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## Address by Mr. Martin Chungong

### Secretary General of the IPU

Mr. Martin Chungong

Interregional seminar on  
parliamentary capacity-building and  
the further implementation of the  
SDGs

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Mr. Vice-Chairman of the National People's Congress of China,  
Distinguished Parliamentarians,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honour to be with you today on the occasion of the second *Interregional seminar on parliamentary capacity-building and the further implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)* in Beijing and, on behalf of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I wish to welcome you all.

The National People's Congress is resolutely engaged in the implementation of the SDGs. By hosting this meeting again—the first one was held in 2016—the NPC shows not only that it is particularly attentive to parliamentary capacity-building for the implementation of the SDGs, but also that it is very interested in encouraging interregional exchange, in particular the South-South exchange, to establish mutually beneficial cooperation.

I would therefore, once again, wish to express my deepest gratitude to the National People's Congress, in particular to the Chairman of the NPC, Mr. Zhang Dejiang, as well as to the NPC Vice-Chairman and Secretary General, Mr. Wang Chen, for their warm welcome and their efforts to gather us here around a subject we hold close to our hearts. This seminar is a logical continuation of the fruitful collaboration between the National People's Congress and the IPU, focusing on a parliamentary contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Your generous support and financial contribution has enabled us to expand our field of action in the mobilization and capacity-building of parliaments for the efficient implementation of the SDGs on the local, national and world levels.

The holding of this seminar in Beijing is symbolically very important for various reasons. Following its remarkable progress of the last 40 years, China, a source of economic, environmental and technologic inspiration, has been able to carry out important reforms, allowing hundreds of thousands of people to break out of the cycle of poverty and make this country one of the most engaged precursors in the fight

against climate change. China's interactions with the African continent is proof of important multisectoral cooperation anchored in strategic plans aimed at enhancing mutual prosperity, that is the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

The SDGs are particularly important in the eyes of parliamentarians. The SDGs are a crucial plan in the pursuit of coherent and synergistic development. They also unambiguously are an expression of the will and interest of parliaments to improve the life of their citizens and the health of the planet. This is at the very core of the role of parliaments. A parliament is useful only to the extent to which it has the will to contribute to the well-being of its citizens, all of its citizens. The 2030 Agenda does, after all, insist on the need to leave no one behind in the development process. This requirement is all the more imperative as, today, parliaments are faced with numerous challenges that have to be dealt with resolutely. If this is not done, they risk losing all legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

This is primarily the reason why the IPU got parliaments involved with the UN and the process of consultations and negotiations on the SDGs. The views of parliaments and parliamentarians the world over have enriched the way the SDGs were formulated and articulated. It is through this process that IPU Members have reiterated their goal to further the realization of sustainable development based on human rights, equality, the eradication of poverty and peace. The IPU is very proud to have contributed to this process and is pleased to see that there is considerable and tangible progress in awareness-raising and implementation of the SDGs on the parliamentary level.

It is through many events on the national, regional and interregional levels, that the IPU has been able to enhance the knowledge and awareness of parliaments regarding the SDGs. Since 2015 the IPU has multiplied the number of seminars and conferences in different regions of the world such as Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Pacific, and to initiate parliaments to the 2030 Agenda and refine their capacity-building strategies for the SDGs and for concrete and synergistic implementation of the SDGs.

The IPU, in cooperation with UNDP, has established a self-assessment toolkit to assist parliaments with the implementation of the SDGs. This toolkit has been designed to assist parliaments in identifying all the means at their disposal and the institutional shortcomings that have to be overcome in order to contribute efficiently to the implementation of the SDGs in their respective countries. I welcome the fact that many parliaments have already used the toolkit and have disseminated it widely among parliaments and their partners.

In all its initiatives, the IPU is working relentlessly to have all parliaments commit:

- to contribute to the inclusion of the SDGs in all legislative acts, including budgets;
- to review the current structure and internal processes of their committees so as to have them integrate efficiently and coherently all SDGs relevant to parliamentary activities;
- to contribute to the elaboration and implementation of the national sustainable development strategy. This is how the IPU advocates a more dynamic interaction with the different stakeholders, namely civil society and private sector representatives and citizens in general;
- to demand their respective governments to prepare a report on the implementation of the national SDGs strategy for submission to parliament for careful examination;

- to examine all national progress reports submitted by their governments to the United Nations within the framework of the global review of progress by the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the occasion of this seminar, you will be directed to give special attention to climate change and to its impact on global development. Climate change is everybody's challenge and has long-term repercussions on human and ecological systems. It is absolutely essential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to maintain the average temperature of our planet below the 2°C threshold compared with the pre-industrial level and to pursue efforts to limit the rise in temperature. This action is clearly supported by the Paris Agreement but also by legislation, national policies and regulations supplemented by actions on the local, national and regional levels. I therefore welcome the opportunity we have been given to deal with this matter, to devise ways and means of integrating it into national programmes and to deal with it by transposing international agreements into national legislation.

South-South cooperation is an essential component in the fight against climate change. The sharing and transfer of experiences, knowledge, and of joint research in different sectors (for example, agriculture, technology, science) are also highly recommended as they impact substantially the process of poverty reduction and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. As a leading country in these areas, China has the responsibility to facilitate and strengthen inclusive cooperation to be able to establish a new model of development based on human rights, equality and peace.

I therefore invite you to make this seminar a forum for open and constructive debates so as to drive forward these discussions and identify concrete strategies and recommendations that will give your parliaments new impetus to play a pivotal role in the implementation of the SDGs. On behalf of the IPU, I wish to reiterate our full engagement in assisting parliaments in this effort. I hope that this seminar will represent an initial phase in future promising gatherings in collaboration with the National People's Congress of China to strengthen parliamentary capacities and to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs on the global level.

I thank each and every one of you for being here. I also wish to express my gratitude to the team of national experts who will guide the work of this seminar with their expertise, advice, experience and know-how.

I wish you every success in your work.