



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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# Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

## Closing and conclusions of the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism

Vienna, 9 September 2021

Honourable Speakers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

We are now arriving to the closure of the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism. This Summit was held in partnership with the UNOCT and the UNODC and it comes at a very important time, amidst a global context which requires urgent action from us all.

Today also marks the first time that we have gathered together to bring attention to the victims of terrorism. We have heard the voices of all the victims themselves. Their messages should be listened to by us all. Ultimately, it is the victims who pay the heavy price of terrorism, through their lives, and their tragedies. They all want the space to speak out, to be heard, to be listened to.

Today, we have seen and heard the survivors of terrorism. They want their lives back; they want to be absorbed by their families again, by their villages, their tribes. Perhaps they are thankful for the funds that the world is trying to give them, however, it is clear that funds are not enough. There is a much more important role for States and parliaments to play in order to support the victims of terrorism, to reintegrate them in society, to turn them, through legislation and support, into real survivors of terrorism, seekers of life and coexistence. They want to communicate with us, they want to feel that they are not alone, and we are here today to tell them that they are heard, they are not alone.

Today, parliamentarians discussed their mandate and their responsibilities towards their respective constituencies, towards the people who trusted them to represent them, vis-a-vis the executive authorities, to transform their needs, their concerns, and their worries into action. Around the world, people count on parliamentarians for support, for protection, they count on them to be the voice that they cannot themselves make heard. They count on parliamentarians for everything.

One of the many important aspects that the world counts on parliamentarians for is their role in protecting people from terrorism. We have heard in the Summit today that executive authorities and armed and security forces often have the primacy countering terrorism. However, by the same rationale, parliamentarians have the upper hand in prevention, and prevention is the focus of the IPU. Prevention encompasses many

elements, as I mentioned this morning, from development, gender equality, countering climate change, and countering cultural and religious misconceptions that can lead to marginalized people being used as tools for terrorists. It is the power of parliamentarians as principal stakeholders to prevent atrocities through inclusive parliaments, through development, education, and above all, through the respect of human rights. As we have said today, countering terrorism without respecting human rights and respecting the rule-of-law can be in and of itself become an element conducive to terrorism.

We have all been watching the development of terrorism on the world map. We have all seen changes in its geography. What we have learnt is that what happens in the Sahel region also affects people in Austria. We had always thought that when we looked at the world map that the Sahel was in Africa, and that Austria was in Europe, however today, we know that terrorism and extremist beliefs know no borders, just as they know no religion. We were also honoured to also have with us today leaders of religion who told us about the misuse of religion for extremist purposes and encouraged us all to open lines of communication and to coordinate with religious and theological leaders within our communities, and the importance of these lines of communication in the prevention of violent extremism.

Just as we should listen intently to the message of the victims of terrorisms and their needs, we should also listen to the people of the Sahel to find solutions for the Sahel. We have all heard about the deteriorating and critically urgent situation in the Sahel, and how the situation is only continuing to deteriorate day by day.

We have also heard how the people of the Sahel are suffering, and how terrorism breeds all sorts of additional challenges, such as transnational organized crime, human trafficking, illegal immigration, the proliferation of weapons, illicit drug trafficking and latent armed conflicts, as well as environmental degradation and climate change, food insecurity and nutritional crises, all of which constitute global and regional threats to peace and security. We all agreed that coexistence and peace in the Sahel is essential to ensuring peace and stability in the region, but also around the world.

Therefore, we must all act now; we must answer to the call of the Sahel. However, to do so, as the Secretary of the Interparliamentary Committee of the G5 Sahel rightly said, solutions must come from within; we must listen to the people on the ground, to the people of the Sahel, to ensure that they are first and foremost placed within our solutions.

With this aim, the IPU, as the global parliamentary organization, has gathered together numerous regional parliamentary organizations, including the Arab Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, and above all, the Interparliamentary Committee of the G5 Sahel, in order to create a geographic block through the development of holistic and comprehensive strategies and legislation that can address the problems on the ground, with measurable impact and continuous feedback from the people of the Sahel. We will continue following up, and we will soon witness another conference in which we will elaborate on the implementable aspects of this call for the Sahel.

Today, I ask all parliamentary organizations to join us in this call for the Sahel, and for the United Nations, International Organizations, financial organizations, the private sector and other key partners to lend their support to the implementation of this call.

We are honoured to have had you all join us today for this important and timely First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism. I would like to thank the

Chairperson and the members of the High-Level Advisory Group, for their sustained efforts. I would also like to thank our United Nations partners again for their commitment and support to this cause. I would also like to thank China, the UAE, Bangladesh, Benin, and Sweden for their support to the Programme, without which this Summit would not be possible.

It now gives me pleasure to declare this First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism closed.