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Remarks by Ms. Tatiana Valovaya United Nations Under-Secretary-General Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva

141st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly

Belgrade, Serbia
Sunday 13 October at 7.30 p.m.

Your Excellency, President Vučić (*President of the Republic of Serbia*),
Your Excellency, Ms Gojković (*President of the National Assembly of Serbia*),
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to join you at the 141st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Let me begin by introducing a special message from United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.

Video message from the UN Secretary-General:

I am pleased to greet the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

I welcome your focus on international law, universal health coverage, the climate emergency and the Sustainable Development Goals.

As a former parliamentarian, I know that your contribution, as representatives of the people, is critical in advancing shared progress.

In facing today's challenges, we need a multipolar world with strong multilateral institutions and universal respect for international law.

This is the path to building a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world, where no one is left behind.

I count on your continued support.

Thank you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the past 130 years, the IPU has proactively committed itself to the fundamental values of democracy and carried out a range of activities to ensure a positive impact on youth empowerment, human rights, reinforced parliaments, and support for responsible and accountable governments worldwide. I particularly applaud IPU's work on gender equality and the political empowerment of women, as it is self-evident that we can achieve more if half of humanity is not left aside.

The strong partnership between the IPU and the United Nations goes back to 1946, and this long-standing, fruitful collaboration is testament to how much can be achieved when we work together.

#IPU141

Today, the extent of our cooperation is remarkable, ranging from in country partnerships with the United Nations Resident Coordinators, to joint annual Parliamentary Hearings, regular interaction between parliamentarians and United Nations officials through the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, and much more.

The IPU has also been very supportive of a number of key United Nations agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, mobilizing parliamentary action towards the implementation of these agendas at the national, regional and global levels.

At the United Nations, we attach great importance to our close ties with the IPU, and to the key role played by parliamentarians in societies around the world. We welcome your active engagement in the work of the United Nations.

Why is this so important? As we celebrate 100 years of multilateralism this year and the 75th anniversary of the United Nations next year, we need, more than ever, parliamentarians who strongly support multilateralism, who resist the growing populism and nationalism that we are witnessing in many parts of the world. Parliaments can play an important role in restoring the trust in today's societies.

We also need a more modern approach to multilateralism, one that is inclusive and collaborative. In today's interconnected and interdependent world, governments and intergovernmental organizations alone cannot effectively address the complex global challenges – such as climate change, conflicts, development and migration - that we collectively face.

Transforming our world while leaving no one behind – the aim of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals – requires efforts from everyone, from the United Nations and governments, to the private sector, civil society, and individuals.

With 2030 fast approaching, we are now entering the Decade of Action for the goals. But we are still off the track. If we don't get this right, we will preserve past inequalities and billions of people will suffer poverty, hunger, sickness, and ignorance, without clean water or other essentials, knowing neither peace nor justice or security. 2030 will be a watershed moment for humankind and we simply cannot afford to fail. We need to do more, faster.

You can help. As parliamentarians, your work and impact are vital. You authorize the resources and pass the legislation that translate global commitments into real, national and local action. We must think beyond short-term political cycles and mobilise everyone and everything at our disposal. We need long-term solutions and partnerships. And it is here that I would like to make a suggestion, if I may.

We need the necessary legislation in place to implement all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals. I believe there is tremendous value in the IPU and you, as experienced parliamentarians, developing - on a voluntary basis – a list of the minimum legislative requirements for implementing each Goal. A sort of "legislative roadmap" to guide parliaments around the world, outlining the minimum legislative requirements for each Goal, for example, goal 4, Education, which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong opportunities for all. By developing such a "legislative roadmap", you can help facilitate and speed up the implementation of the goals. This, in turn, would help trigger finance for the goals by clearly showing a mature and focused SDG environment in each country. The impact that you can make is tremendous, and I hope that you will consider this positively.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Your commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation is clear. Indeed, the theme of this Assembly is "strengthening international law". We urge you to demonstrate your leadership, accelerate your actions, find innovative ways to reach this goal and help us build, like the Secretary-General said, a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world, where no one is left behind.

Global challenges require our collective response. The closer we work together, the more likely we are to succeed. In partnership, we can make real, meaningful and swift progress.

Thank you for your attention, and I wish you successful deliberations.