



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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## Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Second Preparatory Committee for the 5th UN Conference on the Least  
Developed Countries

Monday, 26 July 2021

Distinguished Co-chairs  
Excellences,  
Dear Colleagues,

Ten years ago in Istanbul, the international community held great hopes for the Least Developed Countries.

Member states pledged to do their utmost to halve the number of LDCs and to dramatically improve the lot of the 900 million people who live there. Fundamental human needs are still going unmet as these countries continue to struggle for systemic change and a path toward self-reliance.

Today, we are nowhere near achieving the many targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA). Meanwhile, conditions all over the world have deteriorated, and the SDGs have gone off track.

The LDCs are among the most vulnerable to the disruptive effects of climate change. They are also among the most exposed to the Covid-19 pandemic as long as vaccination rates remain in the single digit.

Make no mistake: the “leave no one behind” promise of the SDGs must apply first and foremost to the Least Developed Countries. We need to keep this promise by mobilizing greater political will and stronger accountability within countries as well as globally.

This is where the IPU, as the world organization of parliaments, comes in.

As we did in the run up to the Istanbul conference, the IPU is again organizing the parliamentary track to the 5<sup>th</sup> LDC Conference in Doha, in January 2022.

The idea behind this is very simple: parliamentarians everywhere, not just in the LDCs, are key to bringing this agenda to fruition through their power of the purse and their legislative and oversight authority.

They need to be aware of the process for the new Programme of Action from the beginning, ask their governments for updates on its negotiation, contribute their views, and at the end of the day make the final outcome their own.

Parliaments as a whole, not just individual MPs, need to institutionalize this agenda as part and parcel of the drive toward the SDGs.

Unfortunately, parliamentary engagement in the Istanbul Programme has not been stellar.

This is partly because of the relatively stronger appeal of the SDGs as a universal and integrated agenda, and partly because parliaments themselves are less capacitated than governments when it comes to integrating these global agreements in their daily work.

In an effort to ramp up parliamentary action, in May we informed all 179 member parliaments of the IPU of the preparatory process for the Doha conference. The pandemic notwithstanding – we are working as best we can to facilitate the inclusion of parliamentarians in national delegations to the regional reviews, the two PrepCom sessions, and the actual conference in Doha.

On 15 June, we organized a special virtual briefing for MPs in which some 80 members of parliament participated. I am grateful to the High Representative and the Chair of the LDC Group for taking time out of their busy schedules to respond to questions from our members.

In the coming months, we will produce three reports to focus attention to the role of parliaments in the LDCs, particularly with regard to gender equality, development cooperation and good governance.

Together with the Shura Council of Qatar, we will organize a one-day Parliamentary Forum in Doha on 22 January. That meeting will help catalyze our members' attention to the nascent Doha Programme of Action and what they need to do to carry it forward in the years ahead.

Most important, we will come to Doha with a Parliamentary Statement on behalf of the global parliamentary community. This official statement will be adopted by the IPU Governing Council when it meets in November.

Excellences,

As you proceed with a first reading of the zero draft Programme of Action this week, I hope you will agree to retain – in whatever language – the commitments in the Istanbul Programme of Action that touch upon the role of parliaments.

Those commitments remain as critical to unblock action for the LDCs as they were ten years ago.

Thank you for your attention.