



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

T +41 22 919 41 50
F +41 22 919 41 60
E postbox@ipu.org
www.ipu.org

Chemin du Pommier 5
Case postale 330
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland

Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Promoting the United Nations' New Agenda for Peace

Rome, 30 May 2023

What role can parliaments and parliamentarians play in the shared effort to create more peaceful, just and inclusive societies?

It is not exaggerated to state that we are heading into uncertain and dangerous times. Regardless of how you qualify it, peace, our common good, is shrinking every day a bit more, while violence and conflicts all around the world are claiming tens of thousands of lives and displacing millions. In addition, the climate crisis is exacerbating tense situations at many levels: women and youth are still facing discrimination, and new domains of conflict are opening up, with new tools emerging for which we do not yet have strong sets of rules. It is in this uncertain context that the UN Secretary General has highlighted the need for a New Agenda for Peace, which would help address the multidimensional and complex challenges we are facing.

In this endeavour, parliaments, who represent the citizens, are at the forefront when it comes to defusing tensions and working for their people's well-being. By definition, a crisis avoided need not be addressed, and if conflict is prevented, then space is left for development to become a local reality for citizens. To that end, the combined implementation of the 2030 Agenda and a sustaining peace offers solid pathways to address the root causes of insecurity and promote development as a means of prevention.

The contribution of parliaments to shaping peaceful, just and inclusive societies is twofold. On the one hand, acting locally with a mindset centred on human development and the protection of the people, who wish to live in peace in a secure environment where they can thrive; on the other hand, thinking globally, pushing for dialogue and conflict prevention as a means of resolving disputes. In so doing, parliaments are imposing themselves as key players in the implementation of the SDGs.

- They introduce and pass legislation, which translates international commitments into national laws that support successful implementation of the SDGs. This includes people-centred laws to protect human rights, promote equality and prevent discrimination, advance the rights of marginalized groups, foster social justice and address social and economic inequalities.
- The role of parliaments in analysing and approving budgets is also crucial in order to ensure adequate allocation of financial resources for fruitful implementation. By ensuring transparency through constant oversight of the effective implementation and use of financial resources by governments, parliaments also play a critical role in monitoring progress and ensuring overall accountability for SDG commitments while combatting corruption and building trust between citizens and government.
- Another important role of parliaments is being a bridge-builder through their representation function. By their very essence, parliaments are inclusive bodies, as they represent citizens in all their diversity of personal characteristics, interests and views. Parliamentarians, by engaging with citizens, civil society organizations and other social groups, can raise awareness on and advocate for the SDGs. Involving those groups in the decision-making process is also a means to strengthen inclusion and gather additional support for effective implementation.

How can we better engage with parliamentarians?

While parliaments are national institutions, their influence and actions go beyond borders. At the international level, they hold an ongoing dialogue with their peers on global issues, which serves as an alternative to traditional State-to-State interactions. Through international parliamentary organizations such as the IPU, more specific networks or specialized bureaus, they engage with foreign counterparts and institutions, and contribute through diplomatic lobbying and participation in international forums.

This form of diplomacy enables parliamentarians to exchange skills, experiences and good practices related to the implementation of the SDGs. By participating in global dialogues, parliaments can enhance their knowledge and understanding of the SDGs, build peer-to-peer relations and establish additional communication channels. In that sense, parliamentary action at the international level also contributes to the development of norms, standards and frameworks that support the establishment of peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

The IPU is one of the structures – if not the main structure – working towards ensuring a mutually beneficial relationship between international partners and parliaments, through regular engagement opportunities, including its two annual Assemblies, regional and global events, and collection of publications. We believe that engagement with parliaments should be a two-way street that involves information sharing, consultations

and coordination on various issues. Parliaments have a wealth of knowledge and should be called upon not only to listen and learn, but also to contribute their perspectives, expertise and insights. It is this dialogue that allows for inclusive policy formulation and implementation.

I can assure you that the IPU stands ready to continue facilitating parliamentary involvement to integrate a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and other multilateral forums, to shape the New Agenda for Peace, and to implement the 2030 Agenda to build a people-centred, sustainable and inclusive future, make gender equality a reality and promote greater youth participation in the political process for stronger peace, democracy and sustainable development.

Thank you.