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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Self-assessment: Gender-sensitivity of the National Assembly of Ecuador
Two-day workshop organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the National
Assembly of Ecuador

6 March 2025

Madam Speaker,
Honourable members of parliament,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this important self-assessment exercise on gender-sensitivity in the National Assembly of Ecuador. I extend my sincere appreciation to the National Assembly of Ecuador for their commitment to this important initiative.

This gathering comes at a pivotal moment for Ecuador. With the just-concluded elections, we can expect an even higher percentage of women parliamentarians in the next legislature. This achievement reflects a deep commitment to ensuring the meaningful participation of women in decision-making processes.

Yet, as we celebrate these gains, we must acknowledge that progress is not always linear. We are witnessing growing polarization across the world and gender-based violence remains a persistent challenge. Also regrettably, there is a backlash against gender equality and women's rights. In some places, we see regression instead of progress. So, no progress can ever be taken for granted. As the world organization of national parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union is committed to strengthening the role of parliaments across the world. For decades we have affirmed that the equal participation of women and men in the conduct of affairs in a country is a precondition for genuine democracy. And this begins with parliament.

Now, why is this gender self-assessment exercise crucial for parliaments and their members?

A self-assessment is a unique opportunity for parliaments to identify good practices, gaps and lessons learned. This internal reflection exercise aims to empower parliaments in assessing whether their work environment and institutional culture are gender-sensitive, and the extent to which gender equality principles are fully known inside parliament and are integrated into parliamentary processes, procedures and structures.

The intention of a self-assessment is not to rank parliaments, but rather to help them identify their strengths and weaknesses so as to determine priorities for reforming and further strengthening the institution.

This initiative builds on the *Plan of action for gender-sensitive parliaments* adopted unanimously at the 127th IPU Assembly in 2012 and reaffirmed in the Kigali Declaration at our 145th Assembly in 2022. These commitments remind us that real change requires continuous effort, self-reflection, and institutional reform.

The self-assessment exercise is also a fitting way to celebrate International Women's Day, recognizing the progress made while reaffirming our commitment to gender equality. Ecuador is a multicultural and diverse country, and I am pleased to see that this self-assessment embraces diversity and inclusion as key action areas. A truly gender-sensitive parliament must reflect the rich plurality of the society it represents.

I also commend the efforts of the National Assembly in conducting surveys and ensuring broad participation of both parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. Their insights and experiences are

invaluable in shaping a more gender-responsive institution. Their active engagement reflects a strong commitment to meaningful change.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my hope that during these two days you will identify priorities to be able to develop an action plan and monitor its implementation.

By going through this self-assessment exercise, the National Assembly of Ecuador will join others who have carried out similar assessments and inspire yet more parliaments to follow suit. More importantly, your Parliament will serve as a model to other institutions in Ecuador.

The conclusions and recommendations from your discussions will constitute a valuable legacy and a roadmap to the upcoming legislature.

I look forward to receiving about these conclusions and to having you showcase the self-assessment at the upcoming IPU Assembly in April 2025. You can count on IPU's support to implement the action plan that will result from these two days of work.

I wish you a productive and insightful workshop.

Thank you.