



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Speech by Martin Chungong IPU Secretary General

Fourth Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Parliamentary Network

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I would like to begin by echoing President Ackson's gratitude for inviting us to the fourth conference of the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network. These are starting to become something of a tradition, and in the busy lead-up to each Spring assembly, we especially look forward to this gathering.

On the 70th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, it is a true credit to the Non-Aligned Movement that it remains as relevant today as it did almost three quarters of a century ago. Of particular note, this occasion marks the fourth time that Parliamentary representatives of the movement come together to put pen to paper and add their voice to the single most important parliamentary gathering of the calendar. The declarations that have resulted from the past four meetings of the NAM Parliamentary Network – including the inaugural meeting in Madrid in 2021 and the First conference in Baku in 2022 – have contributed to the rich and diverse tapestry of outcomes that continue to make the IPU Assemblies a crucial forum for addressing the world's pressing challenges, as well as further underscoring the unique role that parliamentarians play in this regard.

The continued relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement is reflected in a positive flurry of Memorandums of Understanding signed by the Parliamentary Network in recent years, including with the IPU itself, but also with longstanding observers of the IPU, most recently the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States, the International Conference of Asian Political Parties, and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organizations.

At a time when the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is under serious threat, the international community can ill afford an increasingly isolationist world order. Dialogue, of the type happening just a few hundred metres away over the next three days, continues to be our most important tool for ensuring a fair, peaceful and sustainable future for our children. A return to great power struggle and geopolitics threatens to undermine our common efforts and benefits the few, not the many. I would in fact question the notion that it benefits anyone at all, as isolationism and working in silos go hand in hand with short-termism, rather than the sort of systemic, forward-thinking politics the pressing issues of our time command.

It is in this context that the NAM Parliamentary Network's present gathering, and the continued expansion of its cooperation with likeminded regional parliamentary organizations, is an integral piece of the puzzle of continued international cooperation. The world's big players may increasingly be pulling in different directions, but the convening power of the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network will only grow in importance as we look to disarm an increasingly securitized global order, as well as remind States of their obligations, commitments and common interest in fending off the biggest challenges to the mutual fulfilment of a prosperous world. These include the worst effects of climate change, striving towards gender equality, ensuring peace and security for all, placing sustainability at the heart of our development, safeguarding human rights, promoting youth participation in politics, and aspiring to fully democratic parliaments that remain accountable to their constituents.

In a year during which the IPU's priority theme is gender equality, the stalling of progress in female political participation for the second year running – and following arguably the most momentous year of elections in modern history – serves as a stark reminder that we cannot take our successes for granted or assume that they will gain enough momentum to self-sustain. Hard-won victories are at risk of unravelling, and it is incumbent upon every parliamentarian, every parliament, and every parliamentary network to remain cognizant of this threat and cooperate to prevent the backsliding of a shared vision of a brighter future for all.

I look forward to reading the NAM Parliamentary Network's 2025 declaration and wish you all a success over the coming days commensurate with the urgency of the topics discussed.

Thank you.