



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

147th IPU Assembly

Luanda, Angola
23–27 October 2023



Governing Council
Item 17

CL/212/17-P.2
15 June 2023

Election of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

(Article 19 of the Statutes and Rules 6, 7 and 8 of
the Rules of the Governing Council)

Candidature

of

Ms. Catherine GOTANI HARA (Malawi)

On 15 June 2023, the Secretary General received a communication from the Speaker of the Malawi Parliament, Ms. Catherine Gotani Hara, submitting her candidature for the office of President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which is to be filled at the 212th session of the Governing Council.

The text of this communication and the additional materials received in support of this candidature can be found attached.

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#IPU147

**COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL
BY THE HON. SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI**

Lilongwe, 12 June 2023

Dear Sir,

In October 2023, at the 147th Assembly to be held in Luanda, Angola, the Inter-Parliamentary Union will be expected to elect a new President for the IPU for the next three years.

I wish to advise and give notice to your office of my intention to contest for the position of President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union during the 147th IPU Assembly.

I am currently serving as the Speaker of Parliament of Malawi up to 2025/26, when Malawi will hold parliamentary elections. I have over 15 years of experience working in the political scene since 2009 when I was first elected as a Member of Parliament for my Constituency.

In 2019, I was elected as the first ever female Speaker of the Parliament of Malawi. One of my milestones during my tenure of office as a Speaker, was when I successfully led the House through one of the most politically challenging times of our country in 2019/2020.

I am committed, Sir, once elected to the position, to serve the citizens represented in all the countries at the IPU and contribute to the growth of the Organization and prosperity and peaceful coexistence among the countries of all Member Parliaments.

My writing to you, Sir, is for your information and to ask for your support and that of the entire IPU.

Attached are copies of my profile and Curriculum Vitae.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed)

Catherine GOTANI HARA (Ms.)
Speaker of Malawi Parliament

**IPU
PRESIDENTIAL
CANDIDATE**



Rt. Hon.

CATHERINE GOTANI HARA, MP

MALAWI

Making the Global Parliamentary ecosystem locally relevant



RT HON.
**CATHERINE
GOTANI HARA, MP**

SPEAKER
PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI

**ENHANCING COORDINATION
BETWEEN THE IPU PARLIAMENTS**



**PROMOTING GENDER
EQUALITY, YOUTH
EMPOWERMENT, PEACE
SUSTAINABILITY, DEMOCRACY
& ADDRESSING CLIMATE
CHANGE**

Rt Hon.

CATHERINE GOTANI HARA



Right Honourable Catherine Gotani Hara, MP was elected as the first female Speaker of the Malawi National Assembly in 2019.

An accomplished, inspirational and fearless politician, she has been on the leading edge of Malawian politics, taking bold stands at various critical periods in the nation's political history and successfully leading one of the most historical and challenging parliaments in democratic history.

In her three-years in office, she guided the House implementing politically difficult court judgements that nullified the 2020 presidential elections, and successful legislation of the associated enabling laws.

Working in one of the most dynamic and vibrant democracies on the African continent, she is making progress on the IPU's mission through

empowering the Parliament of Malawi by championing and securing more autonomy from the Executive through an Act.

She established the budget office to strengthen Parliament's oversight role, overseeing the setup of e-Parliament, progressing the digital Parliament agenda and making notable strides towards citizen engagement through diversification of parliamentary communication including the setting up of the ParliamentaryTV.

Prior to this, Right Honorable Hara held key cabinet portfolios in Health, Environment, Gender, and Community Development, and Transport and Public Works.

Previously, she worked for the then Department of International Development (DFID) where she was responsible for DFID vulnerability programmes in Malawi and Mozambique.

She is also an innovative astute entrepreneur who over the years has established successful enterprises in agri-businesses, energy, retail, confectionary and transport. Through these initiatives, she has created over 200 jobs for some of the most vulnerable Malawians.

The variety of her experience is a testament to both the depth and breadth of her experience that goes way beyond her professional area of expertise, equipping her with critical insight into key global issues like climate change, Health, rural livelihoods, and infrastructure delivery.

She is well-respected for her leadership as evidenced by local and international awards, the range of international organizations that work with her in championing various initiatives and the doubling of development partners' direct financial support to the National Assembly.



MY VISION

I would like to inspire the rebranding of the IPU as a powerful global organisation which will be perceived as both locally relevant, and capable of solving global challenges. Therefore, globalising and localising the IPU's identity will require a strong result-oriented internal culture, plus the creation of a powerful external narrative about its work and achievements.

Working hand in hand with the Secretariat, I will:

- Use my regional leadership skills to map new ways of inter-parliamentary work that can facilitate dialogue that is locally effective, responsive, and inclusive, while firmly responding to global challenges;
- Review the ways in which global parliaments can be supported

further to accelerate the pace of achievement of IPU strategic goals and mission;

- Redefine and strongly communicate the IPU's role in supporting the development of solutions to existing and new threats around; geo-politics, global security, the environment, inequality and social-economics;
- Identify ways of increasing the IPU's regional visibility and people's sense of the IPU's presence;
- Make the IPU an exemplar of institutional global inclusivity, through continued advocacy on youth and women empowerment, and in particular new ways of supporting parliaments with increasing representation of disabled people;
- Advance the IPU's global influence through strengthening existing partnerships, creating diplomatic channels and developing new knowledge exchange mechanisms with other global and geopolitical and regional entities and
- Identify impactful models of communication that can relay the IPU's mission and relevance to both local and global spaces.



An active promoter of inclusivity, gender equality and youth empowerment



Rt. Hon. Catherine Gottani Hara, MP. Speaker of Parliament of Malawi clad in green school uniform advocated for youth empowerment at the grassroots level

I am an active promoter of gender equality and youth empowerment starting with leading a vibrant women's and youth parliamentary caucus which delivers high profile parliamentary campaigns for the girl child and the youth, to taking up ambassador and champion roles for various initiatives by influential global organisations e.g.

- Plan International Ambassador for promoting Girls education
- Supported United Nations in Malawi spotlight initiative - gender related laws
- Champion for Association of Women in media – Speaking out against sexual violence
- Champion for Oxfam/Concern Worldwide/Action Aid – 16 Days of activism against gender-based violence
- An Ambassador for World Vision International – Campaign to end child marriages
- An Ambassador World Vision International – Child participation forum (youth parliament).

Some strides are being made on representation for young people though more needs to be done. However, I am aware that other marginalised groups such as the disabled, are almost systematically excluded from getting as far as the IPU because of in-country barriers to their participation and my vision is to make bigger strides in supporting countries take initiatives that remove those barriers.

I also plan to also review how the IPU can better support in-country initiatives to not only increase the election of women and young people, but to sustain them through achieving their re-election while finding new ways of stimulating changes that may support more people with disabilities.



CLIMATE ACTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As an ex-Cabinet Minister of Environment and Natural Resources I am well versed in the global challenge that is climate change. Many of the initiatives across the world are just not going far enough to mitigate the effects.

The recent Cyclone Freddy in Malawi and Mozambique strengthens my resolve to make a difference on this agenda.

I support the IPU's recent **parliaments for the planet initiative** and I plan to champion its wider take up and implementation across the IPU membership.



Cyclone Freddy has been devastating on many Malawians and its impact will be felt in Malawi and Mozambique for a long time. On the Far left, Rt. Hon. Catherine Gotani Hara, MP, Speaker of Parliament of Malawi

WHY VOTE FOR ME?



The breadth, depth, and variety of my leadership and experience equip me with a unique ability to be a first-class champion of the IPU.

The IPU has achieved so much in its 134-year history, but in that period, the world has also experienced rapid changes and challenges such as; the COVID -19 pandemic and others before it, the deepening of existing and new geo-political conflicts, climate change, rising inequality, and the cost-of-living crisis.

All of these issues highlight the urgent need for a more visible leadership from a more expressive IPU, and the call for unifying and consensual methods of dealing with the challenges. These issues can only be effectively tackled by exceptional leaders with the drive, intellect, exceptional diplomatic skills, broad experience beyond their professional zones, foresight, determination, and a hunger for making a positive difference.

At the same time, leaders from the world's most 'resource-constrained' countries are yet to adequately contribute their vision and leadership style to most of the global political institutions and ecosystems.

However, leadership in these settings require higher levels of resilience, diplomacy, drive, creativity, charisma, hope, and courage. I am that leader, and I believe the IPU will be richer from my experience of successfully leading in such contexts.

Vote for Me!







Rt. Hon. Catherine Gotani Hara, MP (Malawi)

for

IPU PRESIDENT

SUMMARY

A visionary, people oriented, diplomatic and results oriented leader, she has spent the last 15 years on the political fore of one of the most dynamic and vibrant democracies on the African continent. She is also an active leader on the international parliamentary ecosystem.

SKILLS

1. Conflict resolution
2. Diplomatic relations
3. Negotiation
4. Strategy development
5. Lobbying & Championing
6. Implementation & delivery

EXPERIENCE

2019 to present

1. Speaker of the Malawi National Assembly
2. Member of Parliament Mzimba North East Constituency
3. Chairperson Parliamentary Service Committee
4. Chairperson Business Committee
5. Chairperson of Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees

2018 - Present

Deputy Secretary General of the oldest political party in Malawi, The Malawi Congress Party

2009 - 2014: Cabinet Portfolios

She has held several Cabinet portfolios in government, gaining insight into the IPU's strategic areas of operation and some global and local challenges such as; climate change, human rights, women's empowerment, public health and infrastructure development.

1. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
2. Minister of Health
3. Deputy Minister of Gender and Community Development
4. Deputy Minister of Transport and Public Works

2014 - 2019: Entrepreneurial Leadership

A dynamic and innovative Entrepreneur, I have also developed highly successful enterprises creating over 200 jobs, more than half of which were for some of the poorest women in Malawi in the following sectors

1. Petroleum and energy supply
2. Bakery and confectionery
3. Poultry farming
4. Maize production
5. Livestock breeding

AWARDS

1. Plan International Malawi Ambassador for promoting Girls Education
2. Women of Substance Award 2023 - Plan International
3. 100 most influential Women in Africa - Avance media
4. 100 most inspiring women in Malawi - Woman Wealth

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. First female Speaker of the Malawi Assembly
2. Championed further strengthening of parliamentary independence from the executive through an Act of parliament.
3. Establishment of the budget office of the parliament to strengthen the oversight role
4. Doubling of direct support to Parliament in 2 years
5. Establishment of paperless parliament
6. Progressing towards full digitisation of the house
7. Contributed to the early processes of the development of the Marriage Divorce and Family relations Act - modifying attitudes towards child marriages and protecting girls
8. Contributed to the development of the Child Care Protection and Justice Act

International Political Ecosystem Leadership to date

1. Session Chair IPU 145th Assembly
2. Session Chair IPU 146th Assembly
3. Current Chair Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Africa Region.
4. Host SADC Parliamentary forum 2022
5. Chair Southern African Development Cooperation Ministers of Health Committee 2013 -2014

Education

An alumna of the prestigious Kamuzu Academy Grammar School, she proceeded to the Chancellor College of the University of Malawi, where she earned a Bachelors Degree in Political Science and Public Administration. She later received further professional training in International Development in Brighton, United Kingdom.

