

PRESIDENT



## **IPU General debate, October 2024 Geneva**

### **Harnessing science, technology and innovation for a more peaceful and sustainable future**

Mme President, excellencies

It is an honor to speak to you today on a topic that holds immense promise for humanity: how we can harness science, technology, and innovation, or STI, to build a more peaceful and sustainable future.

We live in an era of unprecedented change. Every day, advancements in science and technology reshape our world in ways that were unimaginable just a few decades ago. From artificial intelligence to renewable energy, from medical breakthroughs to space exploration, human ingenuity is pushing the boundaries of what is possible. But with great power comes great responsibility. How we choose to use these tools will determine the future of our planet and the well-being of its inhabitants.

First, let us look at sustainability. The climate crisis is the defining challenge of our time. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss are just a few of the signs that we are reaching the limits of what our planet can endure. But while this is a moment of danger, it is also a moment of opportunity.

Science and technology offer us solutions to tackle the climate crisis. Renewable energy technologies, like solar and wind power, have become more efficient and affordable, and they offer a path away from fossil fuels. Innovations in agriculture can help us feed a growing global population without destroying our ecosystems. Additionally, the development of smart cities can reduce carbon footprints, making urban spaces more livable and environmentally friendly.

However, these technologies alone are not enough. We must ensure that they are accessible to all, especially to the developing world. A sustainable future can only be realized if we address the inequalities that exist in the distribution of technology and resources.

Now, let's turn to the question of peace. Technology has always been a double-edged sword in this regard. While it can enable destructive conflicts, it can also be a powerful force for peace. History has shown us how breakthroughs, such as satellite communications and the internet, have connected people across borders, facilitating dialogue, cooperation, and understanding.

Today, innovations in cybersecurity, blockchain, and AI can play a role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. These technologies can track and verify peace agreements, combat misinformation, and improve transparency in governance.

Furthermore, technology can serve as a tool for education, promoting the values of tolerance, diversity, and empathy. By fostering connections across cultures and giving marginalized voices a platform, we can build a more peaceful and inclusive global community.

Innovation, in its essence, is about problem-solving. It requires us to think creatively and look at challenges from new perspectives. But to truly harness the potential of innovation, we must foster an environment that encourages it. This means investing in education, particularly in STEM fields—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—and ensuring that the next generation is equipped with the skills needed to address the challenges of tomorrow.

Governments, businesses, and civil society all have a role to play in creating the conditions for innovation to thrive. Collaboration is key. The challenges we face today—whether they are related to climate change, health crises, or political instability—are too complex for any one sector or country to solve alone. We must share knowledge, and work together towards common goals.

However, we must also recognize the ethical dilemmas that come with technological advancement. As we build powerful new tools, we must ask ourselves critical questions: How do we ensure that technologies are used for good? How do we protect privacy and human rights in the age of AI and big data? And how do we prevent the misuse of innovations that could fuel conflict.

It is essential that we develop robust frameworks for ethical decision-making and governance in STI. This will require cooperation at the international level.

In conclusion, science, technology, and innovation offer us the tools we need to build a more peaceful and sustainable future. But they are just that—tools. It is up to us to use them wisely. We must ensure that the benefits of these advancements are shared by all, and that they are used to uplift humanity rather than divide it.

The future is in our hands. Let us work together to harness the power of STI to create a world that is not only more innovative but also more just, more peaceful, and more sustainable.

I thank you.

Albert Frick

President of Parliament  
of the Principality of Liechtenstein