

## **International Youth Day: Highlighting the high importance and value of youth**

The President of the Inter – Parliamentary Union (IPU) Forum of Young Parliamentarians and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname, Mr. Melvin Bouva, issued the following statement on International Youth Day:

“International Youth Day is a recognition of one of humanity’s most valuable resources: the enthusiasm, ingenuity, fresh perspectives and vitality of our world’s young women and men.

“Youth have much to offer to help address the global challenges we face today – from tackling climate change to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet our potential is largely untapped. This is not only a waste of all we could contribute, but also leads many to lose trust in our democratic institutions.

Every one of us need to be aware that the youth over the whole world has a critical role in the development of our nations. The youth faces major challenges and at the same time they have to be formed socially and professionally for their future and the society. That’s why it’s very important for us to give special attention and protection to this very strategic resource. We must take the opportunity to stimulate the youth for participating in good governance which results in independent citizens who can contribute to the development of the country, nation and the world.

“Youth are knocking on the door waiting to be let in to work with people of all ages, yet too often we are kept shut out. Only 2.2 per cent of the world’s parliamentarians are under the age of 30. Some 65 per cent of parliamentary chambers exclude young people who are eligible to vote from holding office, simply because of their age. This exclusion is not only an injustice in and of itself, but it also diminishes our collective ability to solve the world’s challenges at a time when all hands are needed on deck.

“The IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians is the collective voice of young MPs from around the world who are standing up for youth and for their political empowerment. Working both in our parliaments and in our communities, we repeat our mantra: No decisions about youth without youth. By coordinating our efforts with young MP champions from around the world – such as at the upcoming [Sixth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians](#) taking place in Paraguay on 9 and 10 September – and sharing strategies, tips and advice, we are working to keep the trust of young men and women and regain it where it has been lost. On International Youth Day, we reaffirm our commitment to raising the voice of youth so that it is louder and more powerful, not only today, but each and every day.”

As president of the Forum I will surely further encourage and support the IPU and its agencies, memberstates and donors, as well as the private sector institutions, to provide increased support for the implementation of concrete initiatives that promote the involvement, participation and development of our youth.

Together we can and will work towards creating a youth and child friendly society in which children and youth can grow up in a healthy and safe way, develop their talents and actively contribute to their own development and that of their country and the world society as a whole”.