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Speaking notes

Ms. Susan Kihika,
President of the Bureau of Women
Parliamentarians

General Debate on the theme:
*Parliaments as platforms to enhance
education for peace, security
and the rule of law*

140th IPU Assembly and related meetings
Doha, Saturday 7 April

Madam President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Madam President of the Forum of Young MPs of the IPU,
Distinguished guests,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to address this assembly today in my capacity as President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians.

Peace, security and the rule of law are enduring objectives that we all share – as individuals, as elected officials and as humanity itself, bound to share a common planet and a common history. With a world population of 7 billion people and limited natural resources, we need to learn to live together sustainably.

Yet, despite the tremendous efforts that many of our nations have made over the years, these goals remain far from being achieved today. On the contrary, the Global Peace Index actually showed a deteriorated global situation for the fourth consecutive year. Research from the World Justice Project reported a similar decline for the rule of law.

I argue for unity among all of us and our nations. And I call us all to focus our interest and resources on shaping and enabling our youth to be the guardians of the stability of peace, security and the rule of law.

There are more young people today than ever before. More than half the world population is under 30 years old. Despite this high proportion of the world population, young people's needs and rights are rarely prioritized.

Education is a human right that concerns them most of all. There is overwhelming evidence that investing in education offers a strong return on investment for more peaceful, happier and more prosperous societies. SDG 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights the link between education and peace. But education isn't simply about achieving a "higher state of knowledge". It is about equipping our youth with the tools they need to go out into the world and shape it for themselves.

Progress has of course been made: primary education enrolment in developing countries has reached 91 per cent. And yet, this progress is still not enough. About a third of countries in the developing regions have not achieved gender parity in primary education. In many regions of the world, girls still face barriers to entering both primary and secondary school. These disadvantages in education also translate into a lack of access to skills, and limited opportunities in the labour market for young women. This has to change!

We must make education a priority in both policy and practice. And we have to make firm commitments to provide free and accessible primary-school education to all boys and girls. We also need to encourage and provide incentives for our governments and the private sector to invest resources in the development of educational tools and facilities. Last but not least, teaching on peace, human rights and gender equality must be part of school curricula.

The opportunities are many and the moment is crucial. Let's act now.

Thank you very much.