



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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

Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Asian Parliamentary Assembly
Parliamentary Forum on Research and Library Cooperation: In
Commemoration of 15 years of Parliamentary Achievements in Asia

Tehran, 17 May 2022

Distinguished Members and staff of parliaments,

We gather here today at a time when the world faces multiple political crises, and at the forefront of all our minds, the war in Ukraine. The time for diplomacy has come, to find a solution to the crisis. Parliamentary diplomacy is a long-established form of dialogue that acts as a useful complement to inter-governmental action. At the IPU, we have observed over the years that parliamentarians often have a freedom that allows them to go beyond the official positions and find new channels for negotiation.

This is why the IPU has recently adopted a resolution calling on Members of Parliament in both the Russian Federation and Ukraine to promote initiatives to cease hostilities and resolve differences through peaceful, diplomatic means. The resolution further calls on the IPU to use its good offices to encourage dialogue between parliamentarians in both countries in support of diplomatic efforts within the framework of a rules-based international order, while respecting the principles of sovereignty and complete avoidance of interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation. In this resolution, Member parliaments also recommend that the IPU establish a Task Force on the situation in Ukraine to facilitate the role of parliaments in formulating feasible peaceful solutions, and this Task Force has started its work, which we hope will shortly bear fruit.

Of course, these issues are not uncontroversial, and there is a lively debate among parliaments on the best approach to take to the situation in Ukraine. Through the process of dialogue and exchange of perspectives, it has been possible to come to a position that expresses the views of the vast majority of IPU Members.

I make this point to underline the relevance and importance of the topics that you have chosen for this meeting of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, and in particular, inter-parliamentary cooperation and parliamentary diplomacy.

In carrying out these important roles, parliamentarians need access to the best possible analysis so their decisions can be informed by evidence and data. Parliaments receive a lot of information directly from the executive branch of government, naturally. It is important however that parliament has its own capacity to carry out research and analysis, so that it is not dependent on the perspective of the government.

Parliamentary research has its own characteristics, in particular the principle that it should be neutral and non-partisan, available to all parliamentarians equally, whether from the government or opposition sides.

In recent years, parliamentary research services have been developing their products so that they meet the needs of busy parliamentarians. Increasingly, parliaments are building capacity to provide short, focused analyses in a variety of formats, including audio formats that parliamentarians can listen to while travelling, or in-person briefings.

In this area, we have a long-established partnership between the IPU and the global network of parliamentary library and research services, IFLAPARL, which is part of the International Federation of Library Associations. I commend to you the Guidelines for Parliamentary Research Services jointly published by IPU and IFLA in 2015, and am pleased to inform you that we will shortly publish together an updated version of the Guidelines for Parliamentary Libraries.

This is a vibrant community that is willing to exchange ideas and good practices, as we saw in the very well attended event in October 2021 on developing an agenda for the next decade for parliamentary library and research services.

While IFLAPARL provides a global network, it is equally vital to pursue this professional exchange at a regional level. I commend the Asian Parliamentary Assembly for the initiative to hold this event on parliamentary research in Asia, and hope that it serves as a springboard for further cooperation in this area.

Thank you.