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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Fifth Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Parliamentary Network

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Your Excellency, Madam Speaker Gafarova,
Honourable Members of the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network,

It is a pleasure to address this Conference one final time as IPU Secretary General. I do so at a watershed moment for the NAM Parliamentary Network, and for the parliamentary community more generally, both of which find themselves at a crossroads. A number of you hail from countries that will have been directly impacted by recent events in the Middle East. Regardless of our proximity to the current hostilities, however, I believe we all share a deep concern for the impact of regional conflict on broader peace and security.

I would like to thank Speaker Gafarova for her ongoing leadership and role in the important collaboration between our two institutions, and for so deftly representing parliamentarianism within one of the world's largest groupings of countries. Governments derive their legitimacy from parliaments, and the creation of the NAM Parliamentary Network was yet another affirmation of the central role parliaments have to play in global politics. Two years ago, the NAM Parliamentary Network and the IPU signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at enhancing ties and promoting cooperation through parliamentary diplomacy on issues of common concern. It is a measure of both the success and the value of such bilateral cooperation agreements that this list of issues ripe for collaboration continues to grow. Working for the betterment of our societies, and for ensuring the prosperity of future generations, is an ongoing challenge, and one that can only be achieved by favouring and strengthening such close ties.

The body of work of the NAM Parliamentary Network belies its youthful age: in seven short years, it has become an influential actor in global affairs. This stems both from its broad influence, representing almost two-thirds of the world's countries, but also its clear prioritization of matters central to a peaceful and thriving future. The themes of the five Conferences held to date are testament to this, beginning with a review of the role parliaments can play in promoting global peace and sustainable development, and culminating in today's theme of climate-resilient urbanization. At a time when the UN – the author and long-standing steward of the SDGs – is under pressure and in need of all the help it can get, leveraging and developing ecosystems, in the image of our work together, has taken on added value. This has been central to the IPU's 2021-2026 Strategy and will be reinforced in the next strategic cycle.

On the matter of the SDGs, in pursuit of SDG 13, the IPU strives to equip parliaments with the tools and knowledge for more effective and comprehensive responses to the climate crisis. We assist parliaments by fostering dialogue and strengthening capacity on climate action, which includes targeted work aimed at combating air pollution and reducing highly polluting methane emissions. The topic of today's gathering is further proof of the ways in which climate change permeates through our work.

The IPU also seeks to promote the voice of parliaments in high-level international conferences on urban development. In collaboration with UN-Habitat, the IPU is supporting the organization of a parliamentary meeting at the upcoming World Urban Forum in Baku in May, to elevate parliamentary perspectives and leadership on urban climate resilience, and I hope to see many of you there.

The mere fact you are present today and attending the Assembly despite events not far from here, is testament to the role parliamentary diplomacy can and must play in peace-building and international relations writ large. I trust that today and over the coming days, you will debate and converse with your parliamentary peers with dignity, respect and no small degree of passion on matters that unite you as well as on those on which you may disagree. As I alluded to earlier, this is my last Assembly and final

NAM PN Conference before I retire, after 12 years as IPU Secretary General and over three decades serving national parliaments. While the Memorandum of Understanding between the NAM PN and the IPU has my signature on it, cooperation will carry on in earnest under my successor, and the IPU will continue to explore avenues for mutual assistance, benefit and synergies in our respective work. I may no longer be on the front line of these developments come July, but I nevertheless look forward to seeing the relationship between our two organizations flourish.

Thank you.