

Mr. Afrim Gashi,

President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia

General Debate on the theme:

“Nurturing Hope, Securing Peace and Ensuring Justice for Future Generations”

Honourable Madam President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Honourable Speakers and Presidents of Parliaments,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's an exceptional privilege to stand before you today in Istanbul, a city with a rich history, where the past meets the future and cultures have always crossed paths. I want to thank our Turkish hosts and the Inter-Parliamentary Union for bringing us together under a theme that demands our urgent attention.

We gather at a time when the global multilateral system faces unprecedented pressure. Democracy is struggling, armed conflicts are growing, and socio-economic divides keep getting wider. For many, including the young people in our countries, the future doesn't feel promising; it feels threatening.

Dear colleagues,

North Macedonia's history shows what determined diplomacy and honest international cooperation can achieve. The Prespa Agreement of 2018 ended a decades-long dispute and paved the way for our NATO membership in 2020. It proved that even the toughest conflicts can be resolved through dialogue, political courage, and mutual respect. This agreement reflects the values we are discussing here today. We are committed to our European Union accession journey, which drives democratic reforms, strengthens the rule of law, and improves public institutions. We aim to restore citizens' trust through real results.

As President of the Assembly, I've made it my mission to make our Parliament a genuine home for citizens, not just a place for voting or procedure. The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia has taken important steps to make law-making more future-focused and sustainable. We have added impact assessments and consultative processes to our legislative cycle. This allows for inclusive dialogue with civil society, academia, and the private sector. We believe that laws should be evaluated not just on their immediate effects, but also on the world they create for future generations.

On digital transformation and artificial intelligence, our Assembly recognizes the responsibility of parliaments. We are strengthening the legal framework for digital technologies in line with EU rules and international standards. We fully support the November 2025 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Parliaments and Responsible AI. As AI technologies develop rapidly, parliaments must lead rather than follow. Governance frameworks must protect democratic principles, individual rights, and future generations' security from the risks of uncontrolled technology, including conflicts.

Addressing the root causes of instability is central to our parliamentary agenda. North Macedonia has worked hard to reduce poverty and inequality, strengthen food security, and tackle environmental issues like air pollution. Our Parliament has responded with stronger laws and increased investment in green energy. We understand that environmental and human security are linked.

Regarding intergenerational justice, we see that only 2.8 percent of parliamentarians worldwide are under 30. This needs to change. Our Assembly is working to lower barriers to youth political participation and to strengthen dialogue across generations. We want the voices that shape our laws to reflect all parts of society, especially those who will face the consequences of today's decisions.

North Macedonia is committed to the United Nations Pact for the Future, adopted in 2024, and we will implement it faithfully. The Declaration on Future Generations urges us to incorporate long-term thinking into political cycles. We take this seriously as we prepare our national legislative agenda and work on the post-2030 development framework. We also reaffirm the commitments made at the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, supporting stronger multilateralism, inclusive governance, and the importance of international law.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Parliaments are not passive observers of the crises we face today. They are the institutions that turn citizens' hopes into laws, ensure accountability, and shape the future. The Assembly of North Macedonia is ready to enhance its inter-parliamentary cooperation, share our experiences, and learn from others, all for a more peaceful, fair, and sustainable world for future generations.

Thank you.