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INAUGURAL SESSION

127TH IPU ASSEMBLY

QUÉBEC CITY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21ST

Your Excellency (the Governor General),

Mr. President (of the IPU),

Mr. Deputy Secretary General (of the UN),

Mr. Secretary General (of the IPU),

Honourable parliamentarians,

Ladies and gentlemen:

- On behalf of the Speaker of Canada's House of Commons, the Honourable Andrew Scheer, I would like to welcome you all to Québec City.
- I am a Member of Parliament and the first Vice-President of the Canadian IPU Group, and am honoured to be delivering this message to you on behalf of Speaker Scheer.
- I know that many of you have travelled great distances to be here today – we are thrilled that you have made the journey.
- The 127th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is particularly special for us. While it marks the fourth time since 1925 that Canada has hosted the IPU, it is the first time an Assembly has been held outside our nation's capital.
- With this in mind, let me open with a few words about our remarkable host city, one that is central to Canadian history.

- Just four years ago, we celebrated the 400th Anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's founding of Québec City. Through his pioneering spirit, Champlain was able to establish the first permanent French settlement in North America. His love for Québec City was passed on to generations of French settlers, whose determination ensured that French political, cultural, linguistic and legal traditions would remain a strong and vibrant part of Canada.
- This exceptional city is imbued with a francophone character, a rich culture, outstanding architecture and exceptional cuisine.
- As you venture outside this Convention Centre, cobblestone streets will guide you to the cradle and heart of French-speaking North America. During your stay, I hope you will take some time to explore this historic city – I guarantee you will not be disappointed.
- All of these qualities make Québec City a fitting choice for this 127th Assembly, during which a Special Debate will address *Citizenship, identity, and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world*.
- In addition to this debate, many other topics will be dealt with our panel and standing committee sessions.
- The Canadian IPU Group and the IPU Secretariat have been working closely for some time to prepare this dynamic program.

- These sessions cover issues of direct relevance to the objectives of the IPU, which Canada strongly shares: the promotion and advancement of the core values of parliamentary democracy, human rights and gender equality.
- A notable example is this week's planned special session on gender partnership. We are beginning the important task of establishing a Plan of Action that will help guide our parliamentary institutions in their efforts to ensure that they both reflect and promote gender equality in their structures, methods, and daily work.
- During the meetings of the Committee on UN Affairs, you will address the value and benefits of multilateralism and parliamentary diplomacy. This discussion will shed light on the ways in which all of us, as parliamentarians, can work to promote dialogue, foster mutual understanding, and build stronger ties between peoples of different nations and regions.
- As your program makes clear, we will not only be exploring these core tenets of parliamentary work, but will be tackling directly some of the most challenging and pressing issues facing policy-makers and citizens today.
- Recent incidents of violence and instability on the world stage have demonstrated yet again the vital nature of our work to ensure the protection

of civilians in situations of armed conflict, a topic which you will debate in your first standing committee.

- The panel session on *Creating opportunities for youth in today's global economy* will help to identify the efforts that are needed to ensure that our young people are reaching their long-term potential, contributing fully to and benefiting from economic growth, and participating meaningfully in society. Indeed, youth employment and education have emerged as key concerns in these times of global economic uncertainty.
- As a final highlight, a panel session on *Building peace after conflict* will address the considerable undertakings that are needed to ensure that the opportunity created for a society by the end of armed conflict is consolidated into durable peace.
- Each of these topics showcases the relevance of the IPU.
- Twice a year, parliamentarians from countries spanning the globe come together for IPU assemblies. It is a forum that allows parliamentarians to address complex global problems, as well as sensitive societal issues such as reconciliation and inclusion.
- We cannot lose sight of what a unique and important opportunity such a gathering of voices, perspectives, experiences, knowledge and resources affords.

- I know that all of you will take full advantage of this occasion to reinforce the ideals of representative democracy and the merits of the *parliamentary* perspective as you debate these pressing issues that we as a global community currently face.
- On behalf of Speaker Scheer, let me close by welcoming you again to Québec City and wishing you all the best in your coming work.
- The Parliament of Canada is honoured to be your host.
- Thank you.