

GENERAL DEBATE

Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future

(7 minutes)

Dear Madam President,

Honorable colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We gather today at a critical time, where the role of science, technology, and innovation in shaping a more peaceful and sustainable future cannot be overstated. As members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, we are tasked with driving this change on a global scale. The challenges of our time—climate change, inequality, and conflict—demand solutions that are bold, coordinated, and, most importantly, sustainable. It is through our shared commitment to science and technology that we can make this future a reality.

For Serbia, harnessing the power of science has been a cornerstone of our national development strategy. Serbia has significantly invested in development of the ICT sector, which has grown its exports from 375 million euros in 2012 to over 4 billion euros that is expected this year. Number of people employed in the sector has doubled to almost 115 thousand, making it the fastest growing sector. In **2019**, Serbia became the **first country in Southeast Europe** to adopt a **National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy**, signalling our commitment to technological innovation. We have also introduced AI into elementary and high school curricula in **2021**, ensuring that future generations are equipped with the skills necessary to navigate and shape a technology-driven world. Serbia was one of only 11 countries in the world in 2021 to have AI in schools' curricula. These efforts demonstrate that our approach to innovation is not just about economic progress but about building a society where technology serves humanity.

In this era, technology knows no borders. It allows us to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems together, regardless of geographical boundaries. Innovation is becoming an essential tool for fostering peace and stability. For instance, AI technologies are being used globally to prevent conflicts, with applications ranging from **early warning systems** for natural disasters to tools that foster dialogue and understanding. Serbia is proud to be part of this global effort, recognizing that shared technological advancements are vital to global peacebuilding.

True peace, however, is inextricably linked to sustainability. Serbia is actively working to promote **clean energy** and reduce its carbon footprint.

At the same time, as we advance in our use of technologies like AI, we must do so responsibly. In **2023**, Serbia adopted **ethical guidelines for AI**, ensuring that the development and application of artificial intelligence respect human rights and fairness. This aligns us with global efforts to ensure that technology benefits everyone, leaving no one behind. Ethical technology is key to maintaining trust and equity as we move into a future increasingly shaped by innovation.

However, the challenges we face cannot be solved by any one nation alone. Global cooperation is critical, and Serbia is actively contributing to international frameworks designed to harness the potential of

technology for good. We joined the **Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)** in **2022** and are honored to have been elected as the chair for **2025**. This reflects our commitment to responsible AI governance and our determination to ensure that these technologies serve as forces for peace, sustainability, and prosperity worldwide.

Looking ahead, science and technology is not just a tool for economic development. It is the foundation for a future where peace and sustainability are within our grasp. The IPU, as a unique platform for global cooperation, plays a pivotal role in advancing these goals. Together, through collaboration, we can harness the power of innovation to address the most pressing challenges of our time.

Serbia stands ready to do its part, and I invite all of you to join us in this mission. Together, through the IPU and beyond, we can make this vision of peace and sustainability a reality for generations to come.