

148th IPU Assembly General Debate

“Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding”

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Leader of the Japanese delegation

Distinguished colleagues,

It is an honor to speak to you today as the leader of the Japanese delegation. When Japan was struck by the Noto Peninsula Earthquake in January this year, messages of sympathy and offers of assistance poured in from many countries, regions, and international organizations. I express my heartfelt gratitude for your warm support.

IPU discusses many global issues, ranging from natural disasters to the impact of AI. The realization of peace is among the most important of these. Peace is more than just the absence of armed conflict. The peace that we should aspire to is a condition in which the life, health, and basic human rights of each individual are protected, and people are able to enjoy fulfilling lives in an environment of mutual respect. The international community should pursue the realization of this vision by promoting mutual understanding and giving ear to diverse opinions. I believe the parliamentarians have an extremely important role to play in this process.

Among ourselves, parliamentarians can engage in real and candid discussions that reflect the diverse views in our countries without being bound to the positions of our respective governments. Engaging in frank exchanges fosters mutual understanding, nurtures trust, and helps build long-term relationships. These are the advantages of parliamentary diplomacy.

Long-term bonds among parliamentarians are unaffected by changes in national leadership and function under all conditions as the glue that binds countries together. In particular, these bonds can act as a safety mechanism when peace is under threat and dialogue between governments is difficult. Based on this belief, over the years I have fostered close relationships with members of parliament, including especially female parliamentarians, of numerous countries such as the United States, China, and South Korea.

I conclude by reiterating that, as representatives of the people, we must play a central role in the efforts of the international community aimed at realizing peace.

Thank you very much.