

Statement at the IPU Assembly

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“Enhancing good governance and empowering communities through inclusivity, trust and opportunities for all”

Honourable President,
Ms. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the United Republic of Tanzania and the Parliament of Tanzania for the warm hospitality extended to all of us and for the organization of this Assembly. It is a particular pleasure to be here in Arusha, and we greatly appreciate the efforts made to bring parliamentarians from around the world together in such a welcoming environment.

It is an honour to speak at this Assembly, and a particular privilege to do so for the first time.

Let me begin with a simple idea: trust is not something institutions can ask for. It is something they earn, one open decision, one accessible service, one kept promise at a time.

This is how Armenia understands good governance. Not only as the way institutions work, but as the way people experience them: whether they are heard, whether decisions are made in the open, and whether someone answers for the results.

We joined the Open Government Partnership in 2011, and since then we have tried to turn this principle into practice. Through our e-Draft platform, citizens can read draft legal acts and send their comments and proposals directly to policymakers. Last year, Armenia was elected to the Steering Committee of the Partnership.

Yet the clearest lesson has come from the local level, so let me share one example.

In 2023, Armenia began piloting participatory budgeting in several municipalities, including Abovyan, Ashtarak and Armavir. Residents proposed projects, voted on them and followed their implementation. In Abovyan, a resident's idea became a road-safety playground.

The beginning was modest. In the first rounds, only a few dozen people took part. But then people saw that their votes led to real projects, and participation grew. In Tsaghkahovit, more than five thousand residents voted. That is 62 percent of those eligible.

The lesson is clear. People do not need to be persuaded to participate. They need to see that participation changes something.

Digital tools can help widen this circle, through a unified, one-stop-shop platform for public services and a Unified Social Service that brings support closer to citizens. But a digital state must never become a state only for the digitally skilled. Older people, persons with disabilities and rural communities must not be left behind.

And we must remember our young people. They are not only the leaders of tomorrow. They are citizens today, and their voice in local decisions is an investment in stronger communities.

Dear colleagues, this is where we, as parliamentarians, carry a special responsibility.

Our first duty is to listen, and to act on what we hear. Citizens bring us a road that needs repair, a service that is hard to reach, a decision they do not fully understand, and we work with the government and local authorities to find solutions.

Our second duty is to follow up. Oversight, at its best, is not confrontation. It is a shared effort to check that what was promised has been delivered, and to tell citizens honestly what has been done.

Armenia, like every country, still faces challenges: the digital divide, disinformation, and the need for deeper participation. No country can solve these alone.

We also believe that international parliamentary cooperation is an important part of addressing these challenges. It gives us an opportunity to exchange experiences, learn from one another and build partnerships that extend beyond our national borders.

In this spirit, I would also like to extend a warm invitation to all our colleagues here to visit Yerevan this month. Armenia will host the 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP17), and we would be very pleased to welcome IPU participants to Armenia and to see you in Yerevan during this important international event.

Thank you.