Distinguished Madam President,
Dear Secretary General, and esteemed colleagues,

Exactly 35 years ago, the Cold War era ended. Russia became a full member of the international community, later – integrated into the "European family". In turn, Europe acquired Russia as a kind neighbor, the largest trade partner, and a reliable supplier of low-cost energy resources—factors that guaranteed successful development of global economic during this period.

Looking back at these 35 years, we must acknowledge that the West was not sincere with Russia. During these years, the European security architecture and the international order have accumulated structural imbalances. As an example: we were promised a common security space from Lisbon to Vladivostok. At the meantime, NATO began advancing toward Russia's borders. Direct military threats escalated considerably. In fact, Europe is once again divided by an "Iron Curtain", this time by NATO and European Union eastern borders.

One more imbalance is politicization of human rights discourse, which Western countries use as an occasion to intervene in domestic jurisdiction across the world, including Russia. It is not only about same-sex marriage legalization or implementation of uncertain "principles" into the electoral process. This is a case of double standards: Russia was accused of non-compliance with the Minsk agreements from 2014 to 2022; at the same time, no one claimed the terrible crimes of the Kiev regime in Donbas, and this is the major reason we had to start the special military operation.

On a global scale, the world is also facing significant imbalances.

The first of these is the imperfection of the international law system. As you know, this system is based on the UN Charter, but there are a lot of legal gaps in it. Russia would like to see a more effective UN capable of responding to crises. We believe that the solution stems from the expansion of the representation of countries from the Global Majority in the UN Security Council, particularly from Africa.

The second imbalance is the unification of states into blocs such as NATO and now the European Union, whose activities are not regulated by international law at all. The bloc system as a phenomenon was not known to the founding fathers of the United Nations in 1945 at the time of the adoption of its Charter. Nevertheless, the countries that have joined together in blocs are use the gaps of international law to impose the so-called "rules-based order".

Unfortunately, we feel similar imbalances in the IPU, where, on the one hand, national delegations are equal among themselves, but on the other hand – there is just one geopolitical group united not by geography, but by ideology, which it consistently imposes on others, trying to hijack our Union.

The IPU is a unique international organization where parliamentarians from different countries could work together on a conciliatory agenda. Like we do it in BRICS. From this rostrum, I wish to reaffirm my commitment to establishing a geopolitical group "BRICS+" in the IPU, which will be open to all parliaments interested in true partnership.

Parliamentary diplomacy is not a weapon for geopolitical struggle and settling scores. Inter-state disputes should be addressed through appropriate United Nations mechanisms. Our parliamentary mission is to build bridges and find compromises on the most sensitive issues.

We should not duplicate the UN agenda, much less transfer disagreements. Our message is to use the IPU to talk to each other here, on this platform, even when inter-state disagreements do not allow it. I'd like to emphasize once again that the Russian delegation is ready for such a dialogue with any other delegation from any other country.

And one more thing, no less important. Russia calls for efforts to correct the imbalances in the world order. This is exactly what President Putin's initiative on the Eurasian security architecture, which will have a parliamentary dimension in the future. Our goal is to create a security system that will be inclusive, not

exclusive, and would involve all the countries of the «Big Eurasia region», including European states.

Dear colleagues! We are in Africa, which is becoming an increasingly important voice in international affairs. This once again confirms that the unipolar world no longer exists. I take this opportunity to thank the Tanzanian Presidency for their hospitality and the excellent organization of the IPU Assembly. In my opinion, Tulia Ackson, representing Tanzania, has become one of the best IPU President ever. *[Madam President, we do appreciate all the efforts you have done in favor of strong IPU and international parliamentarism in general].*

At this assembly, we will have to decide on the successor of Dr. Tulia Ackson. Let me remind you that in the 137 years of the IPU's history, a representative of the "Eurasia" geopolitical group has never been elected as its President. We call on all national delegations to advocate for the principle of rotation of geopolitical groups in the leadership of the IPU. We have a unique chance to restore historical injustice by supporting the candidacy of Ms. Gafarova from Azerbaijan, nominated by "Eurasia". Thank you for your attention!