

The 150th IPU Assembly
“Parliamentary action for social development and justice”
5-9 April, 2025

Excellencies,

Dear participants,

Ladies and gentlemen.

It is my pleasure to greet you all on behalf of the parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the 150th Anniversary Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. I would like to congratulate President of the IPU, Ms. Tulia Ackson and Secretary General Mr. Martin Chungong with this milestone achievement. Staying true to its vision of dialogue and solidarity, the IPU has been enormously effective in uniting parliaments and mobilizing them around common goals for years.

It is also pleasing that this historic event is being held in the brotherly Uzbekistan under the wise guidance of my dear friend, Ms. Tanzila Narbaeva, the Chairperson of the Senate of Uzbekistan.

I would like to thank the government and the Senate of Uzbekistan for warm welcome, hospitality and excellent organization of this important event.

Dear colleagues,

A theme for this General Debate is a pressing matter of the day. Unfortunately, conflicts and geopolitical tensions around the world, economic inequalities, environmental and other challenges seriously impede social development. Recent assessments show that we are severely off track to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with only seventeen percent of the Sustainable Development Goal targets being on track.

The issue of social development is relevant to all of our parliaments. Indeed, as people are at the center of social development, it is a parliament, an elected representative of people, which bears a direct relation to it.

Given that the Second World Summit for Social Development will take place in November this year, this General Debate is a good opportunity for sharing our experiences, good practices and delivering our position.

One can put the question: how to move forward to strengthen social development? Some evident and feasible answers to this question can be the following: 1. To implement SDG's through comprehensive approach without giving preference to economic pillar over others. 2. To strengthen welfare state, its protective role through adoption and amendment of relative legislation, further intensifying government policies on social development. 3. Not to view social development only as national issue and strengthen collective international efforts and actions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Taking this opportunity, I would like to share with you experiences and achievements of my country Azerbaijan.

As such, general framework of social development is defined by our Constitution, Article 16 of which provides that “the State of Azerbaijan takes care of improvement of well-being of all people and each citizen, their social protection and proper standard of living.”

In line with this approach, our parliament has adopted essential laws that cover various aspects of social development. Making amendments to existing laws according to changing demands has also been one of the main focus points, as the legislation is a constantly evolving process.

The approach of our government implies that strong economic foundation allows for better implementation of social policy. As stated by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, His Excellency, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, “Our policy is centered around the people of Azerbaijan and the principles of social justice have always been important to us”.

Noteworthy achievement of this policy include significant reduction of the level of unemployment and poverty to five point five percent. The four social reform packages adopted in the last five years covered forty percent of population, with the minimum wage being increased two point seven times, the salary fund two point six, social benefits and pension payments five times.

Today, our government has already aligned its national development strategies with Sustainable Development Goals. “Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for socio-economic development” have identified a dynamic and inclusive society based on social justice as one of the five national development priorities.

Dear colleagues,

For the past 30 years, social inclusion of refugees and internally displaced persons has been one of the priority issues for our country.

As a result of Armenia’s occupation of Azerbaijan’s twenty percent territories for thirty years, one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and IDPs. More than two hundred and fifty thousand of them were expelled from Armenia. 9 cities and hundreds of villages, historical, cultural and religious sites, and the whole infrastructure in the occupied territories were totally destructed.

Despite severe social and economic burden of the occupation, our government took all necessary measures to meet the needs of refugees and IDPs.

After liberating territories from occupation in 2020, our government has been very active in rebuilding these territories, clearing them from mines, restoring economic activity, implementing green energy projects.

To date, about ten thousand former IDPs have returned back to their homes. And by the end of 2026, this number is going reach one hundred and forty (140) thousand. So, it is another indication of our integrated approach to sustainable development centered around people.

Dear colleagues,

As I stated before, social development cannot be regarded only as a national issue. The Copenhagen Declaration recognizes critical importance of collective commitments

and efforts of international community. In this sense, by delivering three hundred and thirty (300) million US dollars of humanitarian, financial and technical aid to more than one hundred and forty (140) countries in the last 5 years, Azerbaijan has clearly demonstrated its commitment to collective efforts in supporting social development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Concluding my speech, I would like to once again express my pleasure of being with you today and wish every success to our deliberations. Thank you.