

National Statement
148th Assemblies of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
23rd – 27th March 2024
CICG Center
Geneva, Switzerland

General Debate

Theme: Parliamentary diplomacy : Building bridges for peace and understanding

Secretary General of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Martin Chungong

Madam President, Ms. Tulia Ackson,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates

Jamaica is pleased to be invited to participate as an observer at this 148th Assembly of the IPU.

On behalf of the people and Government of Jamaica and in my capacity as President of the Senate of Jamaica, I wish to extend commendations to the IPU for its longstanding commitment to the promotion of democratic governance, institutions and values. As a previous member of the IPU, we can attest to the value of the work of the Organization and our participation in this session is an important step as we reassess our membership within the Organization.

The theme of this year's assembly, ***Parliamentary Diplomacy : Building Bridges for peace and understanding*** is timely as it is becoming increasingly evident that parliamentary diplomacy is necessary to address pressing global issues such as climate change, poverty alleviation, international peace and security and conflict resolution. Through constructive engagement and dialogue, we can harness the collective wisdom and resources of our nations to tackle these challenges effectively. It is for this reason, Jamaica continues to play an active role in facilitating dialogue and cooperation with CARICOM to promote and restore peace and stability in Haiti and throughout the region. In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the presence of CARICOM members present at this session of the Assembly including the Bahamas which recently joined the IPU.

Madam President,

Jamaica continues to uphold strong democratic principles, which features the consistent peaceful transfer of power, and features an effective bicameral parliamentary system, with a strong and independent accountability framework. The Parliament is a critical pillar of a well-functioning democratic society, and we are keen on ensuring diversity and inclusiveness, which are both crucial pillars for building bridges and fostering greater understanding, as well as the provision of dynamic and effective leadership that can better respond to the needs of the people.

Within our Parliament, we have a high level of female representation with one of the highest percentage of women elected to Parliament. Of note, both the Leader of Government Business in the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives are women. Just last year, we established

the Bicameral Caucus of Women Parliamentarians with the goal of facilitating networking, building solidarity and promoting constructive dialogue on issues of importance among women parliamentarians as well as their professional development. The establishment of this Caucus supplements ongoing efforts to promote greater progress towards gender parity and equality in Parliament.

I am also pleased to highlight that our Parliament also includes persons with disabilities and a significant number of young parliamentarians. The engagement and participation of youth in the work of the Parliament and issues relating to governance are fundamental to Jamaica's development and a key area of focus. Since 2003, we have established the National Youth Parliament of Jamaica (NYPJ) which provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the work of the Parliament and offer concrete recommendations and solutions.

Madam President,

In closing, the support of the IPU will be essential in offering training and capacity building for parliamentarians to effectively discuss and address the plethora of issues being faced, especially by developing countries. As a small island developing state, Jamaica understands the importance of multilateral cooperation in confronting shared challenges. We remain committed to working closely with our international partners including the IPU to promote dialogue, foster understanding, and build bridges towards a more peaceful and prosperous world for all.

I thank you.