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Speech by Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

Building Financing Momentum: “Getting to Scale by 2030”

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[Question by the moderator: Social accountability at local and national levels is another important piece of the going to scale puzzle and to ensure rights and that programs are inclusive, of quality and reaching all. As a parliamentarian and listening to the opportunities and challenges presented in this session by the ministers what are your reflections on how we can get to scale by 2030?]

- The global maternal mortality rate in 2017 is estimated at 211 maternal deaths per 100'000 live births, and this rate reaches 415 in least developed countries. We are still very far from the target of reducing the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100'000 live births by 2030. Between 2000 and 2017, on average, the global mortality rate declined by less than 3% every year. At the current pace of progress, we will fall short of our target by more than 1 million lives.
- Greater progress is not only needed for women to “survive”. Women and girls worldwide face challenges in accessing essential health services, education and good nutrition, and are victims of violence and discrimination. About 200 million adolescents were not in secondary school in 2017; and between 2005 and 2016, one in five women and adolescent girls worldwide were subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner.
- Scaling up efforts and ensuring that laws, budgets and programmes are effectively targeted at those most in need will first of all require accurate data.
- The IPU has been collaborating with health partners such as WHO for over a decade to build a bridge between the parliamentary community and the scientific health community. By representing the people, parliamentarians also have a role in voicing the concerns of the people and in supporting data collection and validation through their own understanding of the needs of their constituents.
- The IPU has supported efforts at the intersection of health and gender equality for improving the availability of data and for community outreach by parliamentarians in a number of countries:
 - In Rwanda, with IPU support, parliamentarians met with religious leaders, who are often partners in socioeconomic and development programmes in the country, to sensitize them to their role in civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS). During the outreach activity, religious leaders agreed to hold regular forums to discuss the importance of CRVS in sexual and reproductive health, as well as

sexual gender-based violence, illegal marriage and adolescent pregnancies.

- IPU support allowed Mauritania's caucus of women MPs to travel to all regions of the country to promote women's rights, delivering its message and listening to the voices of citizens. Links with communities – particularly women in rural areas – were strengthened, and their priority issues were addressed. The impact of the consultations was also felt in the Mauritanian Parliament, where MPs of both genders raised questions regarding the socio-economic needs and interests of rural women and girls.
- In addition to this, as I always say, true love is shown through the budget – efforts can be scaled up only if adequate resources will be allocated through national budgets.
- The IPU has been supporting national parliaments on budget advocacy for women's, children's and adolescents' health as well as in gender budgeting. As a result of these efforts, for example, MPs in Tanzania have improved their ability on budget advocacy and oversight, leading to the allocation of increased national funds to family planning. In Uganda, parliament successfully pressured the government to allocate more funds to health and made robust efforts to monitor the government's commitment to the issue.
- At the 141st IPU Assembly in October, IPU Member Parliaments adopted a landmark resolution on universal health coverage and the right to health. The resolution focuses on women, children and adolescent health including sexual and reproductive health as a key component of UHC, and calls on Parliaments to allocate adequate domestic resources for the progressive realization of UHC through sustainable health financing
- The IPU will build on this momentum to continue scaling up commitment and action by parliaments at different levels:
 - We will continue raising awareness and provide a platform for dialogue and exchange of experiences and good practices at the global level through IPU Assemblies and parliamentary engagement in key health processes, as well as at the regional level through regional seminars on the SDGs.
 - We will work with partners to support national parliaments to implement the resolution and strengthen their capacities to make full use of their legislative, budgetary and oversight functions to accelerate progress towards UHC.

The IPU will also identify good parliamentary practices and track parliamentary contributions to improvements in health, in order to provide recommendations to national parliaments on effective actions and strategies.