



Union Interparlementaire

Pour la démocratie. Pour tous.

Speech of Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

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Dialogue on Migration 2018**

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Mr. Chair,
Distinguished participants,

I would like to congratulate you on organizing this second session of the International Dialogue on Migration and thank you for inviting us to contribute to this debate.

This is an appropriate forum for me to pay tribute to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for the tireless efforts it has made, and continues to make, to ensure the proper management of this sensitive and topical issue of migration.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to the IOM for its support to the IPU's contribution to promote safe, orderly and regular migration.

Mr. Chair,
Ladies and gentlemen,

In the context of members of parliament and parliaments, the question of migration governance and related capacities comes down, first and foremost, to *politics*. With or without the capacity to master the issue, members of parliament are driven by political considerations that reflect the mood of their electorates and socioeconomic conditions at the national level. Much of what we have done as an organization with so many meetings and declarations is aimed at establishing a common understanding among members of parliament of migration as an issue that needs to be dealt with objectively and as much as possible by de-politicizing it.

This is easier said than done but that is a necessary first step. As long as politics come into play, capacities matter little and sound migration policies that can help reap benefits of migration and avoid the usual pitfalls are ignored.

The promotion of parliamentary involvement in migration management has been a priority for the IPU. In October 2015, our organization adopted a Declaration on *The imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration following* a rich and lively general debate during the 133rd IPU Assembly. The Declaration focuses on concrete measures parliamentarians can take to ensure sound policy-making.

The Declaration followed the launch of the handbook on *Migration, human rights and governance* published jointly by the IPU, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Labour Organization. The handbook offers an overview of the legal framework and tools parliamentarians need to be aware of in order to help ensure the protection of the rights of migrants and the governance of international migration in compliance with the law.

In addition to the numerous other initiatives undertaken by the IPU on this subject since 2015, the Organization has taken part in a number of others aimed at strengthening parliamentary engagement on migration matters.

The critical contribution that parliaments can make to migration governance in the context of the Global Compact once it is adopted, includes: protection through the incorporation of migrants' rights in legislation; support for the development of a governmental approach, including the adoption of indicators for implementation of target 10.7 of the SDGs and monitoring progress; promotion of a more balanced approach based on the empirical data about migration. All of this in order to help change of discourse on migration.

In the IPU's view, parliamentary ownership of the migration issue is a prerequisite for developing a vision that would support a coherent parliamentary strategy adapted to the current situation, including reference to migration in parliamentary priority actions.

At the 139th IPU Assembly later this month, our members will adopt a resolution on *Strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation on migration and migration governance in view of the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, which invites parliaments to design and implement a parliamentary action plan on migration for the implementation of the Global Compact when it is adopted, and to set a timetable to report back to the IPU on progress made.

We believe that the Global Compact for Migration strikes a fine balance between the rights of States and those of migrants. For this reason, it is a politically sound document that should be "sellable" to politicians of all political persuasions. This, however, is not automatic, and will require a proactive effort, which the IPU is prepared to make.

The first political choice that needs to be made is to stop looking at migration primarily through a *security lens*. Parliaments need to understand that this is a development, human rights issue that requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-parliament approach. This requires a raft of institutional capacities to be developed or fine-tuned. Many countries lack a proper migration policy or have policies in place that are out of sync with social, economic and environmental realities. Parliaments need to ask for strong policies to be put in place and to involve citizens and migrants themselves in the design of those policies. Parliaments also need stronger capacities to oversee the implementation of those policies. Many parliaments currently lack those capacities. The IPU and the international community should help.

Enhanced migration governance requires the adoption of national policies that take into account the international dimension and which facilitate the incorporation of international dialogue into the planning of development strategies. In this regard, it is necessary to design this new migration policy architecture within the framework of the holistic structure suggested by the Global Compact.

We believe that the time for silos and isolated national migration policies is over. A holistic approach to migration requires more coordinated and harmonized strategies

for targeted interventions. International cooperation is essential to this end. We encourage parliamentarians to establish inter-parliamentary cooperation to facilitate consultations on and the harmonization of strategies, the exchange of good practices and to support the implementation of multilateral provisions; and to develop partnerships with other stakeholders, including civil society and international organizations, to join efforts at the regional and international levels for broadened interventions with lasting impact.

In addition, we believe it is important to continue reflecting on the following areas while developing targeted migration strategies:

- The root causes of migration. Material and financial support for development, increased investment, functioning democratic States and regional economic integration are essential to this end. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a viable long-term strategic approach in this respect.
- Sociopolitical and economic stability should be supported by a more positive discourse on migration. The IPU supports and encourages assertive leadership with a focus on the positive aspects of migration, and fact-based discourse by parliamentarians, governments, officials, business leaders, the media and other stakeholders. A parliamentary approach to this objective should include concerted national action programmes and strengthened domestic legislation against racism and xenophobia and in favour of non-discrimination and equality.
- Our efforts should also aim to promote improved access to education, training and continuous development to tackle the increasing global shortages of people with tertiary-level qualifications and the necessary vocational and technical skills.
- The protection and security of women, children, unaccompanied children and other vulnerable groups should be at the heart of the actions we take. As we know, the vulnerability of these groups exposes them to violence, exploitation and other reprehensible practices, including trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery.

Parliamentarians are encouraged to create a legislative environment that is conducive to human rights and hostile to indefensible practices related to migration in countries of origin, transit and destination.

I thank you for your attention.