



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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# Video message by Dr. Tulia Ackson IPU President

Fourth Eurasian Women's Forum  
"Women for Strengthening trust and global cooperation"

Saint Petersburg, 18-20 September 2024

Madam Speaker, distinguished colleagues, esteemed participants and friends,

It is an honor for me to join you through this message at such a significant gathering. The theme of this forum resonates deeply with the IPU's commitment to fostering inclusive, and constructive inter-parliamentary dialogue. In particular, bringing together women leaders to discuss common concern and exchange experiences is of crucial importance.

Women's leadership is the driving force behind progress in all the areas you will be discussing—from peacebuilding and technology to social well-being, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation. Each of these themes is deeply interconnected, and women's role is essential to advancing them all.

Women leaders bring fresh perspectives and bold innovation to every discussion, focusing on the common good. We know well by now that when women have a seat at the decision-making table, societies flourish. We know, for instance, that women are agents of lasting peace. We also lead the way in shaping social policies that ensure no one is left behind, creating more equitable and resilient communities.

Yet, women make up only 13% of negotiating teams, and less than half of this portion are signatories in major peace processes. In the meantime, women enjoy only two-thirds of the legal rights of men, and are largely pushed back from decision-making spaces. How come 73% of parliamentary seats today are still held by men? And regardless of our positions in society and in politics, women are constantly targeted by physical, sexual and psychological violence, both online and offline.

Dear participants, at a time of unprecedented challenges, we are morally and practically obliged to unlock the full potential of women and harness it for the benefit of all. In today's world, where peace and security are paramount yet often overlooked, I urge my fellow Eurasian Women to recognise the importance of these values during our discussions.

We must emphasize the need for peace, security and peaceful co-existence, which are not concerns limited to war zones but affect everyone globally. It is especially crucial for us women and mothers, as we are often the ones most impacted by the violence and instability caused by conflicts.

Thus, I call upon each of you to stand together and champion the cause for peace, ensuring a better and safer world for us all.

Parliaments have a critical role to play - by maintaining dialogue and ensuring that multilateral engagement is grounded in the aspirations of the people we represent.

We, women leaders, should not be regarded merely as symbols of progress but as central agents of transformation.

In 2022, during the 145th IPU Assembly, we adopted the milestone Kigali Declaration recognizing the centrality of gender-sensitive parliaments in driving lasting peace. This means that women, in all their diversity, should equally represented in parliament, and in leadership positions within parliament.

And that the institution as a whole is equipped to advance gender equality. Most importantly, ensuring our parliaments are free from gender-based discrimination and violence should be a top priority for all of us. Our diversity is our strength. Any meaningful progress needs to reflect the perspectives of women in all their diversity—rural and urban, young and old, from different ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Here in the Eurasian region, there is a rich cultural heritage that must not only be preserved but celebrated.

It is only when we ensure that women from all walks of life are included in policy-making processes, that we make more just, more equitable, and more sustainable decision.

At the IPU there will be important discussions where women's voices – in all their diversity – need to be heard. The upcoming IPU Assembly will focus on the role of science, technology and innovation to advance the common good. We will also discuss a draft resolution on the impact of Artificial Intelligence on democracy and human rights.

I wish to invite women parliamentarians from the region to engage actively in these discussions.

Your perspectives and lived experiences are essential to building parliamentary momentum for ensuring democracy, gender equality and human rights are at the heart of technological advances.

Dear participants, it is fora like this one that maintain the necessary bridges between nations, organizations, and people. The Inter-Parliamentary Union remains deeply committed to all multilateral processes as they offer a platform for real progress in shaping the future we want—a future where women are equal partners in every aspect of public life.

I am confident that the discussions and outcomes of this forum will contribute meaningfully to global efforts for peace, trust, and cooperation.

Thank you.