



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

150th IPU Assembly
Inaugural Ceremony

Tashkent, 5 April 2025

Madam Chairperson of the Senate of Uzbekistan,
Mr. Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of Uzbekistan,
Madam President of the IPU,
Honourable Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

It is a great privilege to address you at the opening of this landmark 150th IPU Assembly – the first ever to be held in Central Asia – here in this dynamic city of Tashkent. At the outset, I would like to thank our hosts, the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan, as well as His Excellency President Mirziyoyev, who I'm sure you have heard will be addressing the plenary session on Monday morning.

This 150th Assembly is not an anniversary in a traditional sense; the IPU won't be celebrating its 150th birthday until 2039. But it is a milestone nonetheless – on 150 occasions now, at locations around the world, the IPU has convened the global parliamentary community to debate the issues of the day, to find solutions to conflict and other crises, to exchange good practices, and to build bridges and foster common understanding between the parliaments of the world.

This week we will be discussing *Parliamentary action for social development and justice*, an important subject that will no doubt encourage you all to reflect on the situation in your own countries and on the everyday lives of your own citizens. But the world continues to face multiple crises and the turmoil of the past few months has shown us that the multilateral order we have come to take for granted could be upended at any moment.

This is why I would like to emphasize once again, as noted in the Geneva Declaration adopted by the Assembly one year ago, the vital importance of parliamentary diplomacy as a complement to traditional diplomacy. This is, after all, the core mandate of the IPU, as envisaged by our founding fathers, William Randal Cremer and Frédéric Passy. For over 135 years, the IPU has brought together parliamentarians from countries in conflict, with a view to finding common ground and peaceful solutions. We must always keep the potential of parliamentary diplomacy, grounded in dialogue and mutual respect, at the forefront of our minds as an ideal way to build trust, promote cooperation and share good practices, in the interests of world peace.

The IPU's work continues on multiple fronts to foster parliamentary diplomacy for peace: from our Committee on Middle East Questions, which for nearly 40 years has been grappling with the conflicts in the region, through our Group of Facilitators for Cyprus, which has been monitoring the situation on that divided island for almost as long. And more recently, the Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, which continues its work to support an end to this conflict; something which seems more in reach now than when the Task Force was formed three years ago.

We are also continuing our support to the several parliaments in West and Central Africa that have experienced coups d'état in recent years, and we hope we can continue the series of meetings between the Speakers of the Parliaments of Armenia and Azerbaijan, for which the IPU provided its good offices.

Our Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians also welcomes a growing solidarity movement among the global parliamentary community in support of the dissemination and implementation of its decisions.

Just a quick glance at the timetable for our Assembly this week shows that the world is facing many challenges. I am hopeful that the process being followed by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security will lead to the Assembly finally passing a resolution that directly addresses the crisis in Gaza by unequivocally advocating for a two-State solution in Israel and Palestine. And the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development will be finalizing its resolution on *Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts, including armed conflicts, on sustainable development*.

2025 is a very special year for the IPU. In June this year, following on from a hugely successful first Conference in Marrakesh in 2023, we will be holding the Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Rome, hosted by the Italian Parliament and taking place alongside the many events to celebrate the Vatican's Jubilee Year. The Conference will bring together parliamentarians from around the world with representatives of religions and beliefs, faith-based and civil society organizations, international organizations and academia to discuss the theme *Strengthening trust and embracing hope for our common future*. I encourage you to attend and contribute to this important Conference.

In July, we will hold our Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. These Conferences bring together the leaders of national parliaments from around the world and take place only every five years, providing a rare opportunity for Speakers to engage in dialogue to shape and strengthen the parliamentary dimension of global governance. The Conference is being organized in close collaboration with the United Nations and will focus on parliamentary cooperation and multilateralism for peace, justice and prosperity for all.

Immediately prior to the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, the 15th IPU Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament will take place, just one of several important events in support of the IPU's well-established goal of gender parity. In fact, this year the IPU has chosen gender equality as its priority theme, in recognition of several milestones relating to gender equality, notably the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which continues to guide the multilateral system's approach to gender equality to this day. This week here in Tashkent we will be launching a new campaign, *Achieving gender equality: Action by action*, aimed at mobilizing parliaments and MPs to take concrete legislative and institutional actions to accelerate gender equality in politics. You will be hearing more about this in the coming days, but the campaign's goals are three-fold: to achieve parity in parliament and politics, to make parliaments more gender-sensitive, and to create a world free from gender-based discrimination and violence.

Last month in Mexico, we held a Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians, which brought together over 300 MPs from around the world to learn from Mexico's recent successes in improving the gender balance of its Parliament – and indeed electing its first woman President – to mobilize for gender equality in their own countries. The IPU's Forum of Women Parliamentarians, which meets at every IPU Assembly, is celebrating its 40th anniversary this week, and I congratulate all those involved over the years in ensuring that gender equality remains at the heart of all of the IPU's work.

So, as I think you can tell, the IPU never sleeps. We are constantly finding new ways to fulfil our strategic objectives and advance our policy goals. But we are here principally to serve you, our Member Parliaments, and I hope this Assembly will provide yet another opportunity for us to reflect on the future direction of our work – for parliaments everywhere, for democracy, for everyone.

Thank you for your attention and I wish you all a fruitful 150th Assembly.