

150th IPU Assembly

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

General Debate Speech

April 2025

Duration of speech: No longer than 2 minutes

Speech topic: Parliamentary Action for social development and justice

Thank you Mr/Madame President. Kia Orana Koutou Kātoatoa.

It's a privilege to address you today in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, as a member of the New Zealand Parliament.

As the institutions that represent the people, Parliaments have a key role to play in promoting and improving Social development and justice for different parts of society. New Zealand is hugely diverse, and people from all parts of the world now call it their home.

We are also home to those who identify as belonging to our LGBTIQ+, rainbow community. Social Justice has been a key staple of our approach to legislation, with the Homosexual Law Reform passing in 1986. Twenty years ago, Civil Unions allowed rainbow partners to formalise their relationships, and in 2013 New Zealand became the 13th country in the world to allow same-sex couples to marry. Parliaments must protect and provide for all members of their community.

Providing for the various needs of such a diverse country, to build an equitable, inclusive and just society, where all individuals have equal access to opportunities, rights and resources involves working across multiple areas. This includes eradicating poverty, improving wages, and making it easier for people to participate in education, employment, and gain access to good healthcare and public services. Jobs, Health and Homes are important to all communities, and they're important to New Zealand.

As a Pacific country, the Pacific region is incredibly important to our Parliament. Since 2019, support has also been provided to Pacific Parliaments through the Tai a Kiwa: Stronger Pacific Parliaments programme. A programme that delivers technical assistance to improve capacity and capability of MPs and parliamentary staff, enhanced inter-parliamentary relations in the Pacific region, and promotes the role and function of Parliaments to encourage greater understanding and engagement with the public. Doing what we can for our neighbours is important.

In justice, New Zealand has a strong and proud history of utilising international organisations such as the International Court of Justice. We have a strong sense of identity as a country. The territorial sea, land and airspace of New Zealand became nuclear-free zones in the 1980s. We utilised those very international organisations to underscore that position, and we remain nuclear-free today.

The role of Parliaments of the world is to be representative of the communities they serve and to provide development opportunities for their people, as well as provide a fair and transparent system. This is a responsibility for us all.

No reira, tena koutou, kia manuia.