralism and cooperation are the main foundations for our work. The IPU stands firmly behind democracy and human rights, and as such, we are committed in transforming words into action, always acknowledging that the desired goal of changing the world will only come as a result of directly reforming our respective communities and societies.

It is in the name of this vision that our organization has worked closely with the UN. This coordination of efforts can be evidenced not only through the signing of a cooperation agreement between our institutions, but also through constant work on the resolutions between the United Nations, national parliaments, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union itself. In fact, in the latest of these efforts, over 90 countries supported the resolution through which June 30th is now celebrated as the International Day of Parliamentarism.

The role played by parliamentarians in the implementation of the development agenda is crucial; we are directly responsible for the ratification and adoption of these agreements in many of the countries that have advocated for this global transformation. We also play a determining role in the modification of national laws, which must be reformed to suit the needs generated by the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also our duty to design the budgets that will allow for fulfilling of the goals for which we now have twelve more years. Lastly, we are the natural bridge between the international agenda, and the representation of the citizenry.

As an organization, the IPU has helped parliamentarians fulfil their goal of implementing fully the Sustainable Development Goals. Our work in the past few years has been consistent in seeking to ensure that parliamentarians have the information they need, the best national strategies for implementation, the opportunity to exchange ideas with peers from around the world. We accomplish this in national, regional and

international seminars and workshops, by providing a self-assessment toolkit that we developed with UNDP, and in helping MPs engage in their country's national voluntary reviews.

I am pleased that 30 parliaments are represented in this HLPF session with some 80 members of parliament in attendance. This is success, but it is far from the ideal.

In preparation for the HLPF, IPU surveyed the parliaments of the 47 nations that submitted Voluntary National Reviews this year. We tried to determine how much input and how much review was included in the VNR process.

Despite revised UN guidelines that call on governments to be more inclusive of parliaments, only fifteen parliaments were consulted in the preparation of national reports. And only eight parliaments had an opportunity to review the report before its official submission.

President more substantial efforts are needed to ensure parliaments are fully engaged in the global review of the SDGs.

Earlier this week, IPU held a side event for MPs to discuss the issues around the sustainable economy.

We live in a world of unprecedented inequality. Finding a way to spread the wealth more fairly within and across countries, reinforces our vision of more representative parliaments and more inclusive decision-making.

All people, including the poor, women, youth, indigenous people and other marginalized groups, must be included *democratically*. All people should be engaged equally in having their say in how their economy and their environment are managed.

The IPU views Goal 16 as pivotal to the SDGs. The so-called "governance goal" includes building transparent, inclusive, and accountable institutions, beginning with national parliaments. It requires painstaking effort and is the basis of our work at the IPU when we help strengthen parliaments' law-making and oversight functions, particularly amongst women.

Yet, despite some progress over the years, democracy building remains an uphill battle almost everywhere. More than ever before, the international community needs to invest much more in governance if the SDGs are to succeed.

In light of the challenges ahead, I wish to leave you with one final message: count on the Inter-Parliamentary Union, we - just like the United Nations - believe in working towards a better, more inclusive world that leaves no one behind.

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