

Statement by His Excellency Sangay Dorji, The Chairperson of The National Council of Bhutan
Head of Delegation
153rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania | 5–9 October 2026

Hon. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kuzuzangpo and Good Afternoon!

It is a distinct honour to address this 153rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, on behalf of the Parliament and people of Bhutan.

At the outset, I bring the warm greetings, good wishes and prayers of His Majesty The King, His Majesty the Fourth King, the Royal Family and the people of Bhutan.

I also convey our sincere appreciation to the Parliament and Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the warm hospitality extended to all of us.

Excellencies,

The theme of this Assembly, “Enhancing good governance and empowering communities through inclusivity, trust and opportunities for all” resonates deeply with Bhutan’s national journey.

For Bhutan, good governance is ultimately about people - their dignity, wellbeing, security, participation and opportunity.

This conviction is rooted in the visionary leadership of our Monarchs.

His Majesty the Fourth King gave Bhutan and the world the profound philosophy of Gross National Happiness, a reminder that progress must be measured not only by economic growth, but also by the wellbeing of our people, the strength of our institutions, the preservation of our culture and the protection of our environment.

He also entrusted our people with democracy under a constitutional monarchy, founded on trust, responsibility and service.

Today, under the compassionate leadership of His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, this vision continues to evolve. At its heart is **Kidu** the profound tradition of compassionate governance, through which His Majesty reaches out to citizens facing hardship and vulnerability personally.

It carries a simple but powerful message; No citizen should feel forgotten or left behind.

This commitment is also reflected in free education and public healthcare and in our efforts to equip our young people through Gyalsung, De-suung, Pelsuung programs, education reforms, skills development,

entrepreneurship and new economic opportunities. Our ambition is not merely to create employable youth, but capable, confident, disciplined and responsible citizens.

At the same time, Bhutan believes that modernisation must never come at the cost of identity.

Our culture, traditions, language and spirituality are not barriers to development. They are the solid foundations upon which we build our future.

The same principle applies to our environment. Our Constitution requires Bhutan to maintain at least 60 percent forest cover for all time. Today, more than 70 percent of our country remains under forest cover, and Bhutan continues to be carbon negative.

Distinguished Delegates,

Perhaps the most forward-looking expression of this vision is the Gelephu Mindfulness City, an aspiration to create new opportunities while remaining deeply rooted in Bhutanese values.

It seeks to bring together technology and mindfulness, innovation and tradition, global connectivity and Bhutanese identity.

Our aspiration is clear: To embrace modernity without losing identity, and to pursue prosperity without losing purpose.

This vision also recognises that human wellbeing is not only material, but also inner and spiritual.

In 2025, Bhutan hosted the Global Peace Prayer Festival, bringing people together in a collective aspiration for peace and harmony.

And on 1 November 2026, Bhutan will undertake the historic raising of 108 stupas at Gelephu Mindfulness City in a single day, as an expression of unity, faith and collective endeavour, with prayers for peace, prosperity and the wellbeing of all sentient beings.

Excellencies,

From the perspective of Parliament, our responsibility is to translate national aspirations into responsive institutions, accountable governance and meaningful participation.

Parliament must be a place where citizens are heard, not only during elections, but throughout the legislative and policy process.

We must listen to our communities, scrutinise policies, oversee public resources and ensure that public power remains accountable - Because trust cannot be demanded; it must be earned, through listening, transparency, responsibility and action.

Bhutan is a small country, but we are blessed with a profound inheritance: the wisdom of our Monarchs and a development philosophy that places the human being at the centre.

We come to this Assembly with humility, friendship and a spirit of partnership, ready to learn, to listen and to contribute.

Let us therefore build institutions that listen, societies that include, systems that empower and economies that create opportunities for all.

May our collective efforts strengthen trust, empower our communities, and advance a future of peace, prosperity and human dignity for all.

Thank you, and Tashi Delek!