



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Justice for Africa's Children
Roundtable Discussion

7 February 2022

Dear Kailash,

Dear friends,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to join your discussion dedicated to the noble cause of justice for children.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my friend and brother Kailash, and to commend his continued commitment to ensuring children's well-being. The Inter-Parliamentary Union is delighted to join your mobilization in favour of this worthy cause.

In the context of our partnership, we have continued to carry out awareness campaigns encouraging parliamentarians to ensure the proper management of this important and sensitive issue.

No effort shall be spared to reach that objective, as children hold the key to a better tomorrow. It's therefore our collective responsibility to work for their full development in accordance with their best interests.

From this point of view, I am pleased to recognize that your fruitful reflections on the relevant question of fair share have enabled you to identify areas where efforts to promote the rights of the child can be stepped up. The issue of justice that leads your reflections today is part of this overall strategy, the implementation of which should produce the expected results.

I concur with you that it is unfortunate that a large number of African children neither enjoy the benefit of the significant resources of their countries nor have access to basic services in accordance with their fundamental rights. The current health context makes the situation even more challenging as most African children do not have access to basic health care, and in particular to vaccines to protect them against COVID-19.

The IPU has joined the widespread mobilization in favour of fair treatment in the fight against COVID-19. To this end, together with the Director-General of the WHO, we recently sent out a letter to leaders and speakers of parliaments globally to draw attention to the need for equal access to COVID-19 vaccines. In the same vein, at the 143rd IPU Assembly in Madrid in November last year, parliamentarians from around the world adopted a resolution which insisted that every effort should be made to raise

awareness regarding the effectiveness of vaccines. In this same resolution, it was recommended that parliamentarians work with their national governments to exert a global and collective influence on the WTO to eliminate all export restrictions and any other trade barriers on COVID-19 vaccines and the inputs involved in their production.

Let me now make several suggestions as part of the parliamentary perspective on promoting the justice we all want to see for African children:

- We should adopt proper measures and put in place robust mechanisms aimed at effectively implementing national poverty reduction and growth strategies, as enshrined in the Sustainable Development Agenda.
- We should focus efforts on such strategies, as well as fighting against corruption and promoting accountability.
- We should mobilize parliaments to ensure sufficient resources are devoted to fighting child labour by ensuring that children are in school and not in the workplace.
- We should mobilize and advocate for the end of child labour and ensure that budgetary reallocations after the COVID pandemic do not sideline children.

I thank you for your attention.