



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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IPU Intervention – Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU

New York, 22 September 2017

I wish to thank UNAOC for organizing this meeting, and for emphasizing the critical importance of youth engagement.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is the world organization of parliaments, with over 170 Member Parliaments representing more than 6.5 billion people.

For us at IPU, youth participation in politics is a must: it is a must for democracy, a must for effective and legitimate policy-making, and a must for peaceful societies. Without the inclusion of young people, democracy is incomplete and policies cannot be well designed and implemented. The risk of exclusion is high, and can lead to apathy, discontent, and in worst cases, violence.

Marginalization and exclusion of young people can not only drive resentment, but it is also a waste of their incredible value to our common challenges.

The story on how we reached this strong conclusion began in 2010 with young MPs as allies for international dialogue and peace. A Resolution on youth participation was adopted by the IPU. It gave birth to what I like to call the IPU “youth movement”.

The framework the Resolution set is very straight forward: it calls on parliaments, governments and political parties to take legal and policy action for youth participation. It recommends the adoption of youth quotas and the alignment of the age to run with the age to vote. It calls for greater partnership between parliaments and youth organizations, as well as with the international community.

Walking the talk, we have established a Forum of Young MPs from across the world. This formal body is an invaluable counterpart for international dialogue among young people from all origins and walks of life. It monitors youth participation and provides guidance to parliaments to open up to youth and better include their perspectives in its work.

Today:

Only 1.9% of MPs are under 30.

30% of parliaments have no MPs aged under 30.

In 73% of countries, the age to qualify as an MP is higher, sometimes much higher, than the age to vote.

The IPU is committed to promoting youth participation and raising youth voices because we are convinced that we need their talents, creativity and energy to craft today’s policies and laws for a better tomorrow. I am convinced that young MPs are ready for this task! They are strong allies for all of us working for inclusion, development, and sustaining peace. They need our support.

I know that in this room today, we all agree to this statement. I welcome our partnership in working to advance youth empowerment at all levels.

Thank you.

IPU Resolution, Youth Participation in the Democratic Process: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/122/res-3.htm>

IPU Report, Youth Participation in Politics 2016: <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/youthrep-e.pdf>