



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Parliaments and Supreme Audit Institutions (Sais) Partnering for Greater Audit Impact, Oversight, and Accountability

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I am pleased to address you today as the Secretary General of the Interparliamentary Union. The IPU is the world organization of national parliaments.

We empower parliaments and parliamentarians to promote peace, democracy, and sustainable development.

It is a particular pleasure to welcome you to this long overdue event that brings together national parliaments and national audit institutions with the aim of cultivating stronger relations between the two.

The IPU is delighted to be co-organizing this event today with the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI).

I am a strong advocate for a close working relationship between audit institutions and parliaments. I believe parliaments need Audit Institutions to be able to do their job of holding government to account. Equally, I believe Audit Institutions depend on support from parliaments to ensure that their findings and recommendations are followed up and lead to corrective action.

In summary: You are the two key oversight institutions in every country.

Populations are growing at a vertiginous rate. The United Nations has forecast that the world's population is expected to reach eight billion on November 15, this year. The average age of the world's citizens is well below thirty – generally less than half the age of those who govern them. Add to this a dire lack of opportunities in the wake of covid that young people need so badly, and you have a potent recipe for conflict.

Yes, it is fair to assume that people want more transparency, wider freedom, and greater social justice. But more than anything, people want fair play, jobs, and the benefits of development. People want more opportunities and better service delivery. They want better governments.

Better governments need better parliamentary oversight, accountability, and high impact audits – of both accounts and performance.

The parliament of Georgia's Budget and Finance Committee has included in the Committee's Strategic Plan the establishment of an 'Audit Office Reports' Examination Group that meets regularly to discuss the audit reports.

The working group must present an activity report to the Committee at least twice during parliaments session.

The State Audit Office of South Africa sought parliament's help to amend legislation that today gives it more independence.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the functions of the House Budget Committee are combined with those of a Public Accounts Committee, the Committee has used budget control to send a quiet though effective message.

The audits of ministries found that several had failed to follow the international standards drawn up by INTOSAI in their management of expenditures.

The multiparty Budget and Finance Committee reduced these ministries' budgets by small, symbolic sums (in areas such as travel).

But the findings were also reported in the papers and amplified by civil society advocates for transparency. This led to improvements in subsequent years of audit performance of the smaller and more politically vulnerable ministries.

These are a few examples of positive developments that we all need to support and spread.

Earlier in my message I lamented this meeting is long-overdue, and it is, but I am very pleased to tell you that this is the first in a series of activities IPU and INTOSAI are working on at the global, regional, and national level to support you to work more together for better parliamentary oversight, accountability, and high impact audits.

I would like to leave you with a call to action: reach out to each other in your countries, start small, be innovative and don't be afraid to be bold. It is only by being bold in your actions that you can help make governments better.

Thank you.