



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

152nd IPU Assembly

Istanbul, Türkiye
15–19 April 2026



Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Inaugural Ceremony of the 152nd IPU Assembly

Istanbul, 15 April 2026

Mr. Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye,
Madam President of the IPU,
Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Türkiye,
Honourable Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament,
Members of Parliament,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

It is an immense pleasure and privilege to address you at the opening of this 152nd IPU Assembly, here in the magnificent and historic city of Istanbul, one of the most beautiful – if not the most beautiful city in the world. This is the fourth time in the IPU's 137-year history that the parliamentarians of the world have convened in this city – the first was in 1934 and the second in 1951. On the third occasion, in 1996, I was here too – for one of my earliest Conferences as a staff member of this institution. So, I have a sense of coming full circle for my final Assembly as Secretary General, here in this city of two continents, the gateway between Europe and Asia.

I had very much wanted the final Assembly of my tenure to take place in the city where I first attended an IPU Assembly and where I was elected Secretary General 12 years ago – Geneva – but when we received an offer from you, Mr. Speaker, I could not resist, and the members of our governing bodies could not resist. They wanted to come and I am now sure that they were not mistaken. A lot of efforts have gone into preparing for this Assembly and I think we will leave here understanding that Türkiye was not a bad choice for the institution.

Let me therefore express my deepest gratitude to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all the authorities in this country, for graciously hosting this Assembly and making sure that the deliberations take place in the most optimum conditions.

We are meeting against the backdrop of a world in considerable turmoil. But I am immensely heartened that the parliaments of the world have turned out in such huge numbers this week – with many delegations led by Speakers and Deputy Speakers. In fact, 77 Speakers of Parliament are present in the city today, a record attendance by high-level officials at an IPU Assembly. These dignitaries have converged on this city to bring the contributions of parliaments from across the world to the General Debate on *Nurturing hope, securing peace and ensuring justice for future generations*.

I would like to invite you all to keep the last part of this theme – “for future generations” – at the forefront of your minds in the coming days. Because future generations should be at the heart of everything parliamentarians do. The work of parliaments should focus on making life better not only for citizens today, but for those yet to be born. Parliamentarians must look to the future and not repeat the mistakes of the past. This is why, during this Assembly, we will have an intergenerational dialogue between a representative of the current generation and a representative of future generations. We will have a senior authority having a discussion with a 10-year-old girl on what we can expect from the respective generations.

E

#IPU152

One of the key lessons I think we must learn is the importance of seizing the moment. I hope that – despite not always finding consensus in recent years – the IPU membership can live up to the moment this week and take the opportunity, through a strong emergency item resolution, for the global parliamentary community to pronounce its views on the various urgent crises we are currently facing. I know that efforts are already being made among the geopolitical groups to ensure that consensus can be found on an inclusive and forward-looking proposal that the whole membership can support in the vote on 17 April, and I urge you to support that endeavour.

Earlier today, our Forum of Women Parliamentarians met, and tomorrow will be the turn of our Forum of Young Parliamentarians. I am proud that these two bodies continue to spearhead the IPU's efforts to ensure that parliaments are inclusive and reflect the diversity of society. As I have said many times, parliaments must be a mirror in which all segments of society can recognize themselves. Later in the week, the Assembly is expected to adopt two very forward-looking resolutions, on building a just and lasting peace based on robust post-conflict management, and on building a fair and sustainable global economy by combating protectionism, reducing tariffs and preventing tax avoidance. These resolutions are timely, as they also speak to this Assembly's overarching themes of peace and justice.

And of course, all our other specialized bodies will meet, along with a whole host of workshops, panel discussions and other special events. I would like to highlight in particular the special session on advancing the two-State solution for Israel and Palestine on 17 April, which is intended as a follow-up to the groundbreaking resolution adopted by the IPU in Tashkent one year ago. I know that the Host Parliament is also convening a discussion on Palestine. I believe these two events will lead to a reaffirmation of the IPU belief in the two-State solution as the ideal solution for the crisis in the Middle East.

Another highlight of the coming days will be our celebration of the 50th anniversary of the IPU's Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. A slate of activities have been lined up, including a campaign that will be launched here in Istanbul.

We will also be organizing the usual accountability segment at this Assembly. As you know, your Strategy lays emphasis on the accountability of the Members for implementation of the outcomes of the Organization's deliberations. It is an opportunity for you, as the owners of this Organization, to report on how you are implementing the policies and resolutions you adopt at the IPU Assembly.

We are also set to adopt the IPU Strategy for 2027-2031. I can assure you that it has many good elements for the global parliamentary community and I would like to use this opportunity to encourage all of you to lend your support to that Strategy – because it is yours. It is the result of your own deliberations; it reflects the priorities that you have identified for the Organization; and your support and endorsement will lend it legitimacy.

In conclusion, we hold out a lot of hope for this week here in Istanbul, but I do know that Istanbul will live up to the billing because we have record attendance. I would like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to convey our gratitude to all those who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes. You have all put your heads together to ensure that we have a good time here and come up with something that we can be very proud of. I look forward to fruitful deliberations during this week and hope that the outcomes will reflect that. I hope to also have the opportunity to say goodbye and thank you for the support that you have extended to me over the past 12 years.

Thank you.