



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Address by Dr. Tulia Ackson, IPU President

The Role of IPU in strengthening Parliamentary Democracy and Diplomacy

23 July 2024, The Lok Sabha, New Delhi, India

Rt. Hon. Om Birla, Speaker of the Lok Sabha (the House of the People),
Rt. Hon. Jagdeep Dhankar, President of the Rajya Sabha (Council of States) and Vice-President of the Republic.
Members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to address you all today in this very important day of my visit in this beautiful and respective country of India. I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate my appreciation for the support that I received from you during my IPU Presidency and the warm welcome I received from my two dear brothers, Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, since I arrived in India. Indeed, India serves at home.

The IPU recognizes and respects the existence of India in the IPU for over 75 years and holding a reputable attendance of the India Parliamentary group to the IPU Assemblies. Having hosted the 57th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (New Delhi, 1969) and 89th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (New Delhi, 1993), was a great honor to our organization.

Dear Colleagues; today we are here to reflect on one of the key roles of the IPU in strengthening the Parliamentary Democracy and Diplomacy. As you are all aware, that the IPU holds a strategic plan of 2022 – 2026 in which one of the fundamental strategies is for Democracy and for everyone.

Parliaments and Parliamentarians, must exercise our mandates, represent and defend the rights and interest of the people. We must also be able to make decisions based on independent evidence- informed and credible information and exercise oversight of our governments.

By doing so we will be democratizing our Parliaments and support them to deliver on key National priorities, which are human rights, development and many others.

The IPU pledged to expand its work to ensure that MPs are able to exercise their Mandates freely and safely in response to the growing challenges and threats that many Members of Parliaments are facing.

Dear colleagues, in today's world where diplomacy has a better chance in ensuring democracy is beneficiary to all and Parliamentary ecosystem over time if effective. We need to focus efforts where action is most urgent, while remaining accessible to all. The IPU among others, is prioritizing in Parliaments emerging from conflicts, or in Transition Parliaments which require reinforced support.

Dear Parliamentarians, the IPU is also taking into account the importance of collective parliamentary action which will accelerate National, Regional and multilateral policy solutions to key global issues by catalyzing inter-parliamentary cooperation among its Member Parliaments towards issues of greatest urgency. Such

issues are combating climate change, promoting democracy, human rights, gender equality agendas, strengthening peace and security, and working towards sustainable development for all.

In today's world emerging agenda, we cannot ignore to mention the importance of peace and security. And by so doing we are reminded of the UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace earlier this year.

It essentially entails two crucial messages: Firstly, the human, environmental and economic cost of conflict is getting out of control. We need to focus a lot more on *prevention*.

Secondly, the multilateral system needs to be updated to be fit for the purpose with regard to conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

I think we all agree that UN diplomacy and assistance is better at repairing the soft tissue of international relations than the deep fractures that come with war and violent conflict.

Dear Parliamentarians; the world and the IPU is looking with great expectation to the Summit of the Future in September for a clear plan and a timeline to fix the various parts of the UN machinery for peace and security.

As IPU debates have brought to light again and again: Security Council reform needs to be at the top of that plan. As representatives of the people of the world, we can all attest to the fact that the people we represent want this United Nations body, which is so critical to preserving and maintaining world peace and security, to better reflect the UN's diverse composition and the world's new geopolitics so that its capable of responding to responds to threats to peace timely *decisively* and *evenhandedly*.

These reforms are overdue, they are urgent as a precondition to the world international peace, stability, security and an effective multilateral order.

Distinguished colleagues; The other event that the IPU is so looking forward is the 6th World Conference of Speakers in late July 2025, which will entail the importance of Multilateralism which includes democracy and diplomacy in it. This is a conference that happens every after five years. I hope I will get to see my Colleague Speakers in this significant conference of ours.

Dear friends, we are urged to also focus on the emerging technology including the Artificial Intelligence. The IPU is about to launch its first Resolution of Artificial Intelligence coming fall 2024 that explains the '*Impact of Artificial Intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*'. This will explain the gap between the technological advancements and the pave of legislative oversight.

When we talk of democracy, we must not leave behind inclusivity as its being one of the core strategies of the IPU. Parliaments should create access and influence pathways for all members of the community, that is must include both women, men and all marginalized groups in our decision-making levels of our Parliaments so that we articulate concerns of society at large.

The IPU will enhance its long-standing work on increasing the participation of women and youth in Parliaments. I have just noted that Women MPs in the House of People are only 74 which is equally 12.7% of the total House. Moreover, the Council of States has only 39 Women Members which rates at 16.3% of the total percentage of the House of Council. Regrettably, this is below the world's average rate of women representation in Parliaments. However, I am also aware of the efforts done by both Houses in passing the legislation serving one-third of seats on women. This is a great development and we look forward to see more and more women in Parliaments.

Having said so, I take this opportunity to sincerely recognize the IPU's Honorary First woman President Hon. Najma Haptullah (1999 - 2002), who was also the Deputy Chairman of the upper house of Parliament for 16 years.

I recall Hon. Heptullah being a great champion on gender issues and equality in politics.

friends, I take this opportunity once again to appreciate my fellow Speakers for allowing me to have this remarkable gesture, I look forward to a stronger cooperation between the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and the IPU.

Long live both Houses,
Long live the IPU.

Thank you so much for listening.