



**Remarks by Ms. Tatiana Valovaya  
United Nations Under-Secretary-General  
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva**

**Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament**

**Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony – Reopening of the Assembly Hall**

**Tuesday 29 July 2025, from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.  
Palais des Nations, Assembly Hall**

**Distinguished Speakers of Parliament,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is a great honour to welcome you all to the Palais des Nations for the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.**

**This is a significant moment for us at the United Nations Office at Geneva because this high-level conference is the first event that takes place in this Assembly Hall after its renovation.**

**The Assembly Hall is the largest conference room at the Palais des Nations, with the capacity over 2,000 seats. It was built in the 1930s for the League of Nations, and inaugurated 88 years ago, in 1937. It was possibly the first meeting room equipped to provide simultaneous interpretation. Since then, the**

**Assembly Hall has gone through two makeovers – in the 1960s and in 1990s to accommodate the new delegations and to improve its acoustics and technical equipment.**

**The latest renovation works through the Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP) focussed on modernization, accessibility, conservation and protection of architectural heritage, as well as integration and harmony with other buildings.**

**For decades, the Assembly Hall has been a place where Member States come together to debate, negotiate, and shape our collective future. The Assembly Hall hosted the annual meetings of the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization. It also accommodated some meetings of the United Nations General Assembly.**

**Reopening this room today, after four years of renovation, in the presence of parliamentarians from around the world, is a reminder of the enduring importance of multilateralism in upholding the values of the United Nations and shaping our joint future.**

**The United Nations deeply values its cooperation with parliaments, which are the beating heart of democracy. Parliamentary leadership is indispensable to the multilateral system: you craft laws, shape budgets, and hold governments to account. We are very pleased that the new era for the Assembly Hall starts with this World Conference.**

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**This year marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, an opportunity for reflection on our past, and on activities and partnerships that will carry us forward into the future. More than just a conference room, the Assembly Hall stands as a symbol of multilateralism and a platform for collective action.**

**I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank:**

- all Member States for their vision to strengthen Geneva as a global center of international cooperation,**
- our Host Country Switzerland for their continued support,**
- members of the SHP Advisory Board for their guidance throughout this project, and**
- the Strategic Heritage Plan team for their work and expertise.**

**I would now like to invite the officials present at the podium, distinguished representatives of the Host Country and distinguished members of the SHP Advisory Board to join me for the ribbon-cutting, as we formally reopen the Assembly Hall and mark this new chapter together.**

**Thank you.**