

President,

The IPU very much welcomes this conference, which was long overdue.

Water and sanitation are key to human well-being, environmental preservation and livelihoods everywhere; yet in far too many countries and in sub-national jurisdictions, water scarcity and water pollution are treated as marginal problems.

It is absolutely vital that we place water and sanitation – indeed the entire SDG 6 and its various targets – to the top of national agendas.

It was with these thoughts in mind that this year's IPU-UN Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations was entitled Water for people and the planet: Stop the waste, change the game, invest in the future.

That two-day event had some 150 parliamentarians from 46 countries participate. It was organized jointly with the President of the General Assembly. Its summary report is in circulation to member states and will be on our IPU.org website soon.

Making the hearing's focus on SDG 6 fits as part of IPU's broader commitment to the SDGs as a whole. Indeed, the SDGs are central to our work for peace, democracy and development.

Though their law-making and oversight roles, parliaments are key to the implementation of the SDGs. The IPU support parliaments in both developed and developing countries with policy advice and capacity building projects to mainstream the SDGs in their work.

In a nutshell, the hearing brought home the following key messages:

First, all action for water and sanitation must be grounded on the recognition that these are **public goods and fundamental human rights**. Governments have an obligation to lead.

Second, the provision of water and sanitation to billions of people who are currently going without or are at risk of deprivation will require **huge infrastructure investments**.

Governments need to spend dramatically more money and resources in water conservation and provision. They must use a mix of taxes and subsidies to **ban unsustainable water use** practices and promote healthy ecosystems.

Where the private sector is involved as an investor or service provider, there must be strong guarantees that water and sanitation are treated as public goods and not mere commodities to be sold at the highest possible price.

Third, water and sanitation policies must be mainstreamed more consistently across all departments, ministries, and sectors, including agriculture, energy, health, education, public works, and the environment. In particular, water needs to be more central to our response to the climate crisis.

As well, policies must be more inclusive of all communities and groups, such as women, who bear the heaviest burden, indigenous people, farmers, and others.

Fourth, water and sanitation policies and budgets needs must draw from more precise data and analysis at local and national levels. Water indicators should be shared among all stakeholders to ensure resources are utilized most efficiently. Importantly, this data should be segregated by gender, socioeconomic status, geographic location, and other context-specific criteria.

Going forward, we must all work harder to mobilize the resolve and the political will without which all of these recommendations will fall flat.

Thank you.