



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

National Assembly of Zambia Research Awareness Week (RAW)

20 September 2022

Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Madam Clerk,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be addressing you today for the launch of your inaugural Research Awareness Week.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, the IPU, is the global organization of parliaments. We represent 178 national parliaments, among them the National Assembly of Zambia. Your institution is an active member of the IPU. I remember fondly being in Lusaka in 2016, when you graciously hosted an IPU Assembly and the Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians.

Aside from these meetings, we have also collaborated on a variety of projects. We were pleased to partner with you in a series of self-assessment activities in 2019, which helped shape the strategic direction of the National Assembly. We also worked together on many thematic seminars, including on human rights – more specifically a review of the Public Order Act – and on climate change, maternal health and other subjects. I also wish to congratulate the National Assembly administration for serving as the coordinator of the Southern Africa hub for the IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament.

Our most recent collaboration has been our close work with the National Assembly's Research Department in preparing for this Research Awareness Week. This innovative initiative was motivated by the administration's wish to better serve you, dear members of parliament, by raising the visibility of the valuable services the Research Department offers. Continuing with our longstanding relationship of cooperation with the National Assembly, we were only too happy to be involved and to support Research Awareness Week by working closely with the Research Department.

Since December, we have held training workshops and coordination meetings with the Department to help bring this event to fruition. We were also happy to bring in experts from other research departments to share knowledge and good practices, including from Ghana, New Zealand, Uganda and the UK. We are very grateful to all our parliamentary peers who contributed their expertise.

During these last few months of working together, I have been very encouraged to see the administration's dedication to this initiative and to meeting the needs of members of parliament.

Madam Speaker,
Honourable Members,

With smartphones and tablets, we live in an era where all manner of information is available to us in seconds. This nearly infinite accessibility has many benefits, but also

many risks. As access has grown, so too has a wave of mis- and dis-information. When even the most basic facts are called into question, trust in our parliaments and in our democracy can be eroded.

Members of parliament must have access to credible and fact-based information when carrying out their essential functions: legislation, the adoption of budgets, and holding government to account. You need high quality, neutral and nonpartisan information that you can trust and that is tailored to your needs. This information is essential to your roles as MPs, and in delivering for your constituents.

Fortunately, you have at your disposal a department fit for this purpose and ready to serve. The services that your colleagues in the Research Department can provide are intended to empower you. Over the course of the next three days, they will present to you the specific services they can offer, and how they can benefit you in your parliamentary work. Working with other departments in your administration, they have arranged for a stimulating programme which also brings in external partners. I encourage all of you to not only make the most of this week by learning how the Department's services can help you, but also to make the most of these services in the weeks and years that follow.

I wish to congratulate the Research Department, the entire administration, and all of you for having the vision to follow through with this excellent initiative. And I wish you a very successful and productive event over the next three days.

Thank you