



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

11th Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians – Opening ceremony

Lima, 11 September 2025

Madam President of the Republic of Peru,
Mr. President of the Congress of the Republic of Peru,
Madam Vice-President of the IPU,
Madam President of the IPU Bureau of Young Parliamentarians,

Excellencies,
Parliamentarians,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be with you today for the Eleventh IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians. I would like to start by heartfully thanking the Congress of the Republic of Peru for hosting this Conference here in the beautiful city of Lima.

I also wish to praise the vision and leadership of so many here in the Congress that made this Conference happen. Madam President of the Republic of Peru; Mr. President of the Congress; Congressman Mr. Wilson Soto, Member of the IPU Bureau of Young Parliamentarians; and Congresswoman Madam Maricarmen Alva, Vice-President of the IPU Executive Committee. Thank you for your commitment to youth, to women, and to the IPU.

Today's Conference represents far more than a gathering of young political leaders. It is a symbol of the IPU's institutional commitment to transforming the landscape of democracy through intergenerational collaboration, gender equality and youth empowerment.

We meet on an auspicious day, the Congress of Peru's anniversary. We also meet just a few days before the International Day of Democracy, on 15 September. For over 135 years, the IPU has served as the global organization of national parliaments, working to strengthen democracy worldwide. Throughout this history, we have learned that the health of our democracies is linked to the degree they reflect and represent the full diversity of the populations they serve.

Whether we are talking about women, youth, or groups in marginalized or vulnerable situations – when people are underrepresented in our institutions, democracy itself is diminished.

As many of you know, advancing gender equality is the IPU's priority theme in 2025. As we mark the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, this year, we are also embedding and mainstreaming gender equality across an array of our initiatives, including the Advancing gender equality, action by action campaign. This campaign follows the remarkable success of the I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament! campaign.

As someone who has always supported and been closely involved with the youth movement at the IPU throughout my career, my conviction is that, when young people are given an opportunity, they take it and make the most of it. You, young MPs, have been incubators for innovation that has enriched the wider IPU and made us more impactful.

But we still have a lot of work to do. As we gather here today, we must confront the realities that define our challenge. Women comprise only 27% of parliamentarians globally and progress has been stalling. These figures represent silenced voices and democratic deficits that impoverish our societies. After decades of progress, we are now fighting against rollbacks on hard-won gains for women's and girls' rights, their freedoms and empowerment.

The challenges are well known: they range from legal and systemic barriers, to gender-based violence and harmful social norms fuelled by anti-rights movements.

To address this, we need an 'all hands on deck' approach.

One of the best ways we can confront these challenges and transform norms is through advocacy by men in the gender equality fight.

I stand before you today not only as Secretary General of the IPU, but as a proud Gender Champion. As Chair of the International Gender Champions Global Board, I have worked for several years to advance a personal, and institutional commitment to gender equality.

Being a Gender Champion means recognizing that equality requires the active engagement of male and female leaders across all sectors and at all levels. I am very happy to see so many male parliamentarians here at this Conference committed to this cause. By working shoulder to shoulder with women, we can not only achieve more results, but also be role models for others, and help to grow a culture of equality.

Another component of the 'all hands on deck' approach is the importance of partnerships. Our movement is stronger when we are working together with others in our ecosystem.

The inclusive dialogue that brings us together here in Lima, between young parliamentarians, more senior MPs, international partners, and youth and gender leaders, creates ideal conditions for collaboration.

I am pleased that the space for such multi-stakeholder dialogue is growing at the IPU with the opportunity provided by the Women and Youth Democratic Engagement – or WYDE – initiative supported by the European Union and UN Women. Through such partnerships, I am convinced that we can meet the challenges facing the gender equality and youth empowerment agendas head on, and we can achieve real progress that is felt in the daily lives of people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I near the end of my term as Secretary General of the IPU next year, I am led to reflect that working with you, dear young MPs, has always given me hope for the future.

With your engagement, I know that we will not let 2025 be remembered for its challenges, but as the year when we made a decisive shift towards the implementation of gender equality commitments.

As we begin these two days of dialogue, deliberation, and partnership-building, I want to emphasize the IPU's commitment to supporting the outcomes of your work together. The IPU will always be a place where young MPs can make their mark – where you can push for change, challenge the status quo, and achieve results.

I wish you all a very spirited and productive Conference.

Thank you.