

Fellow parliamentarians,

As we discuss the importance of education, we cannot lose sight of the need to educate ourselves – as parliamentarians – as well. For me, engaging in the work of the IPU has been an important part of that education.

Forty (40) years ago, I participated as a new young parliamentarian at the 66th IPU Assembly in Caracas, Venezuela.

I hope one day we will be able to go back to Caracas, to again celebrate democracy in that wonderful country.

À l'époque, il y avait peu de femmes parlementaires de tous les pays, peu de femmes aux conférences, 10 femmes députées du Canada.

Nous nous sommes battus pour ce sujet à la maison, aux Nations Unies ainsi qu'ici, au UIP.

Nous nous sommes battus à cette époque pour les droits des femmes, le droit à la propriété, le droit de choisir, le droit de vote.

De plus en plus de femmes à la maison. Vers la parité hommes-femmes au Sénat.

Il reste encore beaucoup de travail à faire.

Nous, à L'IPU nous nous sommes battus pour ces femmes.

We changed our rules to encourage mixed delegations and the participation of women, and at our last Assembly we had over 200 women parliamentarians, a third of all delegates.

We here at the IPU fought for those women. Stood up for their rights at a time when they were largely being denied.

At that same conference back in 1979 we fought for the protection of journalists and press freedom.

Sadly this issue remains critically important today. By one count, the number of journalists who were killed in retaliation for their work doubled last year. At the IPU we continue to call for the rights of journalists to be protected, including at an event recently announced for this September in London.

We have also fought for the rights of indigenous communities, and other minorities around the world. To give them a voice and a place at the table.

We in Canada know this is not easy. We are at the beginning of a long – sometimes painful - process of reconciliation with our indigenous peoples. This has required us to face the hard truths of our past.

Recently we at the IPU have been fighting for the greater participation and rights of young parliamentarians, including through the Not Too Young to Run campaign.

All of these battles were fought at the IPU. This is our shared history. One in which we should be proud. We at the IPU have led by example, taking what we've accomplished here back home with us. It has not always been easy. But we have promoted change for the better.

Universal rights, not new rights.

Rights recognized for all groups.

I am not expecting all of you to change your minds. You decided last year not to debate the extending many of these rights to an additional group. We recognize that these conversations are difficult. As conversations in the past have been difficult.

Au Canada, nous n'avons que récemment avancé sur les mêmes sujets.

Depuis 1889, vous savez que la création de l'UIP est plus ancienne que l'ONU. Nous avons défendu et étendu les droits.

Nous n'acceptons pas la torture et l'avons dit à la maison autant qu'ici.

Nous n'acceptons pas l'emprisonnement illégal.

Nous condamnons la peine de mort même si de nombreux pays la pratiquent encore.

Pour la même raison, nous avons ajouté tous ces droits et les avons ciblés pour être reconnus.