



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Trans-Altai Sustainability Dialogue Gender And Sustainability
Plenary 8: Gender Equality and Sustainable Development

13 June 2023

Honourable members of the State Grand Hural,
Distinguished guests,

It gives me great pleasure to address this important conference.

We all know no country can claim to have achieved all the Sustainable Development Goals. The same way no country can claim to have achieved gender equality.

Connecting gender equality and sustainable development, and acknowledging the two go hand in hand, is a first step in the right direction.

Parliaments are key to achieving these two objectives. But they cannot do it alone. So I really commend the State Grand Hural for bringing together such as a wide range of key stakeholders to advance gender equality and sustainability.

The multiple crises and challenges the world faces today oblige us to do things differently. We cannot leave half of the world's population behind or lose ground where gains have been made to bridge existing gaps.

To build resilience and to prepare a solid basis to absorb shocks, we need institutions that are inclusive, legitimate and solid, grounded on the rule of law and geared towards the common good.

I believe we can all agree that gender equality is a prerequisite for fair, prosperous and peaceful societies. And it is also a *sine qua non* for genuine democracy.

This is why the Inter-Parliamentary Union has long placed gender equality high on its agenda. For many decades, we have been promoting gender equality in the world's national parliaments and, through their work, in societies at large.

While we still have a long way to go, we know that change is possible. And we know how to get there.

First, parliaments and institutions at large must embed gender equality at all levels and in all areas of decision-making. This includes equality in numbers and in influence, but also ensuring due consideration of the gender dimension in all deliberations.

The good news is that we have a roadmap. Just over a decade ago, IPU Members unanimously adopted a Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments.

The IPU defines a gender-sensitive parliament as a parliament that has equality in numbers, but also in leadership positions and across all committees. To be truly inclusive and representative, parliament must also have a clear mandate and be equipped to advance gender equality in its work. This means having dedicated policies and mechanisms with the needed authority and adequate resources.

In the world today, over 90 countries apply legislated quotas for women, and more and more mandate gender parity in parliament. Also, gender equality committees exist now in every other chamber of

parliament. And over 100 women's parliamentary caucuses across the globe have been amplifying the voices of women.

Also very importantly, gender-sensitive parliaments are parliaments that say no to any form of sexism, harassment and violence against women. More and more countries are adopting laws and policies to address that and build a culture of equality. Such policies must also apply to parliament.

Second, to pave the way to positive change, parliaments and all other institutions must have gender equality as an objective in all their endeavours. This includes removing discrimination in laws and policies where they subsist, and legislating to accelerate equality. It is not enough to have laws that are gender neutral. Laws must state gender equality objectives and include positive measures to reverse persisting inequalities, include those that have been historically excluded, and lift cultural and practical barriers to achieving equality.

Some will say that you need equal rights, and equality at school and in the economy first, before women can lead on an equal footing with men in political decision-making. Experience shows that we need to tackle all of this at once. We need women as role models, strong leadership and sustained efforts in all areas of life.

Parliaments can and must lead the way by adopting rights-affirming laws, reforming constitutions and laws, allocating resources for equality and building a culture that allows all voices to be heard equally. We must all embody the change that we want to see.

The IPU is most pleased to be collaborating with the Parliament of Mongolia and many other parliaments towards these objectives. And we look forward to the next steps in this collaboration.