



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity Building and the Further Implementation of the SDGs

Beijing, 6 July 2023

Honorable Chairpersons,
Honorable Members of Parliament,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to be with you today at this Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity Building and the Further Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I am glad that after four challenging years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are now able to meet again in person for the fifth edition of this seminar.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to the National People's Congress of China (NPC), in particular its Chairman, Mr. Leji Zhao, and the Secretary General of the NPC Standing Committee, Mr. Qi Liu, for our precious collaboration.

As you might be aware, the IPU regularly offers parliaments the opportunity to connect with one another, exchange ideas, and build their knowledge and capacity to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs. The IPU has organized more than 60 global, regional and national meetings on the SDGs since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. This has been possible in large measure thanks to the NPC, which has consistently provided the IPU with financial support in this area.

I share your emphasis on the need for community of mutual learning and exchange.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The IPU 2022-2026 Strategy gives special attention to sustainable development, as one of its four main policy areas. I was proud to see that, in approving this Strategy, your parliaments, together with the other IPU Members, recognized the importance of prioritizing actions towards the achievement of the SDGs over the next five years.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, parliaments have been engaging in multiple ways to implement the SDGs. In an extensive multi-country review we conducted in 2021-2022 on parliamentary SDG practices, we observed that a variety of approaches have been adopted, depending on parliaments' needs and specific characteristics. For example, some parliaments have established a multi-party taskforce on SDGs; others have opted for a joint bicameral parliamentary committee, or an SDG parliamentary forum or caucus; others are mainstreaming the SDGs into the work of existing standing committees.

We have also observed various interesting examples of parliamentary practices and initiatives, ranging from the establishment of innovative SDG portals to increase domestic accountability and transparency, to procedures aimed at strengthening the systematic legislative review process to ensure that the national legal framework is aligned with the SDGs.

Political will and engagement are definitely essential ingredients for success. However, they should be combined with other important elements such as collaboration and coordinated actions, aligned with the international commitments that countries have made.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The UN Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report shows a disturbing picture of the lack of progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In-depth analyses and estimates indicate that just 12% of the SDG targets are on track.

Under current trends, by 2030 only about one third of countries will meet the target to halve national poverty levels, and shockingly, the number of people facing hunger and food insecurity could increase.

Inequalities are at a record high. Almost 300 years would be required to close the gender gap in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws.

Concerning climate change, carbon dioxide levels are rising to a level not seen in two million years. Current actions to address the crisis are definitely not sufficient.

All of this means that if we don't act now, if we don't play our part in making the SDGs a reality by 2030, there won't be future generations and our present will increasingly be characterized by widespread poverty, conflicts, disease, water scarcity, and irreversible losses in our ecosystems.

Ladies and gentlemen,

You have the power to enact positive changes.

As representatives of the people, and through your parliamentary responsibilities, you can help boost the change we want to see in the world. There are many actions you can promote, facilitate and implement.

Based on the experience and work the IPU has been conducting in this area, I would like to set out some concrete activities that you, as parliamentarians, could undertake to help achieve sustainable and inclusive progress in your country, but also in your region and around the world.

- 1) **Advocate** for national development which pays equal attention to sustainable and inclusive economic growth, health and the well-being of all people and the planet. Make sure that policies, laws, programmes and budgets contribute to the achievement of the SDGs in an effective and coherent manner. If your Parliament has not yet established a mechanism or procedure to mainstream and deliver on the SDGs, advocate for this.
- 2) **Align** your work and political agenda **with the SDGs. Build alliances** within your parliament, with the executive branch and other relevant stakeholders. **Coordinate actions** and make sure they are aligned with international and national agreements.
- 3) Disaggregated data is extremely important to monitor the implementation of the SDGs. However, its availability is still limited. **Request data from the national statistical office and help ensure that such offices are adequately funded.**
- 4) Help **implement the provisions of the recently adopted UN resolution** "Enhancing the role of parliaments in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs" as a priority. Use it to enhance dialogue and cooperation with your government – including within the context of international and regional monitoring processes like the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, where countries voluntarily submit SDG progress reports, as well as the relevant forums organized by the UN Economic Commissions in your respective regions.

- 5) Increase opportunities to **consult citizens**, especially those that are underrepresented, marginalized and/or in vulnerable situations – to understand how things are progressing and if current strategies need to be adjusted. Involve them in the SDG implementation process. Inform the government if there is a need to correct actions.
- 6) Last but not least, **promote** campaigns that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, like the **new IPU campaign, Parliaments for the Planet**. Encourage your colleagues to take action to reduce their carbon footprint by changing day-to-day behaviour, improving the energy efficiency of your Parliament, and reducing carbon emissions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Action for sustainable development begins at home and should not stop there. It should be further developed through this type of event, which offers a unique opportunity to enhance parliamentary dialogue, coordination and cooperation.

The IPU stands ready to provide assistance in this area, if needed. Do not hesitate to request information from the IPU Secretariat and see how this support could be organized and tailored to your specific context.

It is my hope that during this interregional seminar you will actively engage with the issues at stake, share your views and experiences, discuss with peers from different parliaments of the world, and identify common concerns and possible solutions to accelerate the achievement of SDGs in a balanced, coherent and integrated manner.

I wish you all fruitful and constructive discussions.