

Republic of Tunisia
Assembly of People's Representatives

Speech of the Tunisian parliamentary delegation
At the 149th session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
Geneva, October 13-17, 2024

- **Her Excellency Ms. Tulia Ackson, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**
- **Mr. Martin CHUNGONG, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen, Heads and Members of delegations,**

First of all, we, as a Tunisian parliamentary delegation, would like to greet your honorable gathering and to extend, on behalf of **Mr. Ibrahim Bouderbala, Speaker of the Assembly of People's Representatives**, and the Members of the Assembly, our sincerest greetings and appreciation to **Ms. Tulia Ackson, President of the Union**, and our wishes for her to continue success at the helm of this deep -rooted organization. We also extend our sincere greetings to **Mr. Martin CHUNGONG** and all his assistants and we appreciate the efforts they are making.

Our discussion as Representatives of our peoples is about the theme chosen for this session *"Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future"* falls within the context of the changes and challenges that humanity is witnessing, the most prominent of which is the disruption of the process of sustainable

development due to conflicts, wars, political instability, the spread of epidemics, the repercussions of climate change, and economic stagnation, in addition to the increase in rates of indebtedness, poverty, marginalization, and the worsening phenomenon of the disturbing and remarkable irregular migration.

To address these challenges, it has become more important than ever to employ scientific visions and technological innovations to better repurpose them with the aim of achieving sustainable development, finding innovative solutions and enhancing communication interfaces between the scientific community, political and economic decision-makers and all the segments of society in order to achieve a safer and more prosperous future.

Approaching the key role of science, technology and innovation as an optimal way forward achieving a better future for humanity depends primarily on achieving the sustainable development goals, to which the topic of our general discussion is linked, such as quality education (SDG 4) industrialization, innovation and infrastructure(SDG9); peace, justice, strong and effective institutions (SDG 16).

Anticipating these challenges, Tunisia has since the dawn of independence in 1956, given priority to education and valued the status of science, technology and innovation, where Compulsory education was established by a law stipulating free education in Tunisian schools at all

levels in order to ensure equal opportunities for all female and male citizens.

This trend has continued to this day to find its echo in the new constitution of 2022, which stipulates that: “The state guarantees the right to free public education in all its stages, and seeks to provide the necessary capabilities to achieve quality education, schooling and training. It also works on rooting the young in their national identity, being open to foreign languages and human civilizations, and spreading a culture of human rights”, besides, Academic freedoms and the freedom of scientific research are guaranteed. The state provides the necessary capabilities for innovation and for the development of scientific research as a basic pillar for achieving continuous and comprehensive development.

Although Tunisia suffers from the burden of unfair indebtedness towards a number of countries and international financial institutions, in return, it is a creditor to these parties as it lends them the most valuable of its human resources and highly qualified people, who, despite its limited capabilities, spend exorbitant costs on their education, training and supervision at all stages and continues to provide them with support and guidance even after they graduate.

On this occasion ,we would like to take the opportunity to confirm that Tunisia is moving forward in building its effective constitutional institutions , completing the path of democratic transition, embodying the

outcomes of the referendum on the constitution, which established the principles of accountability, fighting corruption, equality and parity between the sexes in political life and established an elected bicameral parliament, in addition to organizing presidential elections which took place on the 6th of October in a climate of pluralism, fair political competition and respect for the law.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are all aware of the imminent danger posed by the improper exploitation of new technologies and artificial intelligence for purposes threatening human lives and rights, as well as the foundations of democracy and the rule of law which makes us strongly convinced of the quote of the German physicist Albert Einstein: **“It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.”** Therefore, we call for confronting digital chaos, dishonest information and criminal uses of digital technology that aim to confuse and destabilise our societies. We are also required to continue working to strengthen and develop cooperation between Northern and southern Countries in the field of technology transfer and reducing the digital divide.

The duty also calls on us not to neglect the tragedy that the Palestinian people are experiencing as a result of the mass murder, genocide, starvation and displacement committed by the Zionist entity against a defenseless people, in a complete absence of human conscience and the inability of the international community and the international system to

enforce international resolutions and conventions to protect the Palestinian people.

On this occasion, we once again recall Tunisia's firm, principled and its positions supporting the Palestinian cause and its unconditional support for the brotherly Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their legitimate rights, foremost of which is their right to establish their independent State with full sovereignty over their lands, with Al Quds Al Shareef as its capital. In this context, we call on all members of parliaments all over the world and the free people of the world to assume their historical responsibilities, whether by intensifying efforts through the Inter-Parliamentary Union or at the bilateral level in order to take urgent action to stop the continuing series of killing and destruction in Gaza and the West Bank, and to accelerate the process of delivering relief and medical aid to civilians, in addition to holding the occupying entity fully responsible for the crimes it committed and supporting international movements to try him before the International Criminal Court; moreover, our primary responsibility remains to put an end to the occupation and its settlement plans.

We also strongly condemn the blatant aggression of the Zionist entity against brotherly Lebanon, the violation of its territorial sovereignty, the threat to its security, and its repeated attacks on a number of sisterly Arab countries.

May the peace, blessings, and mercy of God be upon you.

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