



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

149th Assembly and related meetings
Forum of Young Parliamentarians - Opening

Geneva, 14 October 2024

Madam President of the IPU,
Mr. President of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians,
Dear young parliamentarians,
Distinguished guests,

For my part as well, I would like to congratulate the Forum of Young Parliamentarians on its 10th anniversary!

Congratulations to each of you for being part of this remarkable platform!

I take great pride in having witnessed the birth of this Forum and having supported its growth since then to become a robust force that amplifies the voices of young parliamentarians and ensures that youth perspectives are embedded into the fabric of parliamentary discourse.

The impact of the Forum over the last ten years has been profound. It has led to tangible changes within the IPU itself, opening up spaces and opportunities for youth leadership, including in the Executive Committee and the Standing Committees.

We have reached and surpassed the target of having a minimum of 25% of young MPs participating in IPU Assemblies.

The Forum is doing a great job in mainstreaming youth perspectives at our Assemblies. By ensuring that youth needs, interests and perspectives are taken into account, you have enriched our discussions and broadened our understanding of global issues and related solutions.

At this 149th Assembly, as we discuss how to harness science, technology and innovation for a more peaceful and sustainable future — here again, the role of youth cannot be overstated. Young people are at the forefront of technological revolutions and evolutions and are equipped with the creativity and adaptability needed to tackle the related challenges.

As the leaders of today, you are the living proof that youth are not just the leaders of tomorrow.

The Forum's initiative to set the global research agenda on youth participation in parliament is another significant achievement. The unique data generated from this research has positioned the IPU as custodians of target 16.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals on responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making.

As we look to the next decade, I urge you to build upon the solid foundation we have established together.

- Let's continue to break down the socio-economic, legislative and financial barriers that prevent young people from engaging fully in political processes.
- Let's continue to open up parliaments to the participation and leadership of young men and women and to the ideas, perspectives and aspirations of young people everywhere.

- Let's encourage transformative change by adopting and implementing quotas to reach the targets of youth participation that this Forum set out as a benchmark for all parliaments, and
- Let's eliminate age discrimination in the law by aligning the age of eligibility for office with the voting age; the motto being that if you are not too young to vote, you are not too young to run!

As we look to the next decade, I want to reiterate my unwavering support to you on this important journey. Together, let's make the next decade even more transformative for youth and parliaments!

Thank you.