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For democracy. For everyone.

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Geneva Declaration (draft)

Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future

We, Members of Parliament from around the world, gathered together at the 149th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, reaffirm our commitment to harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) to address the pressing global challenges of our time and to advance peace, sustainable development and human rights.

We are meeting at a time of unprecedented technological advancement and interconnectedness. From the transformative potential of artificial intelligence and the urgent need to combat climate change, to the persistent digital divide and the ethical challenges posed by emerging technologies, the multifaceted opportunities, challenges and risks we face underscore the need for parliaments to take urgent collective and forward-looking action, informed by common ethical standards regarding STI development and governance. We note that some nations have already taken bold decisions to pre-emptively ban certain inhumane technologically advanced weapons, creating a good practice precedent. The challenges we face demand a shared global commitment to leveraging STI for the common good.

We conclude this Assembly recognizing the potential of STI, when guided by ethical principles and inclusive governance, as a powerful means for building trust, promoting cooperation, bridging divides and enhancing the contribution of parliaments and parliamentarians to build a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable world. We welcome the work of the IPU to foster dialogue and cooperation on issues related to STI and we commit to continue and expand these efforts.

We note with satisfaction that the themes of science, technology and innovation permeate the important commitments adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2024, namely the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations. We are committed to working closely with the executive branches of our governments, the United Nations system and civil society on implementing these commitments.

As representatives of the people, we parliamentarians are keenly aware of our responsibility to ensure that the benefits of STI reach all segments of society, to bridge the technological divide between and within nations, communities, genders and generations, and to find consensus on how to overcome the challenges posed by rapid technological change.

We recognize that parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to develop and implement ethical frameworks for STI governance, ensuring that scientific and technological progress aligns with human rights standards and societal values, and contributes to the well-being of all.

Parliaments must address the complex challenges of an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world, leveraging strategic foresight to anticipate future trends, opportunities and risks. Parliaments have an important role to set legal boundaries, establish accountability mechanisms and prevent uses of technology that lead to human rights violations, exacerbate inequalities or undermine the rule of law and democratic processes.

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We must pay particular attention to the situation of women, youth and groups in vulnerable or marginalized situations who risk being left behind in the digital age, and recognize the vital role they can and should play in shaping the future of STI. Parliamentary action is crucial in empowering all sections of society to participate in and benefit from technological advancements. Parliaments must address the specific needs of these groups by embracing inclusive technological solutions that simultaneously preserve dignity, uphold rights, reduce exposure to digital risks and provide the conditions for them to realize their socioeconomic potential.

We especially commit to fostering the more substantial involvement of women and youth in STI, including in education, public health, research, innovation and technology governance, and to the effective implementation of gender-responsive and youth-inclusive STI policies by ensuring that technological development processes integrate diverse perspectives and guarantee the equal and meaningful participation of all segments of society.

We reiterate our commitment to evidence-based and efficient policymaking and to fostering a culture of scientific inquiry and innovation. We urge all States to invest in research and development, promote international science diplomacy, and adhere to global standards for responsible innovation. We advocate for increased recourse to scientific expertise in parliamentary decision-making processes as an essential mechanism for addressing complex global challenges.

We recognize the close link between STI, peace and development. The ethical and inclusive application of STI is crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, building resilient societies and strengthening accountability. Conversely, the misuse of or unequal access to technology can exacerbate existing inequalities and conflicts, or risk creating new ones.

Our focus should be on harnessing STI to tackle the underlying causes of global challenges, which are often rooted in socioeconomic exclusion, inequality, discrimination, lack of access to education and environmental degradation. We should increase our focus on leveraging technology to enhance human security, which encompasses citizens' protection by addressing essential needs such as food security, health care, shelter, education – including digital literacy – political security, environmental sustainability and climate action. STI can also be harnessed to anticipate and mitigate the impacts of natural hazards and public health emergencies.

We must monitor the potential risks and challenges posed by emerging technologies and take necessary and pre-emptive action to mitigate negative impacts, foster responsible innovation and ensure compliance with international standards and ethical principles. In this vein, we recognize the importance of ethical AI development, cybersecurity and digital privacy protection to ensure the peaceful use of technology that is grounded in human rights. In particular, we commit to ensuring a safe online environment to prevent harassment, bullying and cybercrime, particularly when they are gender-based. Particular attention must be paid to addressing, through regulation and targeted policy, the proliferation of misinformation, disinformation, and AI-generated content that propagates hate speech, as these can undermine public trust and threaten social cohesion.

Today's technological challenges transcend borders and demand a collective global response. As members of parliament, we agree on the importance of international cooperation in STI governance. It is only through collaborative efforts and upholding ethical standards that we can bridge the STI gap between and within nations, address growing technological risks, build digital solidarity, strengthen common security and trust to reduce tensions, and find lasting solutions to establish a shared sense of security and prosperity in the digital age.

We reconfirm our commitment to inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation on STI issues. We emphasize the IPU's unique role in fostering global parliamentary cooperation on STI governance. We welcome the adoption of the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology and IPU resolution on *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*. We further acknowledge the reports, recommendations and guidelines on digital transformation and AI that have been developed through the IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament, including the World e-Parliament Report 2024. We commit to work for the implementation of these new standards.

We pledge to take this Declaration back to our respective parliaments, disseminate the outcome of our collective work to our national authorities and seek to implement its principles through legislative, budgetary and oversight actions.

As parliamentarians, we commit to lead the way towards a more equitable, sustainable and technologically advanced world, pursuing informed, inclusive and innovative approaches to STI governance. We therefore pledge to do our utmost, individually and collectively, to harness the power of science, technology and innovation for the benefit of all humanity and the preservation of our planet.