



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

T +41 22 919 41 50  
F +41 22 919 41 60  
E [postbox@ipu.org](mailto:postbox@ipu.org)  
[www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

Chemin du Pommier 5  
Case postale 330  
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex  
Geneva – Switzerland

## Opening General Debate

Ms. Julieta Sierra  
Member of the IPU Bureau of Young  
Parliamentarians

151<sup>st</sup> Assembly and related meetings  
20 October 2025 – Geneva, Switzerland

Madam Vice-President of the IPU,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Madam President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians,  
Esteemed parliamentarians,  
Distinguished guests,

I am honoured to address you in replacement of our President Ms. Nour Abu Ghosh, who unfortunately could not be here today.

We gather at a defining moment: hundreds of millions of young people are growing up in an armed conflict. Youth, who are in their most formative years, are among those most impacted by war. Globally, more than 1 in 6 children live in conflict and face daily violence that robs them of their safety and futures. Over 240 million young people face disruption to education due to conflict.

Humanitarian needs are rising but meeting them is becoming more difficult. At this assembly, we are called upon to ensure no one is left behind. The lives of young people must be protected in all circumstances. Their hopes

should never disappear because when they do, there is nothing left not only for them but for the whole of society.

Too often in crises, youth are spoken *about* but not spoken *with*. The international community sought change with UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security. Here, the world determined that it was no longer an option to exclude young generations from peacebuilding, political processes, and humanitarian responses.

10 years later since the resolution was adopted, we have a long way to go to meet the goals it had set.

We must face the facts: our new IPU data shows that only 2.8 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide are 30 and under, no improvement since 2023. For young women under 30, the situation is worse: their share has actually declined. This growing gap between representation and demographic reality weakens our institutions and our response to today's crises, including conflicts and wars. When young people feel excluded from the halls of power, many will seek other ways to be heard, as we see in the wave of Gen Z-led protests and movements shaking political systems around the world today.

To address this, as young MPs :

- We call on Parliaments to enhance youth participation, so more young people are represented at the decision-making table and can contribute to peace-building solutions;
- We also call to safeguarding education and employment for young people. Young MPs have long called for accessible schooling and expanded economic opportunities for those affected by conflict. These are non-negotiables to prepare youth for their future but also to prepare societies for sustainable peace.
- Most importantly, we call to upholding fundamental rights of young people even in crisis situations and wars. Greater attention must be given to protecting young people in vulnerable and marginalized situations, in particular.

This applies worldwide, with conflicts raging on all continents. But even in the darkest hours, we see reasons to hope. The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, where people have suffered beyond what humans being can take, is one example. There should be no wait for the rescue of innocents, and no wait for international humanitarian law. Although the latest developments offer a glimmer of hope for the future, we must all do our part to ensure unhindered humanitarian assistance, respect for international humanitarian law, and a just and sustainable peace. The present and future of hundreds of millions of young people cannot wait. Thank you.