

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

**GENERAL DEBATE**  
**Parliamentary action for social development and justice**

Madam President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,  
Speakers of Parliaments,  
Colleagues,

It is a pleasure to be here with you today. I am glad to be able to address this important and relevant topic.

We are all well aware that high inequality of income and opportunities divides and harms every society, disrupting national development in every state. We are glad that Lithuania is classified as a country with very high human development: in 2024, it ranked 37th on the UN Human Development Index.

However, we still face challenges. Over the past decade, the relative at-risk-of-poverty rate has remained around 20% in Lithuania. The income gap between the poor and the rich has remained sixfold over the past several years, with the poor earning six times less than the rich. The composition and categories of social assistance recipients remain virtually unchanged, and more than a third of the unemployed are in long-term unemployment. The lack of social mobility also reflects the differences in opportunities. For example, vulnerable groups require more effort and time to access higher education and better professional positions.

Our parliamentary elections were held last October, and the 14th Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania began its work on 14 November 2024. The new Government of the Republic of Lithuania is committed to putting the state back on track for sustainable development and treating the country as the common good of all citizens. These objectives are being pursued through targeted measures and reforms across various sectors.

First, we aim to strengthen the national economy and reinforce public finances. We support projects by both local and foreign investors that drive economic transformation. Our policy focuses on active investment and job creation, reducing the administrative and regulatory burden on investors. We pay particular attention to balanced regional development. Additionally, we will implement progressive taxation on the highest incomes, regardless of the source, while protecting low-income earners from

an additional tax burden and making sure that the tax system remains competitive. Ensuring accessible and high-quality healthcare and education remain our top priorities.

We support efficient state governance by strengthening local self-government and promoting regional development to reduce economic disparities. To this end, a new Ministry of the Regions will be established.

However, peace and security are essential conditions for social development. Today, we are all witnesses to the Russian Federation's illegal, unprovoked, and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. Russia is supported by Belarus, and their actions are a brutal violation of international law. As we are all well aware, the situation in the Middle East is complicated, and there are conflicts in other parts of the world as well.

Apart from undermining international law, democratic values, and human rights, every war and military conflict also creates insecurity in the region and across the globe. Instead of spending money on meeting the social needs of the population, reducing poverty, and increasing access to and quality of education and health care, states are forced to invest in security and defence. As parliamentarians, we feel it is the duty of all of us to change the situation. It is our collective duty to show zero tolerance for violations of international law and human rights. It is our duty to not only put a stop to military action but also to halt the aggression itself. It is our duty to demand that justice be restored, that the aggressor be punished, and that the damage caused be compensated.

Only then will we be able to speak without the reproach of conscience about social inclusion and justice in our country.

Thank you.