

## The 148<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly

“Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding”

23-27 March, 2024

Excellencies,

Dear participants,

Ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I greet you all at the General Debate of the 148<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and wish our deliberations to be successful and productive.

Dear participants,

I would like to congratulate the leadership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for choosing the issue of peace, security, understanding as its strategic policy focus for 2024 and specifically for this General Debate. Indeed, the issue of peace and understanding has gained an utmost importance and became a determining factor. Reality is that our hopes for a better world are closely linked with peace and understanding.

Regretfully, today, the world has become more fractured and less peaceful. There are many debates about the ineffectiveness of multilateral mechanisms, which is the result of non-compliance with international rules, double standards and predominance of interests of certain states. Several days ago, these issues were extensively dealt with in the framework of the 11th Global Baku Forum under the theme “Fixing the Fractured World”, organized by the Nizami Ganjavi International Center, with participation of more than 400 high-level guests from 68 countries.

**Dear colleagues,**

There is a general consensus about the need for a stronger, more effective and inclusive multilateral system, with the United Nations at its core.

What is most important is that strict adherence to and non-selective application of the universally recognized norms and principles of international law, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, protection of justice should stand at the basis of this system. This is a precondition for restoring and maintaining peace and understanding that we all aim for.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

In view of the growing importance of parliamentary diplomacy, it is necessary to elaborate on the role of parliaments in obtaining peace and understanding – what they can do and what they can achieve. Indeed, parliamentary diplomacy has become an important perspective in global affairs, in particular in the context of current international complexities, where preservation of multilateralism and global cooperation in addressing global challenges continue to be paramount as never before.

Of course, it would be quite optimistic to consider parliaments alone as a remedy against the challenges to peace and security, which need to be looked at from wider perspective.

But taking into consideration the notion of centrality of dialogue for peace, they become an effective additional resource of building bridges for peace and understanding. Being representatives of the people, parliaments can make an important contribution to the issues such as building confidence, trust and peaceful coexistence.

In this context, I would like to commend the role of the IPU leadership, especially Mr. Secretary-General, Martin Chungong for providing a platform for the first meeting of the speakers of the parliaments of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Today, both countries are closer to peace than ever before. And such meetings between the two parliaments will be a useful mechanism for constructive discussions.

Unlike some other inter-parliamentary organizations, which have deviated from their declared objectives, the IPU stays true to its vision of dialogue and plays an invaluable role of bridge-builder.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I believe, peace and understanding are the first and the foremost prerequisites for addressing the global challenges that we face today. Without peace and understanding, it is difficult to ensure solidarity and sincere dialogue necessary to jointly deal with the challenges that require global and urgent responses. And you would all agree that one of the most serious challenges that demand collective efforts is climate change. To put in other words, our steps today will determine the fate of our future generations.

**Dear colleagues,**

My country Azerbaijan was chosen to host the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change in November this year in Baku.

It is a sign of recognition of Azerbaijan's efforts in addressing climate change not only at national, but also at regional and global scale.

We are honored and understand the great responsibility that comes with it. Azerbaijan, as a bridge-builder and having the potential to unite communities and countries behind a common cause, is ready to help guide the international community to realize a future that is climate-focused, equitable and sustainable.

Engagement of all parties is important in order to advance climate action and achieve our goals. It is only with constructive collaboration, increased commitments and collective action we will be able to deliver our shared vision of a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

**Dear participants,**

Climate change has been identified by the IPU as one of the four priority areas that require urgent intervention.

The IPU has done a great job in supporting parliaments in their efforts to combat climate change and mobilizing them around climate action. Given the centrality of this issue to the IPU's activities and upon the initiative of the Secretary-General of IPU, His Excellency, Mr. Martin Chungong, the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan together with the IPU, will organize the Parliamentary Meeting in the framework of the COP29.

This meeting will offer parliamentarians to exchange their views and identify what they can offer in the fight against climate change. Thus, the meeting will provide parliamentary contribution to multilateral climate action.

And in conclusion, I would like you all to participate in this conference.

Thank you for your attention.