Honorable Chairs, Honorable Members of Parliaments,

I am proud to report, on behalf of the World Health Organization, on a very fruitful collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and to present key opportunities for the SDG agenda, which is an economic, environmental and social agenda, as stated by Ms. Amina Mohammed, Secretary General Special Advisor on 2015 Development Planning.

WHO considers the collaboration with IPU and Member Parliaments as an extremely valuable opportunity to engage stakeholders with a key enabling role in legislation and oversight, in accountability and advocacy. Health needs to be high on the agenda of countries, and you are the ones that can raise it up.

WHO, together with partners of the global health community, is joining forces to ensure that women’s and children’s health remain high on the global agenda as well as on the agenda of countries. In 2010, the UNSG launched the ‘Global Strategy for Women and Children's Health’ to accelerate MDG4 and 5. Maternal and child mortality have gone down by 50% since 1990, a great result showing that it is possible, but that more needs to be done to reach the MDGs goals. Less women are now dying giving life, than in 1990, but we still count 800 maternal deaths every day, with large inequities between and within countries. As a woman, as a mother, as an obstetrician/gynaecologist, as a former MP in the Belgian Senate and a current WHO womens health lead, I consider this as an unacceptable, silent tragedy that call from more outrage and action! The unfinished MDG agenda calls for strong investments in what we know that works, such as reproductive health and rights, and better access to family planning. Better care around childbirth is a triple return on investment saving women and newborns and preventing stillbirths.

As we transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, it is imperative to accelerate momentum not only in women and children’s health, but also in adolescents and young people that are more that 20% of the world population. Given the demographic divident in many parts of the world, investing in young people, and especially in young girls, is an economic and social investment.
I am proud to share three major strategies that the UN/WHO is keen to finalize within the next year, and that are going to have a crucial role within the SDG agenda.

1. The first is the renewed *Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s, and Adolescents’ Health*, lead by the office of the UNSG. This strategy will incorporate the unfinished MDG agenda, but also build on new evidence, and on emerging diseases such as non-communicable diseases and cancers. Focus will also go to critical population groups such as adolescents and those living in fragile and conflict settings. The aim of the new GS 2016-30 calls for *Every Woman, Every Child, Every Adolescent and Every Setting*. This strategy will be discussed at this IPU Assembly tomorrow, during the Committee on Democracy and Human Rights session and a side event at 12.30. The outcome will be a brief report on how IPU and MPs can contribute to the Global Strategy. This report will be presented in South Africa early May during the next regional consultation on the Global Strategy.

2. The second global initiative regards the issue of *Violence against women and children*. Recent global estimates confirm that this is a global problem, with 1 out of 3 women experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by her partner at least once in their life. This problem, in different measures and forms, affects all countries, affects all of us. In 2014 the WHO Assembly adopted a historical resolution to strengthen the role of the health system in addressing violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children. Member States have given mandate to WHO to develop a Global Action Plan to strengthen the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence in particular against women and girls and against children, in consultation with key stakeholders, including Parliaments.

3. The third key piece of work I want to mention is the development of *global health sector strategies in three areas: HIV, hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections*.

These three strategies are fundamental in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and they need to be developed in concert with key stakeholders, including Parliamentarians. WHO is keen to work with you and I am here to ask your active contribution to these processes. On 28 March the Advisory Group on HIV/MNCH has endorsed the IPU engagement in this strategies. All the 3 strategy drafts are on the web for global consultation and we hope that IPU and MPs will contribute to the Global Consultation ([http://www.womenchildrenpost2015.org](http://www.womenchildrenpost2015.org)).
Mine wants to be a call for support, and I am sure you will actively respond to that.

We all share the same passion for a better world, with more equity and more space for women and girls. It’s great to dream together, but ‘A dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a plan and a deadline.’