



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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# Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

148th IPU Assembly and related meetings  
Forum of Young Parliamentarians

Geneva, 24 March 2024

Madam President of the IPU,  
Mr. President of the Board of Young Parliamentarians,  
Dear young parliamentarians,  
Mr. Felipe Paullier, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs,  
Distinguished guests,

I am very pleased to be joining you at this Forum once again.

Madam President, I know that youth participation is a cause as close to your heart as it is to mine. Your decade-long experience working with students at university, and your work through your NGO, demonstrates your exemplary dedication to young people.

I am sure young MPs have gained a strong voice for the IPU Youth Movement!

Dear friends,

I would like to start by echoing remarks made by Kofi Annan to young people when he said “Conflict is often caused by having unequal access to political power; ... A good way to avoid conflict is to encourage inclusive democracy, which gives everyone a say in decisions that affect their lives.”

The importance of youth participation for effective decision-making for peace and security has been reiterated time and time again at the IPU and the UN.

After UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth Peace and Security was adopted, the IPU explored the role of young MPs in inter-parliamentary diplomacy and peace-making. We found that when young MPs participate in peace processes, they have positive impacts linking youth with parliament, acting as mediators, and promoting dialogue in divided societies.

There is one glaring problem however: far too often, this potential cannot be harnessed because young people are simply left out.

We need to curb this under-representation by:

- **Having more** young MPs, for example through youth quotas and lowering the age to be eligible for office;
- **Engaging** youth more and better into the work of parliament, including through hearings, committees, and caucusing; and
- **Supporting** young MPs with skills, tools, and leadership roles to influence decisions.

I am pleased that the IPU has been walking the talk with these actions to make sure youth are not just participating, but leading and contributing first-hand to decisions. For example,

We set incentives for member parliaments to include at least one young MP in their delegations to IPU assemblies. This both ensures a critical mass of young MPs at Assemblies as well as opens the door for more young MPs to be empowered with the IPU experience. I am proud to say that we now regularly

surpass the Forum target of 25% of delegates being young MPs. I hope we can make our Assemblies even younger in the years to come.

And, we work with young MPs both globally and nationally to help build skills in leadership, communications, and more. We strive to help young MPs be more influential and impactful in their work. And we hope to work with more parliaments to this end so we can come to your capitals and help make a difference.

You can count on the IPU to continue to support youth and young MPs to play leadership roles in politics, including in peace and security. Whether it be during this Assembly, or in a national project, we look forward to continuing to work with you so that you are firmly leading at the decision-making table.

Thank you.