



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

130th Anniversary of the International Peace Bureau
Re-imagining peace processes

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Madam Co-President, Mr. Co-President,
Dear colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to speak on this wonderful occasion to celebrate the International Peace Bureau's 130th anniversary. I recall that, just over two years ago, when the IPU celebrated its own 130th anniversary, it provided us with a chance to look back at the Organization's history. We realized that what started as an association of individual parliamentarians in 1889 has been transformed into a constantly growing alliance of national parliaments, reflecting the global demand for democracy.

IPB, like the IPU, was founded by peace activists who believed that diplomacy and dialogue were more effective ways of settling disputes than war and fighting. And what was true at the end of the 19th century is still very much true today. Since the beginning, the IPU and IPB have been steadfast in their efforts to contribute to peace and security. This is the reason why we are still standing, over 130 years later, always acting on the basic premises of lasting peace for all and a world without war. Over the years, our mandates have grown to encompass matters relating to development, human rights, gender equality and youth empowerment, but we have always maintained the guiding principle of achieving and sustaining peace.

Madam Co-President, Mr. Co-President, dear IPB members, I wish you a happy 130th birthday. May our common principle of peace continue to guide your actions now as it has done for 130 years.

Dear Colleagues,

We spoke of the distant past, when our organizations were established. However, is it obvious that, despite our commitments, there is still much to do today to sustain peace. We are faced with increasingly complex contemporary challenges. In addition to the so-called classic risks of weapons proliferation, violence, massive human rights violations, terrorism and conflict between states, we must now deal with non-traditional threats to international peace and security. Climate change, famine, pandemics and poverty, as well as the growing importance of the cyber dimension: all of these can lead to or exacerbate conflict and are endangering human security.

At the IPU, we are very much aware of these threats and are actively working to address them, including through our new Strategy for 2022-2026. The four policy goals we will be pursuing over the next five years, namely (1) Democracy, human

rights and gender equality, (2) Sustainable development for all, (3) Climate change and (4) Peace and security, will allow us to cover all these aspects.

As this event is also an opportunity to look back at the past year, please allow me to provide some brief examples of what the IPU did in 2021 with regard to peace and the various threats it faces today.

Helping parliaments to perform their duties during the COVID-19 pandemic has been at the heart of the work of the IPU since the outbreak of the virus. The IPU has thus assisted its Member Parliaments in whatever way possible through facilitation of dialogue, sharing of good practices and maintenance of an open platform for parliamentary interactions, all while taking full advantage of the technological tools that are at our disposal.

In 2021, the IPU membership adopted a landmark resolution that recognizes the nexus between climate change and security. The resolution calls on parliaments to take action against this existential threat, including through the implementation of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The IPU also renewed its efforts against the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) while continuing its strong stance against nuclear weapons. We actively engaged in the universalization of the major disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and strongly promoted the necessity to reduce military spending and shift budget priorities in order to respond to the health crisis and its consequences.

We organized the first Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism, examining parliamentary efforts to support the victims of terrorism and to prevent terrorism, radicalization and hate speech. The Summit allowed us to unveil a suite of digital tools, including an interactive map and mobile application, aimed at helping parliamentarians to coordinate their counter-terrorism legislation and strategies.

Finally, continuing our belief in the primacy of dialogue and diplomacy over war and conflict, the IPU started working towards rethinking the global approach to peace processes. There are clear growing challenges to democracy and peace. The epidemic of coups or attempted coups, the increase of tensions that rekindle the memory of the Cold War, the never-ending conflicts... all of these have led us to review in depth the approach we should take to solving international crises.

The IPU believes that it is essential to bring forward an improved notion of conflict resolution, so that the conflicts of tomorrow can be avoided and those of today sustainably resolved. Ms. Widegren, one of the co-rapporteurs of the draft resolution on these issues, will explain in depth how she sees the change of paradigms towards better and more sustainable peace processes.

Thank you for your kind attention and, once again: Happy 130th anniversary!