



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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T +41 22 919 41 50
F +41 22 919 41 60
E postbox@ipu.org
www.ipu.org

Chemin du Pommier 5
Case postale 330
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland

Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

IGC Vienna Champions Meeting

10 July 2025

Dear fellow Champions,
Dear guests,
Dear friends,

Let me begin by extending warm greetings to our hosts, to my fellow Champions and key supporters of IGC in Vienna. Your leadership has shaped and strengthened this network in vital ways, and I am truly grateful for your continued commitment.

Today, we celebrate a decade of committed leadership through the IGC: ten years of turning promises into concrete, transformative action. The IPU has been a proud, long-term supporter of this initiative, which I have the honour to serve as Chair.

I also want to express our appreciation to all Vienna-based Champions who submitted videos as part of our 10th anniversary celebration, held just recently in Geneva on July 3. It was a valuable and well-attended moment of shared reflection and renewed commitment.

Our celebration centred the commitments each Champion has made. It called for continued leadership from each of us as we navigate times when our sustained advocacy for gender equality in the global multilateral system is more necessary than ever. As we mark 10 years of collective commitment to gender equality, we must look ahead and ask ourselves: what is the role of the IGC in the years to come?

I am pleased to share that the IGC Secretariat is currently developing a strategic framework to guide the next phase of its impact. This Lighthouse Strategy will steer our work for the next five years.

And indeed, in times of pressing old and new global challenges, a lighthouse becomes essential. It guides us toward inclusive, evidence-based policies. It warns of the dangers of complacency, regression, and backlash. And it welcomes new actors—such as those from the private sector—into a shared mission for equality.

As Vienna-based Champions, I believe this theme will resonate deeply. Vienna has long served as a lighthouse for multilateralism, technical expertise, and principled, value-based leadership. In a world increasingly challenged by division, polarization, and regressive rhetoric, multilateral Vienna remains anchored in these core values.

But, as we emphasized during our anniversary in Geneva, a lighthouse needs lighthouse keepers. Now is not the time to dim our commitment to gender equality, but rather to stand firm in our values and illuminate a clear path forward.

This work requires dedicated resources and strong local leadership. I highly commend the work of the Vienna Steering Committee in continuing to set the Hub's strategic trajectory—not only to meet this moment, but also to ensure the Hub's sustainability. At the same time, I warmly invite all of you to mobilize your partnerships and networks in support of this vital mission.

Through the IPU's presence in Vienna, led by Amb. Brigitte Brenner, we can promote cross-hub collaboration as we develop our lighthouse strategy. I thank her for supporting the Vienna hub and building bridges as much as possible. These connections are essential as we work to strengthen the IGC in advancing our shared priorities.

And so, as we celebrate together today, I invite each of you to recommit to leading by example—and to ensuring that gender equality becomes a foundation, not an afterthought, of every policy and every process.

Thank you.