



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

147th Assembly and related meetings
Forum of Young Parliamentarians

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Mr. President of the IPU,
Madam Representative of the Board of Young Parliamentarians,
Dear young parliamentarians,

I am very pleased to be joining you at this Forum once again.

As you know, this Assembly's theme is dedicated to parliamentary action on SDG 16, for peace, justice and strong institutions. What some of you may not be aware of is that the IPU is the official custodian for one of the indicators of this SDG. Namely, our data on ages of MPs in parliament.

I am very proud that the IPU is the global reference point when it comes to youth in parliament. This is only possible because of your parliaments' contributions and the data you provide to us on a regular basis. Knowledge is power. And this data is a powerful instrument to mobilize support for a more inclusive and equitable future where the voices of youth are not just heard but also making a difference in the halls of democracy.

It is, therefore, very timely that we focus on SDG 16 at the same time as we launch the new report on Youth participation in national parliament.

This report shows that young people, such as yourselves, continue to be strikingly underrepresented in parliaments. Only 2.8% of parliamentarians are 30 and under, and a mere 18.8% are 40 and under. These numbers not only prompt reflection, but resolute action to rectify this imbalance.

However, as you will see, this report is not just a document that highlights challenges, it is also a trove offering solutions. Our years of research and exchanges with members of this Forum have revealed many of the solutions that can help make our institutions more inclusive. Things like youth quotas, lowering the age of eligibility to run for office, building youth caucuses, empowering young MPs and aspirants, and more. These are tangible strategies the parliamentary community can put into action.

The IPU is here to monitor progress and serve as a source of information. But more importantly, we are also here to offer our support to your parliament's efforts. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that youth are not just statistics on paper, but active participants in shaping the world to come.

I wish to close by dedicating a few words to our IPU President. Mr. President, since the beginning of your tenure you have done so much to contribute to the IPU youth movement. From speaking to young people in the sand dunes of Djibouti, to championing the "I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!" Campaign to global leaders, I know this is a cause very close to your heart. Although your term as IPU President ends, we know that your commitment and dedication to empowering young people will only grow. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to you for all your efforts these last couple of years. And I would like to ask everyone to give the IPU President a round of applause for his contribution to this movement.

I wish you all a very productive meeting and Assembly.

Thank you.