



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Speech of Dr. Tulia Ackson, IPU President

Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the
29th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29)

Baku, 16 November 2024

Your Excellency Mr. Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Honourable Ms. Sahiba Gafarova, Speaker of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Distinguished Mr. Mukhtar Babayev, President of COP29, Honourable Speakers and Members of Parliament, and Distinguished guests.

I stand before you with a sense of honour and responsibility as the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, representing the global organization of parliaments dedicated to fostering collaboration, upholding democratic values, and addressing the critical challenges of our time.

It is inspiring to see the impressive number of participants here, with over 300 MPs registered for this meeting, a testament to our shared commitment to climate action. This gathering reflects the power of unified parliamentary engagement, bringing together voices from around the world in the pursuit of solutions to the climate crisis.

I would like to acknowledge and extend my deepest appreciation to Mr. Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC.

Your commitment to steering the international community towards sustainable climate solutions serves an inspiration for the work of parliaments worldwide.

As a former senior minister and parliamentarian, you understand the fundamental role of legislative bodies in translating climate ambitions into action. Through your leadership, you emphasise the urgency for national and global priorities to align with the Paris Agreement goals - an alignment in which parliaments play a central role.

Our sincere appreciation to the city of Baku for hosting COP29, a platform that reflects Azerbaijan's commitment to championing climate solutions and setting a high standard for global cooperation climate action.

Our gratitude is extended to the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan for co-hosting this event and building on the significant milestone of COP28, where the Parliamentary Meeting took place within the COP Green Zone for the first time.

By providing this essential platform, Azerbaijan is reinforcing the role of parliaments in climate governance and affirms their impact in translating climate goals into actionable policies that resonate at all levels of governance.

The warmth and generosity we have experienced here in Baku embody the spirit of inclusion and partnership, encouraging us all to work together to address the climate crisis.

The IPU's mandate is rooted in a commitment to strengthen parliamentary institutions, empower legislators, and ensure that the voices of the people are heard on the global stage. We work to promote international dialogue, advance sustainable development goals, and champion human rights, striving to create societies that are just, equitable, and resilient.

Climate change is one of the defining issues of our mandate because it impacts all aspects of life - social, economic, and environmental. It challenges us to look beyond immediate national interests and instead focus on the well-being of the entire planet and future generations.

Tackling this global crisis requires not only effective policies and legislation but also sustained political will. The IPU is committed to mobilising and strengthening this will within parliaments worldwide, empowering them to take climate action through advocacy, capacity building, and collaboration. Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the IPU has supported the development of climate legislation and provided resources and training to help align national policies with global climate goals.

Notable examples include the Ten Actions for Stronger National Commitments, launched as part of the IPU's Parliaments for the Planet campaign, and also our recently launched Toolkit on Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight of Nationally Determined Contributions both of which offer support to parliaments in overseeing and strengthening their NDCs, ensuring national goals align with global climate targets.

Esteemed participants, in just one year, since the last Parliamentary Meeting, the world has witnessed a series of extreme weather events that have severely impacted vulnerable communities. Record heatwaves have led to droughts and water shortages, while intensified storms have caused widespread devastation. Historic droughts have resulted in energy blackouts, water rationing, and extensive wildfires, exacerbating food insecurity. Unprecedented flooding has displaced millions and destroyed infrastructure.

These events have left no region untouched, affecting the communities and constituents we represent here today. By the end of 2023 7.7 million people were internally displaced by disasters—a number that excludes those uprooted by slower-onset crises like rising sea levels and environmental degradation. Climate change is increasingly driving extreme weather events, putting countless more people at risk of losing their homes and livelihoods.

As we reflect on these impacts, we must ask ourselves: What kind of world do we want to leave to our children and future generations? A world of scarcity, where water shortages, food insecurity, and displacement are the norm? Or a world where our commitment today creates a sustainable and resilient future? These are the types of decisions that will shape the lives of the generations to come.

As we convene at COP29, we must acknowledge that approximately 733 million people—one in eleven globally—are currently facing hunger, a crisis intensified by climate change's relentless impacts. We stand at point where ambition must meet action, and words must translate into meaningful change.

Parliamentarians hold significant responsibility in this effort and this urgent phase of climate action, bridging the gap between international agreements and national implementation.

With our authority to draft, enact, and oversee legislation, we ensure that climate policies are ambitious, practical and enforceable. We are uniquely positioned to scrutinize government actions, allocate resources effectively, and mobilise public support, making climate action a priority at every level.

COP29 carries unique significance by advancing fundamental areas essential to our shared climate goals. It emphasises the importance of new climate financing commitments, increased national climate ambitions, and important steps forward in adaptation and loss and damage efforts. Building upon the momentum from COP28, we now turn to implementing these ambitions with clarity and urgency.

The focus of this Parliamentary Meeting shows the depth and complexity of the issues before us, but we must rise to the challenge. Let us commit to translating the commitments made here into impactful policies that drive resilience, adaptation, and mitigation at every level.

Together, we can forge partnerships that transcend borders, ensuring our efforts are inclusive and responsive to the unique challenges faced by each nation. Let us act with the urgency, ambition and determination needed to build a sustainable, climate-resilient future for generations to come.

Thank you.