



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Ms. Mourine Osoru

**President of the Board of the IPU Forum of Young
Parliamentarians**

Opening remarks

**5th Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians
14-15 December- Baku, Azerbaijan**

Dear Chairman of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan,

Dear fellow parliamentarians,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here today and to welcome you all to the 5th IPU's Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians.

Firstly, I want to thank every one of you for being here today and for your commitment to improving the lives and the future of young people around the world. I would like to also thank the Parliament of Azerbaijan for doing such an excellent job hosting this event, and for their warm welcome and hospitality.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Empowering young people and giving them a voice is one of the most pressing challenges of our times. The implication and scale of this challenge are not always fully understood. All of us are here today because we acknowledge the magnitude of the challenge and are aware of the great importance of promoting youth participation in politics.

Increasing the participation of young people in the political process will have a significant impact on today's political mechanisms and policy content. The greater the energy brought to our socioeconomic systems by young people, the brighter the visions to ensure sustainability for our future, as we, as young people understand the world from a long-term perspective.

It is our responsibility, as young parliamentarians, to make a difference. We are already in positions of influence and power and are uniquely placed to become real agents of change. By working together we draw strength and inspiration from one another; we exchange experiences and ensure our voice is heard at the global level.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our mission here in Baku during these two days is to unite our efforts and define together the way forward. This Fifth edition of the Global Conference of Young Parliamentary provides us with a unique platform for exchange and dialogue. We are marking the anniversary of five years of productive work and we can say that the youth movement has incredibly advanced. However; there is still a lot to do.

Many of our young people have a vision of the type of world they want to live in, but feel they have little chance of realising it. If parliaments don't become more representative, the aspirations of this whole section of society will remain unheard.

Aware of this challenge, the IPU has been working hard to create spaces for youth and to promote youth participation. Eight years ago, the IPU established the Forum for Young Parliamentarians: a permanent body dedicated to enhancing youth participation in parliaments and within the IPU itself. It meets at every IPU Assembly and moves the youth agenda. The Forum unites young MPs from all countries and political boards and is a powerful platform for innovative solutions to the challenges we are facing. I am extremely honoured and proud to preside over this unique body of young parliamentarians

I am also very proud to say that IPU Global Conferences of Young Parliamentarians have been taking place annually since 2014. Bringing together hundreds of young parliamentarians to empower them, helping them build solidarity and networks, and promoting a youth-coordinated approach to issues of common interest. These conferences have addressed diverse issues like political participation and democracy, peace and prosperity, the Sustainable Development Goals and political, social and economic inclusion. As you know, the conferences are youth-led in their conceptualization, implementation and outcomes.

At this Fifth Global Conference we will discuss about the interests of future generations and consider the impact of today's political decisions upon them. We will be reflecting on innovative and sustainable solutions to key issues of today that will have major impact on tomorrow.

I invite you to be intrepid and conscientious in your contributions. Let's harness the power and vision of the young to bring positive and sustainable change for all.

We will also be launching the 2018 edition of the bi-annual IPU report on *Youth participation in national parliaments*. This substantive report provides updated information on the percentages and genders of young parliamentarians, as well as the latest information on special mechanisms designed to encourage or enhance the participation of young people in national parliaments. I hope that you will find it useful and take on board its recommendations to make youth participation a priority, institute effective youth quotas, and continue empowering young MPs worldwide.

I would like to conclude with a quote from Michelle Obama: *Your history is what you have, what you will always have. It is something to own.*

Dear fellow young parliamentarians, we must seize the moment and write our history, not only for us, but also for the future generations.

Thank you.