



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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## Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Opening session: Ninth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians

Hanoi, 15 September 2023

His Excellency, Mr. Vuong Dinh Hue, President of Viet Nam National Assembly,  
Honourable Mr. President of the IPU,  
Honourable Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament,  
Honourable President of the IPU Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians,  
Dear Mr. President of the Young Parliamentarians Group of Viet Nam National Assembly

Honourable young parliamentarians from across the world gathered here,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be with you here today for this important event. First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the National Assembly of Viet Nam for hosting the Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians.

I am delighted that this gathering is taking place in the beautiful country of Viet Nam, a country that, as His Excellency the Speaker of the National Assembly has pointed out, has made remarkable strides towards sustainability and technological advancement. It has also been a beacon in empowering youth when it comes to technology, as we will hear more about in the course of today and tomorrow. I am very heartened to see the country's unwavering commitment to combine these two dimensions: technology and youth empowerment, and in doing so, becoming a world leader on these fronts.

I also warmly applaud our hosts for their inclusive approach in involving young people and the young MPs in preparing this conference. It is truly commendable to see such a proactive approach in shaping the agenda and discussions.

Dear friends,

Standing here in this esteemed hall, I cannot help but be transported back to the 132nd IPU Assembly in 2015 you referred to Mr. Speaker of the National Assembly. Indeed, in this same hall, the IPU was celebrating the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals. It was an extraordinary milestone, and it enshrined our shared commitment to tackling the world's most pressing issues. The Hanoi Declaration that was adopted has been the anthem for the world's parliaments ever since to help bring these goals to reality. It reinforced our dedication to this cause and set the stage for collective action on an unprecedented scale. In a way, the SDGs have become part of the IPU's DNA.

But as we know, promises alone cannot bring about change. It is the actions we take that truly define us.

Since 2015, parliaments have in many ways risen to the challenge. Many MPs have become tireless advocates for sustainability within their countries, pushing for change, and making the global goals a central theme in policy discussions and debates. Legislative bodies around the world have enacted laws and reforms that directly align with the SDGs, addressing issues such as poverty, gender equality, environmental protection, and climate change.

Internationally, the IPU has facilitated vibrant inter-parliamentary cooperation across borders, sharing best practices and forging new partnerships. We have strengthened our ties through global parliamentary forums, understanding that the SDGs are a shared journey. We have provided platforms for dialogue and

provided resources and technical support to parliaments, such as through our SDG self-assessment toolkit.

In recent years, the IPU has formalized its belief in the power of technology for the promotion of the SDGs, namely when we adopted a new Strategy for 2022-2026. Our members placed innovation and digital transformation at the heart of our work. Resilient and innovative parliaments is now entrenched as one of our strategic objectives. As we embark on a journey towards our own institutional digital transformation, we are not only embracing change but also positioning ourselves to lead. Along the way, we want to help bring as many parliaments as possible with us.

To this end, the IPU launched the Centre for Innovation in Parliament in 2018 to bring parliaments together to support collaboration and share knowledge. We are also hosting forward-looking events, such as the Summit of the Committees of the Future being co-hosted by the Parliament of Uruguay later this month. Through these initiatives and more, we are consolidating good practices on how parliaments can take concrete steps to capitalize on this new digital era. This includes:

- Revising parliamentary procedures to enhance virtual participation by MPs so they can more easily carry out their work. This is especially important for young MPs with responsibility for caring for children.
- Developing new platforms for MPs and parliaments to connect with constituents to contribute to parliament;
- Forming or enhancing future-looking parliamentary bodies, like Committees of the Future to anticipate and address long-term trends or potential shocks. Of course, we encourage youth views to be fully included in such committees; and
- It also includes eliminating the possibility for the online space to be used as a breeding ground for gender-based violence. This is why we call for parliaments to put in place policies and procedures to prevent and address technology-facilitated harassment and violence against parliamentarians.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These are some of the ways that the IPU, and parliaments themselves can harness new technologies and innovation to help us achieve the SDGs. The main champions who can be at the vanguard of this transformation are you, young MPs. Let me run the risk of overstating a fact, after what the Speaker and the IPU President have earlier said: you, young parliamentarians and the young people you represent play a significant role. You can be a driving force for progress, injecting fresh perspectives, energy, and innovative solutions into parliamentary processes.

Sharing practices, amplifying your voices on the issues that concern you most, and better connecting you to youth, is what this Conference is all about.

However, this Conference is also a reminder that among the young, there is a portion that is too often doubly discriminated against: young women. Even here among the young MPs, we have not yet achieved gender equality in the proportion of women participants. Needless to say, the contribution of young women is needed not only in our parliaments, but in the wider global mission to accelerate the SDGs through digital transformation and innovation.

As young MPs, you can and must be harbingers of greater gender equality. The IPU is fully committed to this cause including through our partnerships with the Generation Equality Forum, UN Women, and many more. I am immensely proud to serve as the Chairman of the Global Board of International Gender Champions, a global network of leaders committed to promoting gender equality in their work. These platforms play a crucial role in advancing gender equality worldwide.

Dear colleagues,

In conclusion, let me reiterate, we face an urgent call to accelerate the SDGs, and you, as young people, play a central role in this journey. Your passion, enthusiasm, and dedication to accelerating the SDGs through digital transformation and innovation are a guiding light for us all.

The IPU is proud to align with you on this mission and stands ready to support your efforts.

Thank you!