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Mr. President, dear colleagues.

It is a great pleasure for me, coming from Iceland - a small island in the Arctic - to say a few words about of our very vital theme:

Getting to zero: Mobilising Parliament to Act on Climate Change.

The temperatures in the Arctic continue to rise at three times the global annual average, driving many of the changes underway in the Arctic. Most prominently, snow and ice are melting at an increasing rate. This impacts both local ecosystems and the global climate system. It contributes to rising sea levels, and is likely to provoke extreme temperature events beyond the Arctic. The effects of a shifting Arctic climate are felt across the high latitudes and beyond – with global environmental, economic, and social implications.

It is clear that climate change is one of the most critical challenges of our times. It increasingly affects our everyday life and our environment. The signs are evident, science is clear, and the plans are in place. All states need to scale up and implement the Paris agreement, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Iceland's ambition is to go beyond the Paris commitments by reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than half by 2030, reaching complete carbon neutrality by 2040 - and becoming fossil-fuel-free by 2050.

Moreover, Iceland's emissions profile is in many ways unusual. Almost all heating and electricity generation is provided for by renewables – hydro and

geothermal energy. It has been a long-standing policy of Icelandic Governments to support initiatives worldwide that aim to increase the utilization of geothermal energy. The potential is enormous and mostly untapped.

It is important to keep in mind, that climate change is not only an environmental challenge but has also social justice and economic aspects. It greatly affects those most vulnerable, both globally and within our own societies. It has increased instability and inequality, causing poverty and displacement.

No country is an island when it comes to the effects of climate change and our future dependent on global cooperation.

Similarly, the fight for gender equality is universal. And now, it has become integrally linked to the climate crisis. The consequences for women are both economic and social, challenging our progress towards many of the sustainable development goals.

Our experience in Iceland has been that greater inclusivity and equality generate more resilient and adaptive societies. That is why gender equality and women 's empowerment are cornerstones of Iceland's foreign policy.

The climate crisis is already having destabilizing effects on peace and security. When people are displaced, women and girls are inherently subjected to vulnerable situations and are therefore under greater threat of gender-based violence.

This is now tragically on display in Ukraine because of Russia's horrendous invasion. More than 3 million people have already fled their homes to seek shelter in the neighboring countries, and millions will follow. Our thoughts are with the innocent people in Ukraine who are suffering and those who are displaced, seeking shelter. The horrific invasion has already had devastating consequences and I greatly appreciate that IPU is on its way to make a clear statement on the war in Ukraine.

The world is at a crossroads, faced with challenges that can only be addressed effectively if we work together – with real actions - for future generations.

Thank you.

(559 words)