



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ENVOY ON YOUTH

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Keynote Address

The IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians on Agenda 2030: Youth leading the way, leaving no one behind

Lusaka, Zambia, 16 March, 2016, 10:15

Your Excellency Mr. Patrick Matibini, President of the National Assembly of Zambia,

Your Excellency Mr. Saber CHOWDHURY, President of the IPU,

Your Excellency Mr. Martin CHUNGONG, Secretary-General of the IPU,

Your Excellency Mr. Vincent MWALE, Ministry of Youth of Zambia,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished young parliamentarians,

I would like to start my remarks by sharing warm greetings from the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the IPU and the National Assembly of Zambia for convening **the 3rd IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians.**

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to congratulate all young people in Zambia with the national youth day, which was celebrated on March 12. Zambia is a committed member of the International Community and has well embraced the UN values of democracy and global solidarity. I commend the efforts of the Zambian government and people and I look forward during my visit to interact with youth groups and government officials to make sure that the UN continues to offer its full support to youth development in the country.

The theme of our conference today come at a significant time to discuss Youth leadership in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development.

Just 3 days ago the UN Statistical Commission endorsed the SDGs Indicator Framework.

We expect that in July the UN Member States will adopt the list of indicators after the consideration at the Economic and Social Council.

This is the final piece in a momentous journey and will mark the end of an almost 4 year long official process to develop the global goals.

Now we have a little less than 15 years to deliver, what I call, the boldest development agenda in the history of mankind. With 17 goals, 169 targets and 231 global indicators. Therefore, implementing as well as the monitoring the SDGs will be a major task, for developing and developed countries alike.

Now in order to deliver the 2030 Agenda, we need to expand our partnerships and make sure that everyone is on board. Efforts of the governments or any other public, civil, or private sectors in silos will not be enough. Partnership is key to build a global movement behind the SDGs. And the MPs are central to this effort.

That is why our conference today represents a unique and timely platform to discuss youth empowerment through parliamentary actions in year ONE of the SDGs. Convening this conference in Africa also sends an important message about the potential of African youth in making a huge leap to development and sustainability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations is proud of the strong partnership we have established with the IPU and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

Through your commitment and national actions and advocacy, we can do more to promote and advocate for young people's rights and participation around the world.

We all agree that young people are agents of transformation, and to unlock their power we have to urgently address the complex challenges they face today.

At 1.8 billion, today's generation of young people is the largest in history. It is also a generation that is disproportionately affected by today's global issues.

To provide just a snapshot of this reality:

More than 73 million youth are currently unemployed. Youth unemployment rate for youth is 10% higher than it is for adults.

Over 500 million young people live on less than \$2 a day.

Around 600 million youth live in conflict-affected areas.

Some 100 million young people worldwide are unable to read and write.

As you know, all these issues are deeply interconnected. Some of you even spoke of an ‘unemployment **bomb**’ at last year’s Conference to convey the wide-reaching effects of failing to take action on what might seem to be a single issue in a thematic sense.

Along with these alarming figures and reality, young people are frequently cast as the problem. I would like to make it clear, young people are not ‘the problem.’ They are **the solution**.

Through their resilience, innovation, creativity and energy we can pave the way for a better future for all. It’s them who will carry forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is young people who will see the decisive agreements of Paris through to fruition. As the Secretary-General’s said:

This generation is the first to have the tools to end extreme poverty, but might be the last generation that can reverse climate change.

For them to carry this historic mission, we have to put in place an enabling environment to support their active engagement.

Overcoming today's challenges require **the full inclusion** of young people as crucial actors and stakeholders at **all levels** of decision-making.

Let me be clear: Young people's experiences of engagement or alienation – their inclusion or marginalisation – will determine whether we manage to deliver a more sustainable future by 2030 or miss this historic opportunity.

So let me conclude by sharing for 3 concrete asks with you:

1. We need you to continue act as role models to young people in your country. Your path to become elected representatives of your communities, your dedication to public good and service can inspire millions of young people.
2. Advocate for inclusiveness, more resources and support to elevate youth issues. You should continue making sure that youth focused policies and programmes are adequately designed, implemented and backed up with resources
3. Help us in delivering the SDGs by adapting national legislations, policies and programmes to meet the global goals

You have the privilege position to make that happen. If we work together in inclusive and transformative ways, we can ensure that truly no one is left behind.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to our discussion!