



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.



150th IPU Assembly Tashkent, Uzbekistan (5–9 April 2025)

Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Inaugural Ceremony of the 150th IPU Assembly

Tashkent, 5 April 2025

Madam Chairperson of the Senate of Uzbekistan,
Mr. Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of Uzbekistan,
Madam President of the IPU,
Honourable Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament,
Members of Parliament,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

It is a great privilege to address you at the opening of this landmark 150th IPU Assembly, the first to be held in Central Asia. We are privileged that this gathering is taking place in this dynamic city of Tashkent. At the outset, I would like to thank the authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including His Excellency President Mirziyoyev, Ms. Narbaeva, Chairperson of the Senate, and Mr. Ismailov, Speaker of the Legislative Chamber. We thank you for your very gracious hospitality.

This 150th Assembly is a milestone – on 150 occasions now, the IPU has convened the global parliamentary community to debate the issues of the day, to find solutions to conflict and other crises, to exchange good practices, and to build bridges and foster common understanding between the parliaments of the world. For the first time, the IPU Assembly has relocated to Central Asia, in particular to the Republic of Uzbekistan, and we thank you for the opportunity.

During this week, we will be discussing *Parliamentary action for social development and justice*, an important subject that will no doubt encourage you all to reflect on the situation in your respective countries and on the everyday lives of the citizens that you represent. But the world continues to face multiple crises and the turmoil of the past few months has shown us that the multilateral order we have come to take for granted could be upended at any moment.

This is why I would like to emphasize once again, as noted in the Geneva Declaration adopted by the Assembly one year ago, the vital importance of parliamentary diplomacy as a complement to traditional diplomacy. This is, after all, the core mandate of the IPU, as envisaged by our founding fathers, William Randal Cremer and Frédéric Passy. For over 135 years, the IPU has brought together parliamentarians from countries in conflict, with a view to finding common ground and peaceful solutions. We must always keep the potential of parliamentary diplomacy, grounded in dialogue and mutual respect, at the forefront of our minds as an ideal way to build trust, promote cooperation and share good practices, in the interests of world peace.

The IPU's work continues on multiple fronts to foster parliamentary diplomacy for peace: from our Committee on Middle East Questions, which for nearly 40 years has been grappling with the conflicts in the region, through our Group of Facilitators for Cyprus, which has been monitoring the situation on that divided island for almost as long. And more recently, the Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, which continues its work to support an end to this conflict; something which seems more in reach now than when the Task Force was formed three years ago.

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We are also continuing our support to the several parliaments in West and Central Africa that have experienced coups d'état in recent years and we hope we can continue the series of meetings that we organized last year with Speakers of Parliament in that region. We want the IPU to continue to be an impassioned arbitrator and mediator that can be trusted by all sides.

I also want to single out the work of our Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and say how reassured I am that this Committee is receiving greater attention from the global parliamentary community and that you are increasingly bringing the decisions of that Committee to the attention of the relevant authorities in your countries.

Just a quick glance at the timetable for our Assembly this week shows that the world is facing many challenges. I am hopeful that the process being followed by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security will lead to the Assembly passing a resolution that directly addresses the crisis in Gaza by advocating more stringently for a two-State solution in Israel and Palestine. And the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development will be finalizing its resolution on *Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts, including armed conflicts, on sustainable development*.

2025 is a very special year for the IPU. In June this year, following on from a hugely successful first Conference in Marrakesh in 2023, we will be convening the Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Rome, hosted in conjunction with the Italian Parliament and taking place alongside the many events to celebrate the Vatican's Jubilee Year. The Conference will bring together parliamentarians from around the world with representatives of religions and beliefs, faith-based and civil society organizations, international organizations and academia to discuss the theme *Strengthening trust and embracing hope for our common future*. I encourage you to attend and contribute to this important Conference, which holds great potential for promoting peaceful coexistence and bringing about peace in the world.

In July, we will hold our Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Geneva, the home of the IPU. These Conferences bring together Speakers from around the world and take place every five years, providing an opportunity for Speakers to engage in dialogue to shape and strengthen the parliamentary dimension of global governance. The Conference is being organized in close collaboration with the United Nations and will focus on *Parliamentary cooperation and multilateralism for peace, justice and prosperity for all*.

Immediately prior to the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, the 15th IPU Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament will take place in Geneva. The 14th edition of this Summit took place in this very room three years ago, chaired by Ms. Narbaeva. The 15th Summit will be discussing important issues relating to women's rights and gender equality and will continue to pursue in a dogged fashion the goal of gender parity in decision-making.

This year, the world is celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was the blueprint for the multilateral system's approach to gender equality and whose provisions continue to be legitimate and valid. We will continue to promote the IPU's ideals and serve as a trailblazer in promoting gender equality worldwide. It is important for us to continue to ensure that the respective rights and interests of men and women – including equal pay for equal work – are respected in an egalitarian and equitable fashion.

This week here in Tashkent we will be launching a new campaign to mark a year in which we are also celebrating the 40th anniversary of the women's movement in the IPU. This morning, I was privileged to be part of the celebrations that were held in the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, and I think that we have made considerable progress over the past 40 years, but this is an opportunity for us to rededicate ourselves to equality.

So we will have the pleasure of launching the campaign on *Achieving gender equality: Action by action*, aimed at mobilizing parliaments and MPs, both men and women, to take concrete legislative and institutional actions to accelerate gender equality in politics. You will be hearing more about this in the coming days, but the campaign's goals are three-fold: to achieve parity in parliament and politics, to make parliaments more gender-sensitive, and to create a world free from gender-based discrimination and violence.

Last month in Mexico, we held a landmark Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians, which brought together over 300 MPs from around the world to learn from Mexico's recent successes in improving the gender balance of its Parliament – and indeed to congratulate Mexico on electing its first woman President. I want to also use this opportunity to congratulate all the women gathered here, and all the men who have been at the forefront of the progress that we have made under the leadership of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

As you can see, the IPU never sleeps. We are constantly finding new ways to fulfil our strategic objectives and advance our policy goals. But we are here principally to serve you, our Member Parliaments, and I hope this Assembly will provide yet another opportunity for us to reflect on the future direction of our work – for parliaments everywhere, for democracy, for everyone.

Thank you for your attention and I wish you fruitful deliberations.