

Speech of **Mr Toomas Kivimägi**, First Vice-President of the Riigikogu at the
General Debate

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

153rd IPU Assembly, Arusha, Tanzania

Distinguished Chair, dear colleagues, honourable hosts! JAMBO!

The strength of a society is not measured in times of stability. It is measured in moments of uncertainty by whether people continue to trust one another, whether institutions continue to serve the public good, and whether opportunities remain open to all.

Today, these principles are being tested around the world. We face geopolitical tensions, conflicts, economic uncertainty, disinformation, and growing polarization. That’s not a world we are looking for. That’s not a world we want to leave to next generations.

Our strength lies in our diversity. We must not forget to celebrate our unique cultures and traditions. In the rush of globalization, we should not lose the identities that define our nations, cities, and communities. Indeed, diversity and uniqueness are among the reasons people travel, connect, and learn from one another. Preserving them is not an obstacle to progress, but an essential part of it.

None of this is possible without security. Security is therefore not separate from good governance; it is one of its foundations.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has reminded us that war does not stop at country borders. Its consequences, including Russia's different kinds of hybrid attacks, are felt across Europe and beyond. We need to respond to that fast, collectively and decisively reaffirming that economic interests should never take precedence over peace and stability. If we allow brute force to prevail over law, none of us can be certain who will be affected next.

WE ARE IN THE SAME BOAT.

We must admit that existing international organisations are not effective enough. That's why I would propose the following: to create a new World Peace Forum. A Forum that brings together governments, local authorities, experts, and civil society to share solutions, strengthen resilience, and build trust. Not to replace existing institutions, but to complement them through dialogue and practical cooperation. Whether established under the umbrella of the IPU or as an independent initiative, its purpose would be simple: let's not let the aggressors win, let the democracy prevail.

Today, more than ever, we must turn our shared values into action. Let us choose trust over fear, inclusion over division, and cooperation over confrontation. Let us strengthen our common security, protect the uniqueness of our communities, and create opportunities for all.

Because in the end, the strongest societies are not those with the greatest power, but those that give every person a stake in a shared future and every community a reason to believe in tomorrow.

Let's make it clear to everybody. Let's make it happen. On behalf of our children and grandchildren.

ASANTI! Thank you for your attention!