



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

WHA79 Global Parliamentary Forum
Closing session: From discussion to implementation—this now moves to your
parliaments

Geneva, 20 May 2026

Dear Mr. Director-General – Dear Dr. Tedros,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we conclude this Global Parliamentary Forum, I want to sincerely thank all of you not only for your participation, but for the seriousness and forward-looking spirit of today's discussions.

Throughout this Forum, one message has come through with great clarity: global health agreements achieve their true value only when they are translated into action at country level. The work ahead is no longer only about negotiation or aspiration. It is about implementation. And implementation begins in parliaments.

The adoption of the Pandemic Agreement was an important achievement. It showed that even in a divided and uncertain world, countries are still capable of working together when the stakes are high enough. Yet we also recognize that important steps remain ahead, including the finalization of the Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS) Annex and the processes that will enable signature and ratification.

When that moment arrives, the responsibility will shift decisively from international negotiations to national responsibility. This is where parliamentary leadership becomes essential.

Today's discussions showed that many countries are already moving forward with innovative approaches, whether through stronger public health laws, improved oversight mechanisms, strategic health taxes or investments in resilient and equitable health systems.

The value of this Forum lies not only in sharing these experiences, but in building a growing community of parliamentary leadership that can continue learning from one another beyond this meeting.

One lesson from recent years is undeniable: health security and universal health coverage cannot be achieved through emergency responses alone. They require sustained political commitment and predictable financing. Preparedness cannot be built only during crises and forgotten afterward. It must become part of national governance and long-term development planning.

This is especially important at a time when many countries are under economic pressures, face tight budgets and competing national priorities. In that context, parliamentary leadership becomes even more important. The decisions made in national assemblies and budget committees will determine whether countries can sustain investments in health care, research, and essential health services.

But beyond systems and financing, today's discussions also reminded us of a broader truth: health is fundamentally about people. It is about protecting lives, preserving dignity, reducing inequalities, and building trust between institutions and communities.

The Pandemic Agreement is not only about preparing for future emergencies. It is also an opportunity to rebuild confidence in international cooperation and to show that multilateralism can deliver real results for people everywhere.

So as this Forum closes, what matters is simple: the discussion doesn't end here, it now moves into action.

As you do this, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the World Health Organization remain committed partners in supporting parliamentary engagement, technical assistance and peer learning.

Let us leave this Forum with a simple commitment: to learn from the past, to strengthen our systems, and to make sure that health as a human right is reflected not in words alone, but in real laws, budgets and policies that improve people's lives.

Thank you for your leadership, your engagement, and your commitment to advancing global health.

Thank you.