



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Speech by the IPU President, Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, on the occasion of the sitting of the Pan-African Parliament Permanent Committees

**The Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in
Africa: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa**

Midrand, 8 August 2019

Africa has the highest number of forced migrants in the world. These men, women and children were forced to flee their homes and countries because of armed conflict, persecution, human rights violations, inter-community tensions, terrorism, public health emergencies, and political and socioeconomic discrimination and exclusions. The 10th Conference of Speakers of African Parliaments took place in order to discuss the role of the Parliaments in these issues.

These themes are very important on the agenda for African States, which need to adopt and implement international and regional normative and political frameworks on the prevention and management of forced displacement in Africa.

The IPU and the European Parliament have an initiative which is the Parliamentary Conference for the World Trade Organization (WTO). This Chair was never occupied before by an African and I appointed a person who I admire a lot and know: its co-Chair, Margaret Mensah-Williams.

Also, as President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I feel committed to ensure the participation and full inclusion of Africa and that is why I came. Now, Africa has 5 seats on the High Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism. We need to share best practices and consolidate efforts and strategies to make parliamentary action more effective to achieve lasting solutions to the problems of forced migration, silencing of guns and the realization of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

There is not a false trade of between security and human rights. This is the moment to renew our commitments, like the President of the Pan-African Parliament already said: “Which Africa do we want to see, but also which is the world that we would like to give to our children?”