



STATEMENT BY

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&

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DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE

AT THE

149TH IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

UNDER THE THEME:

***“HARNESSING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (STI) FOR A
MORE PEACEFUL AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE”***

MONDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2024

**GENEVA,
SWITZERLAND**

Check Against Delivery

President of the Assembly,

Madam IPU President,

Secretary General of the IPU,

Members of the IPU Member Parliaments,

Distinguished Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to address the 149th IPU Assembly here in Geneva, under the theme “*Harnessing Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future*”. My address this afternoon will be two fold. Firstly, I will address the Assembly on the theme as alluded above and thereafter conclude on a personal note.

The theme for the 149th IPU Assembly and Related Meetings “*Harnessing Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future*” provides yet another opportunity for us as parliamentarians to harness our collective resolve and energies to science, technology and innovation. Science, technology and innovation play a central role in human development and must be seen as a primary mechanism for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. As the supreme law-making institution and agents of people’s well-being, parliaments main responsibility is to ensure that the benefits of science, technology and innovation

reaches all segments of our society. We are obliged to guarantee the promotion and adoption of effective and inclusive people-centered policies and legislation on science, technology and innovation to ensure that no one is left behind.

Madam President

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we all know, the digital gap is now a worldwide concern and this is an opportune time to unpack it. Therefore, as parliaments it must be our primary objective to work together to build cooperative projects, unify digital regulations and standards, and establish frameworks for cross-border digital trade and cooperation through international collaboration, global partnerships and funding. Conversely, as parliaments we need to enhance our capacity to utilize scientific evidence in law-making and oversight scrutiny. By establishing dedicated science and technology committees, strengthening the role of parliamentary research services, developing stronger relationships with research institutions, and providing training for parliamentarians. By adopting these strategies, I assure you that, parliaments can better harness scientific evidence to craft effective, evidence-based legislation and ensure that laws are grounded in reliable and current knowledge.

Madam President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we reflect on these considerations, let us remember that our actions today are seeds planted for the future generation. It is of utmost importance for parliamentarians to anticipate the long-term futuristic impacts of STI-related decisions. By ensuring that legislative and policy databases, foresight and scenario planning tools as well as public and stakeholder engagement platforms are in place. By leveraging these tools and resources, as parliamentarians we can better anticipate and navigate the long-term impacts of our decisions, ensuring that science, technology and innovation contribute positively to future generations. Lastly, I urge all IPU member states, to enact laws, that establish ethical standards for science, technology and innovation development as well as to oversee the implementation of ethical guidelines and laws. Ensuring that ethical considerations are integral to the development and implementation of ethical frameworks for science, technology and innovation.

Madam President,

Ladies and Gentleman,

Before I conclude, allow me to address you as I am concluding my tour of duty as the head of the Namibian Parliamentary delegation to IPU.

It has been a privileged for the past ten (10) years to lead the Namibian delegation to the IPU Assemblies and Related Meetings. As a close IPU family, Namibia has played an active part in promoting IPU's global vision. Together with those that have come before us and with some of you, we have been able to shape the strategic direction of our organization. Today, as I am concluding my tour of duty at this global stage as the head of the Namibian delegation, I can confidently attest that IPU is indeed in good hands. Things that were unimaginable a few years ago have become everyday's reality. I remember, when my predecessor the late Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab took IPU Presidency in October 2008, the first question he asked the former Secretary General Anders Johnson was the IPU Strategic Plan. We did not have one at that time, and as we move on we produced the first ever IPU Strategy 2012 – 2017 titled "*Better parliaments, stronger democracies*". Since then we never look back, but continue to build on the success of that strategy and remain on course to produce strategies at various intervals to shape our organization's strategic direction.

Therefore, I count myself fortunate amongst our generation of leaders and that history could grant me that rare opportunity to share IPU's global vision on various platforms with the global community. I will forever remain grateful to my parliament for granting me this rare opportunity to be a member of this global organization. As I

conclude, I pay tribute to all member parliaments of IPU for the commitment and contributions we collectively made towards our organization. Sometimes, we had differences which were often important or profound, however we have demonstrated our overriding commitment to uphold the ideas and vision of our organization. For me that matter the most. Together, we have achieved a lot under the umbrella of IPU. As I move on, I do that with a happy heart and clear mind. With time, we will continue to overcome many challenges and make the world a better place for each and everyone one of us. My colleagues from Namibia, we were able to deliver one (1) IPU President, my colleagues from SADC region, we were able to deliver two (2) IPU Presidents, my colleagues from Africa-geopolitical region we were able to deliver seven (7) IPU Presidents. Lastly as a democratic institution our organization thus far was able to be led by thirty – one (31) democratically elected Presidents from across its geo-graphical regions. Indeed, democracy is shining in IPU family. We are on safe path. God bless IPU community, God Bless each one of you, God Bless our organization.

I thank you.