



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Exhibition on Accessibility for All: Building an Inclusive Future

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Excellencies,
Distinguished Hosts,
Colleagues and Friends,

It is a great pleasure to join you today for the opening of this important exhibition, *“Accessibility for All: Building an Inclusive Future.”* I thank the Permanent Mission of China and the United Nations Office at Geneva for bringing us together to spotlight this essential issue.

When we speak of accessibility, we are not only referring to ramps, signs, or software. We are talking about something much deeper—the right to participate, the dignity of being included, and the obligation to ensure that no one is left behind.

This principle has become increasingly clear to me during my time at the Inter-Parliamentary Union, where I have met with parliaments and citizens across the world.

One lesson stands out clearly: Democracy cannot thrive when people are excluded. Democracy is only as strong as those it includes.

That is why inclusion must not be an afterthought; it must be a foundational design principle. At every step, we must ask: Who benefits? Who is being left behind? This includes both in the physical world and in digital spaces. AI and emerging technologies provide the opportunity to enhance inclusion, if this is the direction we choose to take. And we must.

This exhibition reflects the spirit of innovation grounded in human values, and it reminds us that we already have the tools—and the creativity—to build inclusive societies. As we move forward, let us remember that technology must serve people, not the other way around.

In this context, I welcome resolution 57/16 of the Human Rights Council, which highlights accessibility as a fundamental human right and calls for concrete steps to ensure full inclusion. It serves as a timely reminder that progress requires not only ideas, but action — and shared responsibility.

So let this exhibition be a showcase of possibilities, and also a call to action to remove the physical, digital, and attitudinal barriers that still hold too many people back.

Together, as an international community, we can and must make accessibility a living reality in people's everyday lives.

Thank you.