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

40th Session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians  
Launch of IGC Gender-Responsive Assemblies Toolkit

Geneva, 19 October 2025

Madam President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians,  
Distinguished parliamentarians,  
Dear colleagues and friends,

It is a great pleasure to join you at this Forum — a space that, for more than forty years has led the way in advancing women's leadership and gender equality in political life.

Your work has inspired progress far beyond parliaments themselves, showing what representation can look like when it truly reflects the diversity and strength of our societies. It is an honour to be among those who continue to lead by example.

I am here with you today not only as Secretary General of the IPU but also as Chair of the Global Board of the International Gender Champions. I am proud that, under our shared umbrella and in collaboration with *Women at the Table*, we have launched the second edition of the Gender-Responsive Assemblies Toolkit. We were honoured to unveil it at the UNGA80 Parliamentary Event, and I am delighted to bring it here today.

This Toolkit draws on the experience of institutions within the IGC network — including the IPU — that have made real progress towards inclusion in multilateral spaces. It is based on the fact that when environments are enabling, leadership is shared equally, and decisions deliberately advance gender equality.

The Toolkit is both a guide and a call to ambition. It sets clear standards for inclusive assemblies and challenges us to make parity a living principle, not a distant goal.

I am particularly proud to see so many examples in this toolkit coming from the IPU. And I want to pay tribute to this Forum that has been at the forefront of this progress, leading us on the path to parity.

The IPU's efforts began as early as in the 1980s, with our first quota for women on the Executive Committee. Since then, we have revisited these quotas and created new ones.

Most recently, we have taken a firm stand against harassment and further integrated gender equality into all areas of our work. Parity is now embedded in our Statutes and Rules. Delegations close to the gender parity standard are recognized, while those that are single-sex face limits on their voting rights. These steps have changed not only our procedures but also our culture. Today, nearly 40 per cent of delegates

at IPU Assemblies are women. We are not yet at parity, but determination anchored in both norms and practice delivers real change.

That is what the Gender-Responsive Assemblies Toolkit is about. So, my call to all of you is: take this Toolkit to heart. Use it. Share it. Adapt it.

Let it guide your work in your own parliaments and assemblies. Take it to your foreign ministries, so that they also implement it as part and parcel of your country's engagement in multilateral spaces. It is a tool built with you and for you.

I am pleased to share this moment with Caitlin Kraft-Buchman, whose leadership and vision have been central to this effort. She will speak more about how the Toolkit came together and how each of us can use it to make our institutions more inclusive, more responsive, and more representative of the people we serve.

Thank you.