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+41 22 919 41 50
+41 22 919 41 60
postbox@ipu.org

Chemin du Pommier 5
Case postale 330
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland
www.ipu.org

IPU Statement

Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron
IPU President

High-Level Meeting on Universal
Health Coverage

New York, 23 September 2019

Mr. President,

Thank you for this opportunity to address the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage.

Health is a precondition for and an outcome of sustainable development, but it is still not a right enjoyed by everyone. Although UHC was enshrined in the SDGs, it will require strong political leadership, sustainable financing, good governance, and a strong legal framework.

Parliaments have a key role to play in these efforts. I am therefore very pleased that UN Member States recognize the vital importance of legislative and regulatory frameworks for the achievement of UHC, as well as the need to allocate adequate resources through prioritizing health in public spending and ensuring equitable allocation of health spending.

The political declaration also calls for building effective, accountable, transparent and inclusive institutions. The Inter-Parliamentary Union believes that by strengthening parliamentary institutions and engaging them to use their powers in an inclusive way, parliaments can become strong agents of change for the health and well-being of people.

In October 2018, the IPU decided to develop a resolution on “Achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030: the role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health”. It is expected to be adopted at the 141st IPU Assembly in October of this year. It will be the first global parliamentary resolution on UHC, and it will provide guidance on concrete actions parliaments can take in support of UHC and the related SDGs.

The resolution will be complementary to the political declaration that will be adopted at this High-Level Meeting. The adoption of these two important instruments will provide a clear signal of the centrality of the UHC agenda not only for health, but also for equity, development, social inclusion and cohesion.

However, there will only be an impact on the ground – for the people of our countries – if the recommendations of the political declaration and the IPU resolution will not remain on paper.

The IPU will support national implementation by working closely with its health partners and in cooperation with different stakeholders to strengthen the capacities of parliaments to make full use of their legislative, budgetary and oversight functions for improved access to health care services for all.

Thank you.