Honourable Speakers and Members of Parliament,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I am honoured to welcome you to this Pre-COP 26 Parliamentary Meeting, organized jointly with the Italian Chamber of Deputies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a warning shot with regard to the much greater challenge arising from climate change, forcing nations to rethink their economies and their national priorities. The challenges posed by this sanitary crisis are urgent and important, but they must be transformed into opportunities for building resilience for healthy people and a healthy planet. In 2020-2021, many countries have shown a higher level of climate ambition, by submitting their revised National Determined Contributions, committing to decarbonization and investing in a green transition.

However, the recently launched report by the International Panel on Climate Change has spoken loud and clear: humans’ role in the climate crisis is unequivocal and the 1.5°C target is slipping beyond reach. The clock is ticking and there is a need to take urgent action to avoid an irreversible crisis. Immediate, rapid and large-scale cuts to greenhouse gas emissions are mandatory to maintain the goals set by the Paris Agreement and parliamentarians have a critical role to play in ensuring its implementation through their legislative, budgetary, oversight and representation functions.

Parliaments can make a turn in climate action now, supporting the translation of the commitments made under the Paris Agreement into national-level action. This is where it counts. With their distinctive legislative mandate, parliamentarians are instrumental in ensuring coherence among global commitments and national legislation. They can also ensure adequate funding is allocated in support to climate action, and ensure oversight on the government’s actions to address the climate emergency.

For the IPU, supporting parliaments and parliamentarians in their efforts to tackle climate change is a top priority. By promoting bilateral, regional and international parliamentary engagement, the IPU facilitates the exchange of good practices and lessons learned on addressing the climate emergency. A resolution was unanimously adopted at the 141st IPU Assembly in 2019, urging all Parties to implement the Paris Agreement. In 2021, another resolution endorsed parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security, acknowledging the concrete and existential threat to humanity caused by climate change and climate-related disasters. Furthermore, the
Declaration of the 5th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in September reiterated the critical importance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the actions and targets set out in the Paris Agreement, expressing a strong support for an ambitious and collaborative outcome from the COP26 in Glasgow next month.

Our meeting today and tomorrow is an important milestone on the journey towards ever bolder parliamentary action on climate change. The COP26 is a chance not to be missed in the fight of climate change and it must deliver in providing solutions from a global and long-term perspective, including addressing the issue of financing. The IPU together with member parliaments continues to provide a platform to ensure a parliamentary dimension of climate negotiations.

I look forward to the fruitful dialogue that will take place during this event, and hope our discussions inspire stronger parliamentary action on climate change for a more sustainable, prosperous, and peaceful planet.