



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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# Speaking notes for Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

## Women Political Leaders Representation Matters Reception

New York, 22 September 2024

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed colleagues, fellow patrons and friends,

It is a pleasure and an honor to be here with you today as we gather at this important time of the year. I want to express my gratitude to WPL for the invitation to be a patron of this reception, and to share a few reflections on why representation matters—now more than ever.

At the core of any functioning democracy lies a simple truth: representation is power. And when half of the population is systematically underrepresented, we undermine the legitimacy of our institutions and the very foundations of democracy itself.

The absence of women's voices in decision-making processes is not only a disservice to women, but a disservice to society as a whole.

Parity in politics and in parliaments is not merely an aspirational goal—it is essential to the creation of a more inclusive, just, and prosperous world. It is only when women are equally represented, that our institutions gain the trust and confidence of the people. They become more responsive, more accountable, and more reflective of the diverse needs and perspectives of the communities they serve. They are fit-for-purpose.

To ensure more women in all their diversity accede and remain in power, we need strong safeguards that leave no room for gender-based violence.

We need institutions that are gender-sensitive, with both the mandate and capacity to advance gender equality.

We need to draw from the experiences of those countries that have gender parity today, because change won't happen alone.

And most importantly, we must be steadfast in securing the gains we have made, and push back against any pushback on gender equality, especially in times that explore new grounds such as Artificial Intelligence.

It is vital that we come together and build strong synergies across all sectors to protect and advance women's rights and leadership.

Let us strive for nothing less than full gender parity in politics. This is not just a matter of fairness—it is a matter of global security, socioeconomic wellbeing, and, ultimately, our shared future.

Thank you.