



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Speech of the IPU Secretary General, Martin Chungong, to the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism

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On behalf of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I welcome this Conference, which allows the global community to forge a stronger coalition in support of the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to prevent violent extremism. I convey the global parliamentary community's support for this Plan. The IPU and its member Parliaments fully endorse the call for a comprehensive approach encompassing not only essential security-based counter-terrorism measures, but also systematic preventive steps to address the drivers of violent extremism.

The IPU is determined to play an active role in the implementation of this Plan of Action. Within the allotted time, let me highlight a few ways in which the IPU is supporting and will be supporting this endeavour.

- Firstly, we are working to help bridge the legislative gap in the implementation of counter-terrorism commitments. It is of capital importance that parliaments be mobilized in support of key international commitments. The UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action is our such commitment. As the world organization of parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union will continue to build awareness among the parliamentary community on these commitments and to encourage parliaments to incorporate them in the national legislative frameworks and plans of action. Our ongoing efforts to promote African parliaments' contribution to the implementation of resolution 1540 are a classical case in point here.
- Secondly, Goal 16 of the recently adopted SDGs provides an important framework for resolving the root causes of violent extremism. Indeed, we are focussing on strengthening the institutions of democratic governance, including parliaments. The IPU and its member parliaments are convinced that the success of the sustainable development agenda hinges on democracy, human rights, and public institutions that are strong, effective and accountable. Time and time again, we have seen how countries with weak and non-inclusive parliaments have slipped into violence and instability, opening the door to violent extremism. We are committed therefore to Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and will be working with our Members at all levels – national, regional, international – to make this Goal a reality. It is crucial that parliaments continue to serve as a platform for inclusive dialogue and discussion, with all components of society feeling a sense of belonging because their interests and concerns are adequately articulated on the national level. Indeed, parliaments should be drivers of conflict resolution rather than active participants in fanning the flames of conflict.

- Related to this second area of focus for us are the efforts we are deploying to rejuvenate democracy by giving more voice to the youth. We have just come back from Lusaka where we had our Assembly with this theme prominent on the agenda. I notice the UNSG's Envoy on Youth Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi is very active at this Conference. He was in Lusaka and can testify to the enthusiasm of MPs to come up with innovative solutions and specific courses of action to better engage young people in public life, make the institutions of democracy more responsive to the people, and generally enhance transparency. I am confident that the newly-established IPU Forum of Young MPs will help us monitor progress and bring about the necessary change and transformation.
- Of course, we can not effectively address violent extremism without more vigorous efforts to achieve gender equality and fight violence against women. Inequality and violence are key drivers of extremism. In this connection, I commend the bold efforts of International Geneva in the context of its Gender Champions initiative. I will continue to be a strong Gender Champion. The IPU will continue to implement more robustly its campaign to ensure more equitable representation of women in parliaments and their effective involvement in the work of parliaments.
- Lastly, I see a role for the IPU and parliaments in stepping up parliamentary action to help dismantle terrorist networks, combat hatred, and counteract terrorist propaganda. Practical steps include urging parliaments to legislate to combat pro-terror websites and to criminalize acts such as travelling abroad to commit terror, recruiting and training terrorists or funding terrorism.

The time available does not allow me to delve into the full range of efforts we are committed to deploying in support of the global drive to prevent violent extremism. Suffice it to say we will spare no effort in mobilizing parliaments worldwide as part of our moral responsibility to contribute to a more peaceful and stable world.

Thank you.