



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Workshop on nutrition: How parliamentary action can help safeguard nutrition gains

Kigali, 14 October 2022

Honorable Members of Parliament,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to welcome you to this important workshop on nutrition. We have joined forces with our partners from the Scaling up Nutrition Movement and the African Union Development Agency, and I wish to thank them for the excellent collaboration. I am here today not only as Secretary General of the IPU but also as member of the SUN Movement Lead Group. The Group met last month on the occasion of the United Nations General Assembly, and it was clear from our discussion that nutrition is central to all dimensions of sustainable development, but it does not receive due attention.

Nutrition is much more than ensuring that people have enough food on their plates. For better nutrition, people need to have access to healthy diets, and these diets also need to be produced in a way that is more attentive to the rights of all people involved throughout the supply chain and the health of our planet.

This is why, the IPU, the SUN Movement, AUDA-NEPAD and other partners produced a handbook for parliamentarians on food systems and nutrition. It illustrates the importance of a comprehensive approach that takes into account the actors, institutions and processes involved in food production, distribution and consumption. Within this framework, it provides entry points for parliamentary interventions. The handbook has a strong focus on legislation to better protect the right to food and ensure its realization through legislation in sectors such as health, agriculture, gender equality and education.

I invite you to have a look at the handbook and reflect on what you can do in your countries. The current context marked by overlapping crises – the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and conflicts – brings significant risks for nutrition. Famines, raising costs of food products, loss of livelihoods for farmers and fishers are in front of our eyes and require immediate action. However, short-term fixes are not the solution. We need a long-term vision and transformation so that food systems can deliver better nutrition.

I also encourage you to promote dialogue with stakeholders in your country. Our collaboration with the SUN Movement and AUDA-NEPAD reflects the importance of collective action and the recognition that parliamentarians are key actors in nutrition.

In addition to the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, a number of international and regional processes have been building political will for stronger nutrition action. The IPU organized a parliamentary meeting last year on the occasion

of the United Nations Food Systems Summit, and our partners have been driving other important milestones such as the Nutrition For Growth Summit in 2021 and the African Year of Nutrition this year. It is important that these processes are not seen as unrelated to national realities, but rather as an opportunity for parliamentarians to contribute to better nutrition and development outcomes. I hope that today's discussion will provide you with the ideas, tools and willpower to become effective change-makers.

I wish you fruitful discussions.