



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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

Induction seminar on women's, children's and adolescents' health, Malawi

29 November 2025

Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Distinguished Partners and Guests,

Good morning. It is a pleasure to address you at the beginning of this important workshop on women's, children's and adolescents' health. Let me begin by thanking the National Assembly of Malawi for its leadership in recognizing the importance of this agenda, and for our ongoing collaboration in strengthening the capacities of parliamentarians for health budgeting and legislation. I would also like to thank our longstanding partners of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, who are playing a vital role in supporting this process.

Your presence sends a strong message: that the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents is not a marginal issue—it is the foundation of a healthy society, a thriving economy, and a prosperous future.

When girls grow up healthy, they become women who can participate fully in their communities and economies. When women are healthy, they can raise healthy children who learn, who complete their education, and who, in turn, contribute to national development. This is a virtuous cycle, and it begins with deliberate political choices.

But we also know that challenges remain. Policies and laws, while essential, are not enough on their own. Deeply rooted gender norms and traditions still limit opportunities for women and girls. The intergenerational cycle of poverty and poor health continues to weigh heavily on individuals and communities. And all of this is being intensified by climate change and other crises that place additional pressures on already vulnerable populations.

Breaking these cycles requires resolve, collaboration, and above all, political will. That is why this workshop is so important. We hope it marks the beginning of a broader, sustained parliamentary engagement. I am also very glad to see local stakeholders here today. Your expertise, your lived experiences, and your voices are indispensable. It is only by working together—Parliament, government, civil society, and communities—that real progress can be made.

In concluding, I reaffirm the IPU's readiness to continue supporting the National Assembly of Malawi in this vital effort. Together, we can craft sound, evidence-based policies that safeguard health and build a stronger future for every woman, every child, and every adolescent.

I wish you fruitful discussions. Thank you.