



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

148th IPU Assembly and related meetings
High-level meeting on the crisis of multilateralism: Root causes and possible solutions

Geneva, 25 March 2024

Distinguished Speakers,

Now that the context and purpose of this meeting are clear, I'd like to complete the picture, as it were, by giving you a sense of the practical ways in which parliaments and the UN interact on a regular basis.

What we have been pursuing at the UN over the last 25 years or so amounts to a “political project” to transform global governance in a way that is more democratic, more responsive to the needs of people everywhere.

Parliaments represent people from all walks of life and all political beliefs. So, parliaments have a key role to play at the UN and in multilateralism in general, as we just heard.

Our political project has three distinct but inter-related objectives:

- To influence and inform UN decision-making processes
- To monitor the work of the UN and related international organizations
- To help implement UN agreements through legislation.

Formally, our interaction with the UN rests on two pillars: one is the Observer Status that the IPU gained at the UN in 2002, which has enabled us to represent IPU positions in relevant debates of the UN.

The other pillar consists of a number of General Assembly resolutions on *Interaction between the UN, parliaments and the IPU*. Incrementally, these resolutions have provided for many practical access points for parliaments and parliamentarians at the UN.

While the IPU as a global organization is in the forefront of advocating for parliaments at the UN in New York, Geneva and Vienna, in truth, the relationship between parliaments and the UN depends most critically on action at the *national level*, where each parliament must work to influence its government's position at the UN and to hold the government accountable for its global commitments.

To support this interaction between each parliament and the UN via the government, we facilitate the participation of MPs in major UN conferences, support parliamentary oversight of government reports to the UN (e.g., Voluntary National Reviews for the SDGs), organize briefings for MPs on UN reform issues, and engage parliaments with UN country teams.

At the *global level*, IPU interaction with the UN comes down to the organization of meetings to accompany UN debates (e.g., the annual Parliamentary Hearing, or the Parliamentary Meeting at the climate COPs), as well as to a host of information sharing activities to empower parliaments to make their voices heard.

Our work over the years has helped break the wall that segregated parliaments from domestic affairs as if international relations were the exclusive domain of the executive.

We have opened most of the doors, developed most of the tools, and mastered most of the processes that matter to us at the UN.

The real challenge at this critical juncture is in making sure that more parliamentarians from all sides of the political spectrum participate and capitalize on the opportunities they now have to bring their views to the fore.

In short, we need to scale up.

At the end of the day, parliaments may need to invest more in their own institutional capacities and the IPU itself may need more resources to cover the UN more in depth.

We have a long way to go on this front, but I am confident that, with your leadership, we can succeed.

Thank you.