



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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T +41 22 919 41 50
F +41 22 919 41 60
E postbox@ipu.org
www.ipu.org

Chemin du Pommier 5
Case postale 330
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex
Geneva – Switzerland

Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Meeting with a delegation of the King Prajadhipok's Institute, Parliament of Thailand

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Honourable members, distinguished guests and colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to Geneva and to the House of Parliaments. We are honoured to receive your distinguished delegation from the King Prajadhipok's Institute, an institution that has long been a pillar of democratic governance and parliamentary development in Thailand.

The IPU and Thailand share a long and productive history. Thailand hosted three IPU Assemblies in 1956, 1987 and 2010, with the first marking the IPU's first in Asia. Over the decades, the Parliament of Thailand has been an active and valued Member of our global community, helping to shape the IPU's vision for more inclusive, transparent and effective parliaments worldwide.

Our cooperation spans many shared priorities including the Sustainable Development Goals, climate action, health, gender equality, youth participation, citizen engagement and more. Together, we have advanced capacity-building and awareness initiatives that strengthen democracy and dialogue, pillar principles that lie at the heart of both the IPU and the King Prajadhipok's Institute.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate you on the adoption of the emergency item that the Thai Parliament led this week on Parliamentary action against transnational organized crime, cybercrime and hybrid threats to democracy and human security. It is a timely and important contribution to our collective efforts to safeguard democracy in an increasingly complex world.

I understand that the purpose of your visit today is to explore how the IPU supports parliaments in areas such as digital transformation, innovation in governance and ethical oversight of scientific and technological advancements. These are indeed crucial topics, as parliaments everywhere strive to become more agile and adaptive to the profound societal changes brought about by digitalisation and emerging technologies.

Thailand has been actively engaged in this area. Since 2010, the Thai Parliament has been a regular contributor to the IPU's World e-Parliament Report, which offers a comprehensive assessment of the use of digital technology in parliaments around the world.

In the latest 2024 edition, which introduced the new Digital Maturity Index, Thailand's two chambers ranked highly among the world's parliaments for digital governance and strategy. This is a remarkable achievement, reflecting strong leadership and investment in institutional capacity, and an inspiration for others. While these achievements are impressive, strong institutions are those that keep evolving, and I am confident that Thailand will continue to build on this progress, particularly in enhancing public engagement and user support.

Your Parliament has also played an important role in shaping the Guide to digital transformation in parliaments, published in 2023 with the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments. We were particularly pleased to benefit from the contribution of Mr. Sirote Patpun, Secretary General of the House of Representatives, whose support and expertise helped enrich the publication.

I see that Thailand has also taken a forward-looking approach to artificial intelligence. Through its Ad-hoc Committee, your Parliament is helping to shape national strategies for ethical and responsible AI

deployment. I also note the Senate Committee's initiatives to promote investment in data infrastructure and develop AI talent, which aligns closely with the IPU's goals for inclusive and ethical digital progress.

All of these efforts connect directly with the work of the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament, which serves as a global platform for parliaments to exchange knowledge, share good practices and strengthen digital strategies. This is complemented by our Working Group on Science and Technology, which explores how parliaments can guide scientific and technological change responsibly. I am particularly pleased to note that Senator Nophadol In-na, a member of the Thai delegation to the IPU, serves as Vice-Chair of the Working Group and was recently appointed as Rapporteur for the annex on AI Ethics under the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology, a landmark document that seeks to ensure that innovation always serves human well-being, equity and sustainable development.

I could go on at length about the depth of our shared engagement, but more importantly, I look forward to hearing your perspectives today. I have asked my colleagues to present the IPU's initiatives in greater detail, so that together we can identify new avenues for engagement and continued cooperation.

Once again, I thank you for your visit and for your steadfast commitment to the values we share. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Parliament of Thailand and the King Prajadhipok's Institute in advancing democratic governance through innovation, ethics and knowledge exchange.