

Speech of **Mr Toomas Kivimägi**, Head of the IPU Estonia group at the General Debate “*Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change*”

144<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, Nusa Dua, Indonesia

Dear colleagues, honourable hosts!

I am very pleased to be here today and to attend the Assembly on behalf of the Parliament of the Republic of Estonia. It is great to see that we all share a concern and a sense of responsibility for creating a successful and sustainable World.

Indeed, tackling climate change appears to be a pressing challenge for every country, but we should take it as an opportunity. It is an opportunity to modernise our economies and ensure sustainable growth. More notably, a clean and healthy environment is an important component in attaining all human rights.

The Parliament of Estonia plays a key role in coordinating multi-level cooperation in all sectors of the society. Democratic participation in combating climate crisis is built on mutual trust, accountability, and equality. We work together with recognised experts to develop scientific research, technological solutions, and innovations in this field. Through education, projects, and environmental competitions we have also established a structured youth engagement. Young people as equal partners to decision-makers are valuable contributors to the climate action. We strongly believe that the openness of the regulatory process along with accurate analyses help to raise public awareness about the importance and opportunities of the green transition.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I want to draw your attention to the situation that the Russian aggression in Ukraine has forced onto the world. I realize that I am not original in saying that

the world we know does not exist anymore and that Russia's aggression has no justification. Unfortunately, it is absolutely true what the speaker from United Kingdom said on Monday: "It is illegal and brutal invasion". It is not only a war between Russia and Ukraine, but also a war between the authoritarian and the free world; it is a war that concerns all of us. We are all at war where every one of us needs to pick a side, even indifference makes the indifferent a party of the war. More than 10 million people have fled their homes in Ukraine, 90% of them women and children. Is this a conflict, dear hosts from Indonesia, or is it a war? Russia's victory would mean a continuing aggression against the next democratic countries. Ukraine and the Ukrainians are fighting for world peace.

*Slava Ukraini!*

Native Americans have a saying "We have not inherited this earth from our forefathers, we have borrowed it from our children". This ancient maxim defines the scope of our responsibility in simple and clear terms. Living at the expense of nature today means living at the expense of our children and grandchildren. That's not acceptable!

Nature knows no state borders. Environmental damage from hundreds, even thousands of kilometres away reaches us – all of us – sooner or later, to a lesser or larger extent. In the eyes of nature, we are all one big family, which is why only together, through joint efforts, we can create a better and more sustainable future: an environment where our children and grandchildren will also thrive.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has set new challenges in environmental protection. I am not talking about the bombings or the criminal abuse of resources or the direct harm caused to the environment; I am talking about the challenges or gaps this has caused in energy supply. Mostly in Europe. An easier but ecologically more harmful solution is a wider (re)introduction of fossil fuels. However, often what is easier for the human beings is a huge problem for the environment. European Union has approved ambitious objectives in achieving

climate neutrality, which have been jeopardised by the war. The best way to avoid this is through cooperation. When we have a problem, you help us, and when you have a problem, we help you. This system should function like communicating vessels.

Today's discussion is a reminder to all of us about the intensifying environmental degradation across the globe. We must recognise that nature has no borders. The air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we inhabit are the responsibility of us all. Every human being has the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

Thank you for your attention.