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## Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Regional Parliamentary Summit: “Charting the path to inclusive and resilient agrifood systems  
in the Europe and Centra Asia region”

22 October 2024

Madam Speaker,  
Honourable Members of Parliament,  
FAO Representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address you at the opening of this important Regional Parliamentary Summit. Let me begin by extending my sincere thanks to the FAO and the Albanian Parliament for organizing this event and providing me the opportunity to speak before you today.

The issue of food insecurity is one of the most pressing challenges of our time. Without swift and coordinated action, current levels of food insecurity will only deepen. We are all witnessing the devastating impacts of conflicts, climate shocks and economic challenges, which disproportionately affect the most vulnerable and threaten to reverse decades of hard-won progress.

At the IPU, we are committed to providing parliaments with a platform to engage in meaningful dialogue and collaboration on these critical issues. Through our work, it has become clear that there is an urgent need to scale up strategic investment in long-term resilience and to support the transformation to sustainable agrifood systems. These are systems that not only improve resource efficiency but also enhance food security and nutrition for all.

Parliamentarians play, and must play, a pivotal role in this transformation. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that policies are grounded in evidence and equity, because one of the great injustices of our time is that a healthy diet remains a luxury for too many. The issue is not merely the availability of food. Rather, the core problems lie within the organization of food systems and supply chains. Political disruption, conflict and climate change all place food production at risk.

To support parliaments in addressing these challenges, the IPU and FAO have developed a handbook for parliamentarians on food systems. It offers concrete actions that can be taken, such as reviewing existing legislation, setting legislative benchmarks and developing comprehensive legal frameworks to strengthen food systems and improve nutrition. It also underscores the importance of connecting Parliamentary committees that oversee health, nutrition, agriculture and food systems, while ensuring that budgets are aligned with policies to support these efforts.

Of course, when making these decisions, parliaments must weigh trade-offs and opportunity costs carefully. As the representative bodies of our societies, parliaments are uniquely positioned to foster national dialogue on food and nutrition priorities. The IPU will continue to work closely with FAO and other partners to mobilize the political will necessary to keep food security and nutrition high on parliamentary agendas.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude, I would like to say a few words about the strong partnership between the Albanian Parliament and the IPU. This partnership dates back to 1955, when Albania became a Member of the

IPU. Since then, the Albanian Parliament has consistently demonstrated its commitment to our shared goals, particularly by placing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals high on its political agenda.

Our collaboration around sustainable development began in earnest in 2020, with joint activities aimed at helping parliamentarians and staff integrate the SDGs into their legislative and budgetary processes. Last year, a study tour to Geneva provided Albanian parliamentarians with the chance to engage with key IPU partners, such as UNECE and UNDP. The Albanian Parliament has shown a commendable willingness to collaborate, learn and exchange ideas with other parliaments and stakeholders, as demonstrated by this very event.

Given the progress achieved and the Parliament's ongoing commitment to the SDGs, we are eager to take our collaboration to new heights. The IPU stands ready to provide further guidance, expertise and technical assistance to ensure the comprehensive and coherent implementation of the SDGs.

In the coming months, the IPU will launch a toolkit designed to help parliaments conduct legislative scrutiny through an SDG lens. We encourage the Albanian Parliament, along with others, to make full use of this tool to advance their work on agrifood systems, ensuring that legislation is fully aligned with the SDGs and contributes to a sustainable transformation.

We are excited about the opportunities ahead and look forward to deepening our collaboration with the Albanian Parliament and our FAO partners.

I wish you a productive and successful meeting.