



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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### Intervention by

**Ms. R.B. Itamari Choque (Bolivia), Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians**

*Opening of the General debate of the 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, 25 March 2018, Geneva*

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Ms. Margaret Mensah-Williams, President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians,  
Mr. Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees,  
Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director of the International Organization for Migration,

Distinguished guests,

Dear colleagues,

If we look at the ages of those on the move from year to year, we will find that youth represent a very large proportion. For example, in 2015 the median age of those immigrating to Europe was 27. As time goes on these immigrants get older, have children, and grandchildren. How countries include these young migrants and refugees in their societies and economies when they arrive has an immeasurable impact on their - and their host country's - future.

This is why at the Fourth Conference of Young Parliamentarians, held in November in Canada, we young MPs prioritized our focus on the inclusion of migrants and refugees.

We recognized a paradox. We young people know that the world is more interconnected than ever before. For us, globalization is not a new phenomenon, but rather the world that we were born into. At a time when the world is getting smaller, why are we raising walls? Why are we adopting travel bans? Why is there increasing hate speech and xenophobia? These two trends simply don't add up.

As a voice of the younger generation, I say that the way forward is not in turning back the clock, but in looking ahead and working together to make the most of our changing realities! Migration is here to stay. The way forward is to work as a global community and create a regime that ensures orderly and fair migration and upholds human rights.

Migration is not a problem to be solved, but an opportunity to be harnessed.

We young MPs want to highlight a number of actions that will help take us in this direction.

- We need to be guided by human rights. No one chooses where to be born, and every person should have a place to call home. A first step to a human rights approach is to ratify relevant agreements that protect the rights of migrants and refugees. And as MPs, it is also our job to hold our governments to account in making sure they are implemented.
- We also need evidence-based policy, and for this, we need better data. We need age-disaggregated data on migrants and refugees. Without this, we are blind to the particularities of young people.
- We also need to ensure that the services that are needed for young migrants and refugees to succeed in new surroundings are in place. Quality health and education is a priority for youth. Failure to provide this is a ticking time bomb. Economic opportunities through quality jobs, and entrepreneurship programs, are also important. The financial cost of such measures is far less than the cost of an uneducated and unhealthy population unable to contribute to society.

- We also need to adopt laws and policies that protect young women migrants and refugees from discrimination and abuse, including sexual and gender-based violence.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the Conference of young MPs we learned that certain indigenous leaders in Canada have a custom of basing decisions on the impact it will have seven generations from now. I challenge us to heed this approach and use our youth and future generations as our guides. What do you want the world to look like seven generations from now? I have faith that if we look through this lens, our offspring seven generations from now will thank us, and the world will look much brighter. Thank you.