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

Parliamentarians for Economic Transitions for the Care, Conservation, and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity Forum

Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity

23 October 2024

Honourable Minister,  
Speakers of Parliament,  
Parliamentarians,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to address you today as you gather in Colombia for this incredibly important parliamentary forum that is being organized at the Sixteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The IPU recognizes how timely this forum is, and is proud to support the organization of this event.

Biodiversity is the web of life that sustains us all. It provides us with fresh water, clean air and fertile soil. It is critical for our well-being. Yet human activity and unsustainable economic practices are causing plant and animal species to disappear at faster rates than ever before. Recent science paints a grim picture: over 1 million species are at risk of extinction, many within decades. As we know, climate change is only worsening the biodiversity crisis. Unless decisive action is taken now, our planet's ecosystems will be pushed to the brink.

As representatives of the people, parliamentarians hold an immense responsibility to not only ensure the well-being of their constituents, but also the ecosystems they rely upon. Without addressing biodiversity loss, our health, food security and economies are at risk of peril.

Parliamentarians are key to translating international agreements on biodiversity into national action. In this regard, parliamentarians have a critical role to play in ensuring that the ambitious targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework are backed up by strong national laws. I encourage you to use your powers to legislate for greater protection of natural resources and for more sustainable land use practices.

You have the opportunity to support policies that drive economic transitions which bring positive benefits to nature, rather than destroy it. You can champion innovative financing mechanisms that prioritize biodiversity while also promoting sustainable economic development and creating green jobs.

At the international level, the IPU is committed to strengthening global cooperation on biodiversity. We recognize that biodiversity loss knows no borders. The degradation of ecosystems in one region can have cascading effects across the globe. This is why inter-parliamentary collaboration is essential to truly tackle this problem and we actively support it with our 180 Members.

Addressing critical issues that threaten our nature, our environment and our planet are at the heart of the IPU's work. The IPU supports parliaments who want to take action to solve these pressing issues that can otherwise reverse years of sustainable development gains if unaddressed. The IPU provides national and regional capacity-building on climate change and other environmental issues, convenes

parliaments in regular dialogues on these topics, and promotes the role of parliaments in global high-level fora, including the annual climate COP meetings.

Through partnerships, knowledge-sharing, and coordinated action, we can confront the biodiversity crisis with the urgency it demands. The IPU stands ready, more than ever, to ensure parliaments are fully equipped with the tools they need to protect nature and halt the loss of biodiversity before it is too late.

At the upcoming climate COP in Baku, the annual Parliamentary Meeting will be organized on 16-17 November. The event's programme features a session in which biodiversity will be explicitly addressed. I encourage you to attend the Parliamentary Meeting at COP29 to further build on the important dialogue that is taking place in this forum.

Future generations deserve a biodiverse world. Every action taken to protect nature today brings us one step closer to securing a world that remains rich in biodiversity for our children. The discussions taking place in this Forum will be critical for charting the way forward for stronger parliamentary action on biodiversity, including by supporting economic policies that place nature at the forefront.

I sincerely look forward to the outcomes of your deliberations. I am confident they will lead us on a path to a more sustainable world in which biodiversity thrives. Thank you.