

150th IPU Assembly

General Debate: "Parliamentary action for social development and justice"

Statement by the Head of the Austrian Delegation Mr. Peter WURM, MP

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Honourable President,

Honourable Speakers,

Dear Colleagues,

Let me thank our hosts for their warm hospitality in bringing us together here in Tashkent for the 150th IPU Assembly.

We meet at a time of immense global challenges: wars and conflicts continue to threaten international peace and security. The global economy is struggling with slow growth, inflation, and escalating trade tensions. At the same time, multilateralism is at stake. Institutions designed to uphold the rules-based international order and to promote economic development and growth find themselves increasingly sidelined - instead of being strengthened.

It is against this backdrop that we are discussing "*Parliamentary Action for Social Development and Justice*" today. Indeed, parliamentary action is needed, because parliamentarians are at the heart when it comes to ensuring that all individuals have equal access to resources, opportunities, and rights.

But our meeting also marks the 150th anniversary of IPU Assemblies. This demonstrates the significant role parliamentarians have continuously played in upholding multilateralism – for the sake of peace, democracy and prosperity - and we must continue this important work in the future!

Why is this important to our topic today? Because peace, democracy and prosperity are key to stable societies – and essential for social progress and sustainable development that "*leaves no one behind*".

As we approach the year 2030, we should remember that social development and justice begin at home – within each sovereign nation. While global cooperation has its place, it is ultimately national parliaments that are best equipped to understand the unique social and economic realities of their people.

We firmly believe that subsidiarity, cultural identity, and self-determination must be respected as guiding principles of any effort towards social development. Parliaments must be empowered to act in the interest of their own population, rather than being pressured by transnational ideas or one-size-fits-all policy prescriptions.

Social justice is not possible without internal security, functioning borders, and respect for

the rule of law. Rising migration pressure and illegal immigration threaten the social cohesion and financial sustainability of welfare systems across Europe.

A just society begins with strong families. We advocate for policies that protect and support the family as the cornerstone of social development. In this regard, parliaments should strengthen incentives for family formation, support for parents and children, and the transmission of values and responsibilities from generation to generation.

Austria has long practiced a model of balanced social partnership, where the voice of workers and employers is equally heard. But we question increasingly centralized, global governance mechanisms that disconnect decision-making from the democratic will of national parliaments and their constituents.

Let us not forget: Justice also means fairness among nations. Development aid and international assistance must be targeted, transparent, and effective – not ideological. The dignity and capacity of partner countries to define their own development path must be respected. True solidarity is endless.

Colleagues,

As parliamentarians, we must reaffirm our commitment to our people. We must place their well-being, their security, and their aspirations at the centre of our political action. Social development and justice are not abstract goals. They are the result of concrete, responsible and value-driven policies – rooted in the democratic will of sovereign nations.

The path to a fairer world is not easy, and we know the challenges ahead. Fairness and justice must be established both within and among countries. In both endeavors, parliamentarians are at the center, shaping policies at the national and international levels, to build a future where *no one is left behind*.

Thank you!