

Statement Delivered
By
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Speaker of the House of Federation of the FDRE
At
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Geneva, Switzerland

Honorable President

Distinguished Speakers,

Honorable Members of Parliaments

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the people and government of Switzerland for the warm hospitality accorded to me and my delegation. It is a distinct honor for me to address the 149th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Honorable President

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We gather here at a time of a sweeping revolution in science and technology which carries huge promises and perils. In many parts of the world, the fast-moving transformations in science and technology are outpacing existing rules and regulations at a national and international level. Concurrently, technological innovations are becoming more unpredictable and complex, with less oversight and control. As a result, the current Artificial Intelligence (AI-led) revolution urgently requires meaningful discussions among parliamentarians as it requires effective governance at all levels. Hence, in light of these changes, we believe that the 149th theme “**harnessing science, technology and innovation for a more peaceful and sustainable future.**” is a timely and fitting agenda.

In this context, we believe that parliaments and parliamentarians have an enormous responsibility in establishing the legal and regulatory frameworks

that govern new innovations and technologies. More importantly, as a major global issue, it is important that states put their actions together to better address the challenges and harness the benefits of technological advancements. In this regard, IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology is a step in the right direction. It offers a roadmap for ethically utilizing these technologies to advance socio-economic development while minimizing the dangers that may arise from lack of regulatory oversight. In addition, the recent adoption of a Pact for the Future by the UN General Assembly that includes a Global Digital Compact to reinvigorate multilateralism and address 21st-century challenges is also a notable progress.

Therefore, Ethiopia strongly believes that IPU should support parliaments to adopt relevant legislation and undertake oversight of the executive functions.

Honorable President

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The government of Ethiopia has been taking bold and ambitious initiatives to increase the effective use of science and technology for social and economic development. The Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy for Inclusive Prosperity is a landmark policy document that aims to harness technology to drive economic growth and improve public services in our country. The plan aligns with the 2019 Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda, which broadly outlines strategies aimed at incorporating digitalization into sustainable development framework. Ethiopia's National Digital ID initiative also aims to register 70 million citizens by 2025, enhancing access to services and supporting national development.

In addition, we have recently adopted a national Artificial Intelligence policy framework, marking a significant step forward in Ethiopia's aspiration to leverage Artificial Intelligence innovation to drive socioeconomic progress and strengthen its technological capabilities. However, lack of adequate digital

infrastructure and addressing the capacity gap remains a major challenge. As the technology rapidly evolves, it is therefore imperative to strengthen cooperation and partnerships in laying the foundation for digital transformation and innovations.

Honorable President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ethiopia believes that advancement in science and technology offers unparalleled opportunity to bridge the gap in socio-economic development among the developing and developed nations. Hence, it is important that parliamentarians effectively leverage their legislative mandate to ensure safe use of technologies including data protection and cyber security through dedicated sub-committees. It is also critical to strengthen parliamentary cooperation in capacity building and experience sharing. As I conclude honorable president, allow me to reiterate Ethiopia's commitment to extend its support to the efforts of the IPU to advance the use of science and technology and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2030.

I THANK YOU!