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## Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations *Putting an end to conflicts: Prescriptions for a peaceful future*

ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York

8 and 9 February 2024

### Summary report

#### Introduction

1. The 2024 Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations (UN) was jointly organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Office of the President of the General Assembly. Its theme was chosen in light of the growing tensions and increasing number of conflicts around the world.
2. The hearing included panel discussions and presentations featuring experts in the field of peace and security. It took place ahead of the Summit of the Future, to be held in New York in September 2024. The summit will be an opportunity to strengthen multilateralism as a way of responding more effectively to current and future global challenges. To lay the ground for the summit, the UN Secretary-General has published a series of policy briefs, including the New Agenda for Peace, which presents several proposals to strengthen the global response to growing security threats. Approximately 200 parliamentarians from 50 countries attended the hearing.

#### Opening session

3. **H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis**, President of the UN General Assembly for its seventy-eighth session welcomed the parliamentarians, stressing that they represent the will of the people. The President underlined that Parliamentarians played a critical role in maintaining global peace and security, and addressing challenges ranging from armed conflicts and the climate crisis to food insecurity and pandemics. Peace was a precondition for attaining all other objectives, and it remained a top priority of his presidency. Ahead of the Summit of the Future, where world leaders will gather to forge a new global consensus on how to more effectively deliver for people and planet, the President stressed that parliamentarians were critical to delivering transformative solutions. They should be innovative, inquisitive, frank and empathetic when considering ways to restore peace and security. The President further highlighted that multilateralism should be turned to, as a way to resolve global issues effectively and the Parliamentary hearing should be used as an opportunity to reinvigorate diplomacy and dialogue.
4. **Dr. Tulia Ackson**, President of the IPU, welcomed the participants to what was a unique joint event, and highlighted the importance of the New Agenda for Peace. She said the policy brief pointed out that the human, environmental and economic costs of conflict were spiralling out of control, and that the world must shift towards conflict prevention. The multilateral system needed to be revamped, so it could successfully address conflicts in light of today's cross-border and global challenges. Reforms were urgently needed, particularly in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Inequities were growing, and there was an urgent need to include poorer people, women, youth and minority groups in political systems and other decision-making forums. Parliamentarians should: act as positive role models; ensure politics takes place from the bottom up; engage in parliamentary diplomacy to bridge divides; claim a stronger role in international affairs; and reverse injustices through greater investment in education, health and people's livelihoods

## **Advancing international law, norms and obligations**

5. The world is facing a dire situation, including: heightened geopolitical tensions and an increasing number of armed conflicts; the changing nature of warfare; record-high military spending; dangerous rhetoric and practices around nuclear weapons; fewer guardrails on disarmament and arms control; the increasing diversion and misuse of small arms and light weapons; the erosion of international law, international humanitarian law, and democratic norms; declining trust in public institutions, the UN, and the multilateral system; irregular and unsafe forced migration; and growing threats stemming from the climate crisis, inequality, and emerging technologies. Lack of political will remains the biggest hurdle to making progress.

6. There is a disturbing decline in adherence to international law and norms-based constraints on the use of force, in terms of both when and how force is used.

## **Recommendations to parliamentarians and Member States on upholding the rule of law and respect for international legal obligations:**

- (a) Prioritize universality. International law cannot be applied selectively based on geopolitical interests and military power. Many participants mentioned that those responsible must be held to account for the crimes committed in Gaza, just like those responsible for the war and crimes committed in Ukraine.
- (b) Comply with the international law, including the UN Charter, as well as international humanitarian law. Support the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and other international institutions as key tools for peaceful dispute resolution. Advance compliance with the ICJ's decision to work towards nuclear weapons elimination. Nuclear weapons intrinsically violate international humanitarian law because they cannot distinguish between civilians and combatants.
- (c) Strengthen mechanisms to enforce international humanitarian law, including by bolstering the capacity of international judicial institutions, and ensuring national legal frameworks are equipped to hold violators accountable.
- (d) Insist that leaders consistently adhere to international law and protect civilians. 2024 is the busiest election year in history, with countries representing more than half the world's population heading to the polls at a turbulent time. It is imperative that elected leaders respect international legal obligations and norms. Focus on elections must not distract world leaders' attention to pressing issues on the global agenda.
- (e) Prioritize promotion and protection of human rights. Human rights restrict the use of State power. They can address many grievances, as well as the root causes of conflict and instability.
- (f) Recognize that parliamentarians act as a balancing force against hegemony abusing international law. MPs represent the conscience of governments, and bring the will of the people to the international stage. Parliamentarians give voice to international law, treaties, and agreements by ratifying them, domesticating and operationalizing them through adequate budgets and oversight. MPs also ensure that laws reflect a nation's social fabric.
- (g) Focus on accountability to end impunity. This recommendation includes judicial accountability, as well as broader accountability that prevents cycles of violence. It is about responsive governments and holistic approaches, such as transitional justice.
- (h) Recognize the successes of multilateralism. Most recently, this would include the passage of the High Seas Treaty in 2023.
- (i) Embrace partnerships. This could include fostering collaboration between parliamentarians and other stakeholders, such as civil society, academia and the private sector.
- (j) Address gender blindness in international legal instruments, and advocate for gender-disaggregated data.
- (k) Ensure national compliance with international law, by assessing the use of and adherence to existing human rights mechanisms, treaties, covenants and special procedures. Use tools such as the Universal Periodic Review, and IPU publications, including [Parliaments and Human rights – A self-assessment toolkit](#), and the [Assuring our Common Future](#) handbook.

## Reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

7. The world is at an inflection point, and is transitioning to a new global order. Decisions made today will have a profound impact on future generations. However, current global governance structures were created more than 75 years ago, when the UN had only 51 Member States, compared to 193 today. The UN body tasked with the primary responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security – the UNSC – is unrepresentative, non-inclusive and ineffective.

8. Intergovernmental negotiations on UNSC reform are now live and webcast. There is also a repository of information available at [www.un.org/en/ga/screform](http://www.un.org/en/ga/screform). Parliamentarians should use these resources to stay abreast of the discussions, and help to build and nurture the political will needed for reform.

9. The five permanent members of the UNSC have used their veto powers to block resolutions regarding some of the world's biggest crises, including the aggression against Ukraine and the conflict in Gaza. Reforming the UNSC requires amending the UN Charter, and therefore consent from the five permanent members. They are unlikely to give up their powers. However, Member States should also be advocating for non-amendment reforms and strategies that are already allowed. This includes more consistent application of the relevant articles of the UN Charter, including:

- (a) **Article 11** enables the General Assembly to take steps in the interests of international peace and security. Also to note here, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 76/262, is that, if a veto is cast at the UNSC, it necessitates a special debate within 10 working days. This ensures that Security Council members are held accountable to the entire UN membership by requiring them to publicly justify their vetoes. It also builds normative groundwork for limiting veto use.
- (b) **Article 99** allows the UN Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that, in his opinion, may threaten the maintenance of peace and security. Following a permanent member's veto in December 2023 of a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the Secretary-General used this mechanism to pressure the UNSC, the international community and the warring parties to agree on a ceasefire.
- (c) **Article 27 (3)** states that "a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting" in decisions under Chapter VI and under paragraph 3 of Article 52. This requirement should be applied to the UNSC.
- (d) **Article 109 (1)** requires a Charter review mechanism within 10 years of adoption. The mechanism has yet to be used.

## Embracing a human-centred security paradigm and the New Agenda for Peace

10. Inequality and other injustices lead to social unrest and conflict. Therefore, it is imperative for every nation to invest in health care, education, the environment, and other areas necessary to build healthy, happy and prosperous societies. But security is still overwhelmingly based on State-centric models that prioritize military spending. A human-centred approach to security seeks to meet people's basic human needs, including good health, a clean environment and political security. Such an approach integrates sustainable development, good governance, the rule of law, and local and global issues, recognizing their interlinkages.

11. As the global community confronts multiple crises and growing armed conflicts, the UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace provides a frank analysis of existing threats and challenges, while presenting opportunities for joint action, and exploring avenues for de-escalation. The Secretary-General has identified three fundamental principles of effective security: trust, which is at an all-time low; international solidarity, which was damaged by inequality during the COVID-19 pandemic; and universality, which has been undermined by double standards. The New Agenda aims to revitalize multilateral action towards peace and security in a world that is transitioning to a new global order.

## Key points to consider for shifting from a State-centric to a human-centred approach, and embracing the New Agenda for Peace:

- (a) Advocate for domestic, regional and international peacebuilding initiatives, diplomacy, and conflict resolution mechanisms. Strengthen these efforts through capacity-building, adequate budget appropriations, oversight, and sharing intelligence and other resources.

- (b) Adopt a universal approach to conflict prevention, acknowledging the cross-border and spillover consequences of conflicts. Universality is key for building trust and solidarity.
- (c) Commit to national peacebuilding and conflict prevention strategies. National action plans are at the centre of the New Agenda, and parliamentarians are at the centre of these plans.
- (d) Engage in dialogue, diplomacy and mediation efforts by leveraging relationships with parliamentarians across borders.
- (e) Encourage collective action to fight against the erosion of nuclear weapons norms. Support integrating nuclear disarmament as an integral part of the UN peace and security framework.
- (f) Use existing tools and frameworks to reduce military spending, prevent conflict, and stop the use and development of nuclear weapons. For example:
  - i. Article 6 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons calls on parties to pursue negotiations towards disarmament.
- (g) Regulate the use of small arms and light weapons, and ammunition.
  - i. To illustrate the need for regulation, representatives from Latin American countries described high rates of crime and violence, with death tolls exceeding those of some armed conflicts.
- (h) Commit to eradicating all forms of violence, including gender-based violence.
- (i) Ensure women's and young people's full and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making.
- (j) Promote inclusive policies through legislation that focuses on the root causes of conflict, which include widening socioeconomic disparities, political marginalization, and human rights abuses. Security will remain an issue if people lack access to basic services, face social injustice, or suffer systematic human rights violations. History has shown that security does not come mainly from weapons, but from remediating injustices. For example:
  - i. Costa Rica grounds its foreign policy in the notion that it is possible to be strong without being armed, and that strength and credibility arise from the strategic choice to be an un-militarized neutral State, which champions human rights and international law.
  - ii. Reducing military spending and investing in human development could have a profound impact on people's well-being and help prevent conflict. Just 3% of the world's annual military spending could be enough to fund education (SDG 4), while 13% could address extreme hunger and poverty (SDGs 1 and 2).
  - iii. Investing in peace is financially sound: every \$1 invested in peacebuilding and conflict prevention provides a \$16 return on investment as a peace dividend.
- (k) Strengthen multilateral efforts to collect an estimated annual \$2–4 trillion lost to tax evasion, trafficking, and corruption. That money should be invested in the SDGs.
- (l) Promote good governance as an enabler of development. People should feel their government is responsive to their needs. Governments must engage with their citizens holistically and create inclusive societies. For example:
  - i. The Netherlands is small in terms of geography and population, and 26% of the country is below sea level. Despite this, it is the world's second largest food exporter, in large part because of good governance.
- (m) Acknowledge that everyone has a shared responsibility towards the global commons, as people's lives depend on the same vital ecosystems, including water, the oceans, and the broader environment. Parliamentarians must invest in formal and informal education that promotes the concept of shared goods, including through comprehensive civics classes and efforts to nurture a global culture of respect and cooperation. For example:
  - i. A suggestion was made to ensure that every child in secondary school has an electronic or physical copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- (n) Ensure people enjoy their fundamental right to self-determination.

### **Climate change and conflict**

12. Climate change exacerbates existing tensions and can lead to new conflicts. It is increasingly causing sea-level rise, tropical cyclones, floods, droughts, ocean acidification, and other unpredictable and extreme weather events. Climate change leads to loss of human, animal and marine life; it destroys homes, land and infrastructure; and damages agriculture and other

industries. It is quickly accelerating and causing environmental degradation, poverty, food insecurity, forced migration, scarcity of resources, and conflict. It affects all nations, regardless of their location or economic status, and increasingly threatens security.

**Recommendations to parliamentarians on addressing the climate crisis within the security context:**

- (a) Understand the strong correlation between climate and conflict. For example:
  - i. The International Committee of the Red Cross has found that, of the 25 countries most vulnerable to climate change, 14 are mired in conflict.
  - ii. One pilot study showed that most young people who joined extreme and radical movements in Sub-Saharan Africa were facing a growing lack of resources, especially natural resources such as water, which have become scarcer due to climate change.
- (b) Ensure climate is discussed at the highest echelons of the UN. While the UNSC has rejected a resolution to integrate climate-related security risks, more than 65 Member States have shown support for linking these issues.
- (c) Focus on meeting climate targets. Deep and immediate mitigation efforts are needed to ensure global warming does not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius. This calls for phasing out fossil fuels and investing in clean energy, including tripling renewable energy efforts, doubling energy efficiency work, and decarbonizing key economic sectors.
- (d) Enhance countries' coping capabilities, and reduce climate vulnerability through strong partnerships (as outlined in SDG 17), bold investments, technology transfers, and capacity-building. Help developing countries to confront climate change using mechanisms such as the recently established loss and damage fund.
- (e) Harness the knowledge and expertise of young people, women, indigenous peoples and others working at the forefront of climate change.
- (f) Push for more science-based diplomacy instead of political diplomacy.
- (g) Use trade to create resilient adaptation systems through preparedness, response and recovery.
- (h) Address challenges stemming from the absence of governmental structures devoted to climate action. This absence leaves some places without access to climate finance, education and research.
- (i) Explore different structures and frameworks to foster dialogue and prompt collective action. For example:
  - i. The Lake Chad Basin Commission works to manage Lake Chad, its water and other resources, preserve the ecosystem, and promote peace and security in the region.
- (j) Improve early warning systems, and work across borders to implement them.
- (k) Prioritize national climate action plans and ensure they are adequately funded. Integrate climate-related risks into national development plans.
- (l) Push for violators to be made accountable. Some participants noted that the world's biggest polluters should be held to account. The least developed nations are often the most impacted by climate change.
- (m) Address the environmental impact of armed conflicts. Participants pointed to carbon emissions stemming from heavy bombardments.
- (n) Counter disinformation, fake news and greenwashing, through education and prompt responses.
- (o) It was suggested that the UN appoints a special rapporteur on climate change and peace and security.

**Including women, young people and other groups working for peace**

13. Research has shown that the inclusion of women and young people in peace negotiations leads to more durable and sustainable peace agreements. While it is widely known that these groups bring valuable expertise, fresh perspectives, innovative approaches, new energy and strong networks, they continue to be greatly underrepresented in politics, and national and international peace negotiations. Many regimes systematically push women and young people out of decision-making structures and processes, thereby perpetuating injustice. Panellists stressed that peace was not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice and equality for all. For example:

- i. In Afghanistan, where 70% of the population are young, not a single young person and only one woman was involved in the Doha peace talks in 2019 and 2020. The repercussions have been far-reaching, with girls not allowed to go to school after around the age of 12.
- ii. In Sierra Leone, women played an integral role in the most difficult parts of peace negotiations. They mobilized a large network, and ensured accountability through mechanisms such as a truth and reconciliation commission, so as to achieve lasting peace.

14. In 2022, women accounted for only 16% of delegates in any given party to peace negotiations. This had dropped from 23% in 2020. Yet women are typically the most affected by conflict. By the end of 2022, 614 million women lived in conflict zones, a figure that had grown by 50% in five years. Similarly, millions of young people continue to bear the brunt of instability, with roughly one in four living in areas of armed conflict. Despite often being the first to be recruited to fight and die in conflicts, young people are usually the last to have a seat at the negotiating table.

**Recommendations to parliamentarians on meaningfully and systematically including women and young people in peace and security work:**

- (a) Embrace principles of diversity, inclusivity, equity and empowerment. All actions must be people-centred and have human rights and gender equity at their core.
- (b) Use existing frameworks, including UNSC resolutions 1325, 1425, 2050, 2250 and 2535, on women, youth, and peace and security issues.
- (c) Appropriate budgets that allow women and young people to participate fully in all aspects of society.
- (d) Create platforms that give young people and women a voice, and recognize their contributions.

**15. Recommendations to parliamentarians that focus on including women:**

- (a) Use multi-faceted approaches to tackle barriers that exclude women. Approaches could include: collective action to dismantle gender inequality and misogyny; stopping violence against women; seeking normative changes in society; and challenging the status quo of male-dominated decision-making structures.
- (b) Collect gender-disaggregated data on peacebuilding initiatives.
- (c) Examine national action plans and ensure their proper oversight. Plans for implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda have been developed in 107 countries, but 30% of the plans are outdated, and only 26% have the budgets needed to meet their goals.
- (d) Increase both women's participation and their leadership in the political sphere. Only 27% of legislators are women; and that figure is even lower in conflict and post-conflict countries. Just six parliaments have gender parity, and fewer than one in four Speakers is a woman. Similarly, only 27 countries have a female president or prime minister, and the UN has had only four female Presidents of the General Assembly and never had a female Secretary-General in its nearly 80-year history. Actions to achieve this could include:
  - i. Using quotas and other tools to include more women in politics. France, for example, passed a law to mandate parity and impose sanctions for non-compliance. This led to an increase in the number of women parliamentarians from 23% in 2017 to the current 37%.
  - ii. Encouraging women to participate in and lead parliamentary committees on budgets and security issues. Women chair just 13% of parliamentary defence or budget committees.
  - iii. Passing policies and budgets that allow women to reconcile family life with work and political life.
- (e) Ensure that parliaments and other venues are gender-sensitive, safe, and free of discrimination, harassment, and abuse.
- (f) Insist on gender parity and gender equality in all spheres of life. For example:
  - i. Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy targets gender equality and empowerment of girls and women.
  - ii. The Republic of Korea's Framework Act on Gender Equality sets out policies to enhance the status of women in many areas.

- (g) Shift terminology and views on women. Instead of primarily seeing women as heroines – which many of them are – recognize them in the first instance as leaders on the front lines, and use terminology that mirrors this recognition. Women should be regarded on the same level as male parliamentarians and leaders in their societies.
- (h) Eliminate discriminatory provisions in existing legislation and entrench and codify gender issues in national and international law. For example:
  - i. Sierra Leone enacted the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Act in 2022. It addresses issues such as reserved seats for elective offices, duties to promote gender equality, and equal pay and training opportunities for women.
  - ii. Ehtesab, an Afghan-based startup that uses civic technology solutions to serve communities, has been collecting reports of human rights violations against girls and women in order to strengthen the recognition of gender apartheid as an offence under international jurisprudence.
- (i) Address discrimination from birth, and help girls become aware of their importance in decision-making processes.
- (j) Advocate for gender-sensitive budgets, and the funding of civil society organizations, including those that involve women’s human rights defenders, peace builders and mediators on the front lines.

**16. Recommendations to parliamentarians who focus on including young people:**

- (a) Take a multi-pronged approach to increase the participation of young people in politics by setting youth quotas, lowering the age of eligibility to run for office, and empowering young people through mentorship, training and financial support. While over half the world’s population is under the age of 30, only 2.8% of parliamentarians are younger than 30, and 39% of parliaments represented at the IPU do not have a single member under 30.
- (b) Incorporate young people’s perspectives in parliamentary work through youth committees, youth caucuses, youth ministries, and enhanced public engagement.
- (c) Link the youth agenda to the peace and security agenda. Politics must deliver hope and prosperity to future generations so as to sustain peaceful communities. Young people must be included in peace negotiations, as their generation will be the most impacted.
- (d) Address youth unemployment. The youth unemployment rate is 3.5 times higher than the equivalent figure for adults. Economic exclusion is a security concern, as it drives extremism, violence, crime and conflict.
- (e) Give young people a voice beyond politics, so they can have an impact in areas that they care about outside party political systems.

**Special segment on parliamentary diplomacy for peace**

17. Parliamentarians can prevent and resolve conflicts, complement government diplomacy, and break through impasses. Parliamentary diplomacy facilitates the exchange of ideas, builds common ground, and creates *deep-tissue connectivity* between stakeholders. MPs’ dialogue skills, alongside their deep understanding of national issues and the public’s needs, uniquely position them for this important role.

18. Governments must provide parliamentarians with the information they need to engage in parliamentary diplomacy. Mediators must respect the principles of sovereignty, independence, objectivity and impartiality. They should fully respect UN resolutions and the equal rights of all countries.

19. While it can be highly effective, parliamentary diplomacy faces many challenges. Its informal nature may result in a lack of follow-up mechanisms. It is also difficult to implement in areas without governmental structures, parliamentary partners, or an IPU chapter that can be engaged in peace processes.

20. Parliamentarians should make full use of their powers, insist that governments share relevant information, and appropriate budgets for parliamentary diplomacy.

21. **Examples of parliamentary diplomacy:**

- (a) The IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine was established in March 2022. It is one of the few remaining formats in which both Ukraine and the Russian Federation engage. The Task Force strives to mitigate some of the war's worst humanitarian consequences by focusing on areas of interest to both parties: nuclear safety, food security, access to and treatment of prisoners of war, ecologically vulnerable sites, and the situation of children who have been deported from Ukraine to the Russian Federation.
- (b) The IPU Committee on Middle East Questions, formed in 1987, is a rare venue where parties to conflict sit and talk to each other.
- (c) The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) have been engaged in discreet parliamentary diplomacy under the IPU's auspices.
- (d) The IPU recently secured commitments from Azerbaijan's and Armenia's Speakers of Parliament to meet for the first time.
- (e) During the 1982 Falkland Islands (Malvinas) war between Argentina and the United Kingdom, the IPU was the launch pad for formal discussions between those countries' governments.

**Special briefing on the Summit of the Future**

22. Mr. Guy Ryder, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Policy, said that the international community was facing deepening geopolitical divisions, growing inequality within and between States, an accelerating climate crisis, and conflicts that had become more deadly, complex and harder to resolve. The Summit of the Future would be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to restore and reinvigorate the international system, and create a more networked, inclusive and effective multilateralism.

23. The recently released [zero draft of the Pact for the Future](#), which is a starting point for deliberations, has **five broad areas in need of concrete action**:

- (a) **Sustainable development and financing for development.** Halfway through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, implementation is off track. With only 15% of SDG targets being met, there is an urgent need to boldly invest in the SDGs.
- (b) **International peace and security.** The New Agenda for Peace calls for a continuum of peace, ranging from prevention and peacebuilding efforts to reconstruction. The UN's existing toolbox on peace and security needs updating, as the world is dealing with new domains of conflict and emerging issues, such as the military use of new technologies.
- (c) **Science, technology and innovation, and digital cooperation.** A global digital compact is needed to ensure technology serves humanity equitably, and addresses risks. The Summit of the Future will consider whether the UN is the right venue for AI governance, and if so, determine its ideal structure.
- (d) **Young people and future generations.** Young people must meaningfully and systematically participate in the work of the UN. Regarding future generations, 10 billion people will be born before the end of the century, and will be affected by decisions made today. The Declaration on Future Generations will draw on existing statements in 50 countries, so as to define policymakers' responsibilities to unborn generations, ensuring sustainability and intergenerational solidarity.
- (e) **Transforming global governance.** The UN Secretary-General has put together far-reaching proposals around governance mechanisms of the UN and international finance institutions to ensure they are fit for purpose. External contributors should be brought together, including from academia, and local and regional governments.

**Artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies**

24. Technology can lead to progress, enhance a nation's security efforts, and improve resilience. However, it also poses new and unpredictable vulnerabilities for individuals, governments, and the international order. AI, lethal autonomous weapons systems, outer space weapons, and other emerging technologies could exacerbate existing inequalities, increase the digital divide, and present risks for people and the planet.



25. Intellectual property, data and AI are now the world's most valuable business and national security assets. They account for more than 91% of the Standard & Poor 500 \$40 trillion stock market value, compared to 17% in 1976. Those assets influence not just the economy, but also social, security, health and geopolitical realms. There is a global race for securing patents in this area, and high consumer interest. But abuse of data and AI can compromise information systems, disrupt markets and democratic processes, and inflict other harms.

**Key points to consider when addressing the challenges of AI and other new technologies:**

- (a) Policymakers need to be more alert and anticipatory. Their responses should be rooted in international law, including international humanitarian law.
- (b) National approaches must be democratic and inclusive, and promote trust and human rights. This should include adopting multilingual approaches, so that English is not the sole operating language. For example:
  - i. Ireland's national AI strategy sets out how the country can be an international leader in using AI, to benefit its economy and society through a people-centred, ethical approach.
- (c) Parliamentarians need to be nuanced and consider different interventions, such as:
  - i. Promoting existing laws on discrimination, election interference, privacy, and limits on the use of technology by law enforcement bodies.
  - ii. Examining whether any human rights framework needs updating to include issues such as information integrity, freedom of thought, freedom from manipulation, and privacy.
  - iii. Applying regulatory mechanisms, such as industry standards and codes of conduct.
  - iv. Identifying and addressing harms in the real world instead of talking about them in the abstract. For example, it is necessary to determine what companies should do regarding AI and new technology, and how to keep them accountable.
  - v. Considering areas ripe for international coordination, such as new agreements and informal mechanisms, including information-sharing about global threats.
- (d) Threats and vulnerabilities linked to digital technologies must be addressed in the following areas:
  - i. **National security.** The digital era poses increasingly complex challenges to national security.
  - ii. **Social inequality.** When AI is based on historical data, it can reinforce existing inequalities and injustices.
  - iii. **People's rights and welfare, including their freedoms and civil liberties.** Facial recognition and other tools can be used in harmful ways, such as to intimidate dissidents, monitor employees' efforts to unionize, or track domestic violence victims.
  - iv. **Information environment.** Fake and manipulated photos, videos and audio can lead to misunderstandings, compromise elections, and move stock markets. Governments should become adept at promptly sharing accurate information.
  - v. **Safety.** There should be prevention mechanisms to avoid the use of technology for harmful and illicit purposes, including, for example, making biological or chemical weapons.
- (e) The international community should put in place systems to deal with emerging technologies. These systems should be based on science, and provide a neutral impact assessment. It was suggested that the IPU appoint an AI ambassador.
- (f) Everyone must be included in decision-making. The AI conversation is often dominated by experts. But AI and other new technologies impact everyone, so different groups and civil society representatives must be heard.
- (g) To respond to new technologies, it is critical to understand the dynamics of the data economy, and how it leads to monopolies and inequality.
- (h) People should be aware of efforts to portray AI and other emerging technologies as more complex than they are. AI cannot be compared to human intelligence, and its limits must be understood.
- (i) Parliamentarians should take advantage of existing resources, such as the Center for Democracy and Technology's report, [An Unrepresentative Democracy](#). The report documents how disinformation and online abuse hinders women of colour who are political candidates. MPs should also make use of IPU workshops on AI.

## **Closing session**

26. The IPU President, Dr. Tulia Ackson, said that the two-day hearing had demonstrated parliamentarians' deep commitment to rethinking and reframing approaches to peace and security. MPs were vital actors in preventing a culture of violence, which invariably led to a culture of war. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to prevent people from suffering, and ensure their security. To achieve that goal, parliamentarians must end the marginalization of women and young people, and ensure their expertise, different perspectives, and innovative ideas were given full consideration. Parliamentarians must act today to support future generations by prioritizing peace, human security, social justice, civics, and respect for each other and international law. MPs could solve today's challenges by embracing transparency, translating the will of the people into legislative action, embracing multilateralism, speaking out against injustices and gross violations of international law, and firmly countering double standards. Every small step taken today could lead to a more peaceful and prosperous world.

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## **Annex: List of Speakers**

Moderator: Mr. Dan Dunsky

### **Day One**

#### **Opening Session**

H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the United Nations General Assembly

Dr. Tulia Ackson, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

#### **Panel 1. The future of peace and security: from good intentions to a renewed collective action**

Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

H.E. Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations (*attended virtually*)

Mr. Adam Lupel, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the International Peace Institute

#### **Panel 2. Might is *not* right: international law vs. the law of the jungle**

H.E. Mr. Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations; Co-Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council

Ms. Ana Lilia Rivera Rivera, President of the Senate of Mexico

Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights; Head of Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, New York

Professor Rebecca Hamilton, American University, Washington College of Law (*attended virtually*)

#### **Panel 3. “Security” redefined: from a State-centric approach to a *new security paradigm* based on human security**

H.E. Ms. Maritza Chan Valverde, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations

Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, UN Special Coordinator for development in the Sahel

Mr. Jonathan Granoff, President of the Global Security Institute; Representative to the United Nations of the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates

#### **Panel 4. Lowering the temperature: climate change and conflict**

H.E. Ms. Margo Debye, Permanent Representative of Nauru to the United Nations; Co-Chair of the Group of Friends on Climate and Security

Mr. Issa Mardo Djabir, Member of Parliament, Transitional National Council of Chad

Ms. Ligia Noronha, Assistant Secretary-General, Head of Office of the United Nations Environment Programme, New York

Ms. Nisreen Elsaïm, former Chair of the UN Secretary-General’s Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change (*attended virtually*)

## **Day 2**

### **Panel 5. *Not in my name*: women, youth and other groups working for peace**

H.E. Mr. Michael Imran Kanu, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations; Co-Chair of the Informal Group of Experts of the Security Council on Women, Peace and Security

Mr. Dan Carden, Member of Parliament, House of Commons of the United Kingdom; President of the IPU Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians

Ms. Cynthia López Castro, Member of Parliament, Chamber of Deputies of Mexico; President of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

Ms. Sarah Hendriks, Director of the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division, UN Women

Ms. Sara Wahedi, human rights activist; founder of Ehtesab

### **Special segment**

#### **Parliamentary diplomacy for peace: good practices and common challenges**

Senator Stéphanie D'Hose, Speaker of the Senate of Belgium; Member of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine

Mr. David McGuinty, Member of Parliament, House of Commons of Canada; President of the IPU Committee on UN Affairs

Ms. Khaddouj Slassi, Member of Parliament, House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco

Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU

### **Introduction to the Summit of the Future**

Mr. Guy Ryder, UN Under-Secretary-General for Policy

### **Panel 6. Emerging threats to peace: technology for evil vs. human progress**

Mr. Amandeep Singh Gill, UN Under-Secretary-General, Envoy on Technology

Mr. Jim Balsillie, co-founder of the Centre for International Governance Innovation, Canada

Ms. Alexandra Reeve Givens, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Center for Democracy and Technology (*attended virtually*)

### **Closing session**

Dr. Tulia Ackson, President of the IPU