



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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## Address by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

### 41st General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly

8 September 2020

Madam President of the National Assembly of Viet Nam,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am grateful for this opportunity to address the 41st General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA). I bring greetings from the IPU and its 179 Member Parliaments. I also convey my heartfelt wishes for a successful Assembly. Madam President, I congratulate you once again upon your assumption of the presidency of AIPA.

Recently, the IPU had the pleasure of welcoming and hosting your participation, Madam President, in the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, both of which galvanized parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism.

The IPU's areas of cooperation are consonant with what AIPA is pursuing under its mission. The synergy between the two organizations has made them more attuned to the needs of parliaments, and better positioned to enable parliaments to speak in unison on matters of global concern.

This Assembly's focus – parliamentary diplomacy – is pertinent today, more than ever before, in view of the challenges the world is currently facing.

I am heartened by the growing number of multilateral parliamentary events in these times afflicted by a global pandemic, a pandemic-driven economic crisis, social dissonances and, above all, recurrent challenges to democratic governance.

This is a strong signal that parliaments must be brought back from the fringes of national political landscapes as representative, efficient and politically robust institutions. And parliamentary diplomacy must be a driving force in bridging divides at the international level caused by so many converging crises.

The IPU has been maintaining this sense of urgency in its work on peace, democracy, human rights, gender equality, youth empowerment and sustainable development. The IPU believes that strong and effective parliaments are essential for democracy and development. We want to continue to serve as a platform for parliamentary exchanges. Our founding fathers envisioned an institution that would provide a forum for dialogue with a view to the peaceful resolution of conflict. We want to promote this objective in cooperation with AIPA in the ASEAN space.

Today's crises make parliamentary leadership and solidarity all the more compelling. We value our cooperation with AIPA as we seek to build on our respective strengths to ensure that parliaments are at the centre of global efforts to achieve peace and development.

I see our cooperation extending to efforts to mobilize parliaments to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Currently, only 25 per cent of the world's MPs are women and a mere 20 per cent of the Speakers of parliament in the world are women.

We also would like to see stronger cooperation in the inclusion of more young people in political decision-making.

From mobilizing parliaments around the global development agenda to protecting and promoting human rights to acting as an *honest broker* in contributing to bridging divisions and building peace, the IPU has been upholding the role of parliaments as institutions with a key role in securing a healthier, sustainable, resilient and inclusive future.

I am hopeful that we can work together to implement the outcome Declaration of the IPU's recent Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, where the global parliamentary leaders committed to contributing to a quantum leap in the quality of our planet's health.

We need to back the world's top legislators in efforts to tackle the converging health, economic, financial, climate and governance crises. In sum, parliaments and parliamentarians should take up the mantle entrusted to them by the people, and exert leadership in policymaking, law-making, budget allocation and oversight.

Above all, we have proven that technology can be harnessed to serve parliamentary diplomacy and leadership. In this context, today's conference represents another important forum that should make the case for parliamentary diplomacy and help us stay on the path of durable progress.

Finally, Madam President, and once again, I wish you and the participants a successful 41st AIPA General Assembly.

Thank you for your attention.