



**THE 141ST IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS
BELGRADE SERBIA
16 OCTOBER 2019**

SPEECH FOR YOUNG MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

**STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL LAW: PARLIAMENTARY ROLES AND
MECHANISMS, AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF REGIONAL COOPERATION**

A very good evening to all the honourable IPU delegates. My name is Vivian Wong and I am a Malaysian born Chinese from Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. Malaysia is committed to its role as a global player in contributing towards the enhancement of universality in international law principles, consolidation of international consensus, establishment of accountability of States and regional player in the multilateral treaty making process.
2. The Malaysia 14th General Election last year marked a turning point of a progressive democracy where a new government, (Pakatan Harapan) was formed. After the election it was reported that 40 percent of the electorate are young people aged 21 to 39 years old. This boost in the political power of youth signifies that the maturity of the younger population and our willingness to contribute to the nation's future. Therefore, youth participation has the potential to positively influence national policy and the political scene of Malaysia in the decades to come.

3. It was reported by IPU, that the global proportion of MPs under age 30 has increased by only 0.3 percentage points since 2016. Overall, young people under age 30 constitute only 2.2 per cent of the world's 45,000 parliamentarians.¹ Currently there are 20 out of 222 parliamentarians in the House of Representative of Malaysia are below 40 years old and 3 at the age of 30 and under including myself.
4. Youth participation in leadership and their role is very significant to achieve **the Sustainable Development Goal as a whole and specifically to 8** target, that is to reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training. The participation in making of the policies, strategies and interventions is significant. The government therefore must be bold in empowering and recognising youth in a policy making body.
5. In line with global phenomena, last session in July, Malaysia Parliament has passed 2(two) bills on youth related to empower youth participation in the nation development. Those are : the redefine age for youth is 18 to 30 and lowering voting age from 21 to 18 and I have just merely made the cut of being a "youth" at my first year of being a Member of Parliament.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. I am proud that Malaysia is taking aggressive steps, to groom our younger generation as we also can see a significant increase in the allocation of fund for our youth development programmes under Malaysia's Budget 2020, which was just being tabled by our Finance Minister last Friday. Malaysia has also broke its own record in appointing the youngest Federal Minister of Youth & Sports at the age of 25 last year, in the state where I came from Sabah, also took part in breaking our own records where I was elected as the youngest Member of Parliament and followed by appointment of the youngest State Minister of Youth and Sports both at the age of 30 this year.

¹ Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Youth participation in national parliaments: 2018*. Link: <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2018-12/youth-participation-in-national-parliaments-2018>

7. Just like what our IPU Chairlady said, youth is not our future but our present. Manchester United Football Club legend Sir Matt Busby once said “if you are good enough, you are old enough”. Age is, afterall, just a number for us to remember once a year. We must take every opportunity we have to transmit our vision in building a better tomorrow to our youths. We as the youth are the best partner in battling global issues such as climate change, we have the time, we have the energy, we have the ideas, we have the manpower. We just need to be given the opportunity.
8. I thank you all for your attention.
9. Thank you. Hvala. Terima kasih. Xie Xie.