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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Closing session: SUN Civil Society Network Strategy 4.0 launch webinar

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Thank you for the opportunity to address you at the conclusion of this important and timely webinar. As a member of the SUN Lead Group and as Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the global organization of national parliaments, I have long been a strong advocate for ensuring that SUN's strategy and actions are firmly grounded in local realities. It is at the local level that the greatest impact can—and must—be made, particularly for those most affected by malnutrition in all its forms.

At the IPU, our work pays particular attention to people in vulnerable and marginalized situations. From a parliamentary perspective, effective mechanisms for public engagement and consultation are essential. They enable parliamentarians to gather data, insights, and contextual knowledge that are critical for identifying inequalities and understanding how laws and policies play out in real life. In this regard, civil society organizations are indispensable partners. They provide vital data and community-sourced evidence that bring visibility to the daily realities of people who are too often left unheard.

Beyond numbers and indicators, civil society organizations help convey lived experiences that frequently remain hidden behind statistics. They humanize policy debates and help parliamentarians better understand the real-world consequences of legislative and budgetary choices. This collaboration is fundamental to fostering a culture of evidence-based policymaking—one in which data is not only collected but actively used by parliamentarians to inform decisions and continuously improve outcomes for populations facing vulnerability and exclusion.

For these partnerships to be truly effective, however, parliamentarians themselves must be empowered. They need sustained support and targeted training to build partnerships, interpret evidence, and engage with communities in respectful, inclusive, and meaningful ways. Equally important, they must operate within strong parliamentary institutions that place people at the centre of decision-making and provide the necessary frameworks for the full and effective use of parliamentary powers, including legislation, oversight, and budgeting.

One of the key challenges parliamentarians face today is ensuring that nutrition remains a political priority amid increasingly complex and interconnected crises. Climate change, conflicts, economic shocks, and rising food prices are reshaping food systems and deepening inequalities. Addressing malnutrition therefore requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that recognizes these linkages. The IPU's work has shown the value of providing platforms for parliamentarians and other stakeholders to share experiences, lessons learned, and effective strategies for advancing nutrition across sectors.

In this context, the SUN Civil Society Network plays a particularly important role. Its engagement, expertise, and proximity to communities are essential to the successful implementation of the SUN strategy. I very much hope that the exchanges we have seen today will continue and deepen throughout the implementation phase, strengthening collaboration and collective action. Together, we can ensure that commitments translate into concrete, people-centred results.