



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

152nd IPU Assembly

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Inaugural Ceremony of the 152nd IPU Assembly

Istanbul, 15 April 2026

Mr. Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye,
Madam President of the IPU,
Honourable Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament,
Members of Parliament,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

It is an immense pleasure and privilege to address you at the opening of this 152nd IPU Assembly, here in the magnificent and historic city of Istanbul. This is the fourth time in the IPU's 137-year history that the parliamentarians of the world have convened in this city – the first was in 1934 and the second in 1951. On the third occasion, in 1996, I was here too – for one of my earliest Conferences as a young member of the IPU Secretariat. So, I have a sense of coming full circle for my final Assembly as Secretary General, here in this city of two continents, the gateway between Europe and Asia.

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to our hosts, the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, who have welcomed us with open arms and ensured that the best possible conditions are in place for this global gathering.

We are meeting against the backdrop of a world in considerable turmoil. But I am immensely heartened that the parliaments of the world have turned out in such huge numbers this week – with many delegations led by Speakers and Deputy Speakers – to make their own contributions to the over-arching theme of this Assembly: *Nurturing hope, securing peace and ensuring justice for future generations*. I would like to invite you all to keep the last part of this theme – “for future generations” – at the forefront of your minds in the coming days. Because future generations should be at the heart of everything parliamentarians do. The work of parliaments should focus on making life better not only for citizens today, but for those yet to be born. Parliamentarians must look to the future and not repeat the mistakes of the past.

One of the key lessons I think we must learn is the importance of seizing the moment. I hope that – despite not always finding consensus in recent years – the IPU membership can live up to the moment this week and take the opportunity, through a strong emergency item resolution, for the global parliamentary community to pronounce its views on the various urgent crises we are currently facing. I know that efforts are already being made among the geopolitical groups to ensure that consensus can be found on an inclusive and forward-looking proposal that the whole membership can support in the vote on 17 April, and I urge you to support that endeavour.

Earlier today, our Forum of Women Parliamentarians met, and tomorrow will be the turn of our Forum of Young Parliamentarians. I am proud that these two bodies continue to spearhead the IPU's efforts to ensure that parliaments are inclusive and reflect the diversity of society. As I have said many times, parliaments must be a mirror in which all segments of society can recognize themselves. Later in the week, the Assembly is expected to adopt two very forward-looking resolutions, on building a just and

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lasting peace based on robust post-conflict management, and on building a fair and sustainable global economy by combating protectionism, reducing tariffs and preventing tax avoidance. These resolutions are timely, as they also speak to this Assembly's overarching themes of peace and justice.

And of course, all our other specialized bodies will meet, along with a whole host of workshops, panel discussions and other special events. I would like to highlight in particular the special session on advancing the two-State solution for Israel and Palestine on 17 April, which is intended as a follow-up to the groundbreaking resolution adopted by the IPU in Tashkent one year ago. As conflict once again rages in the Middle East, it is more important than ever for us to keep up the momentum and build on the consensus that the IPU membership was able to articulate in that resolution.

Another highlight of the coming days will be our celebration of the 50th anniversary of the IPU's Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. This Committee is at the heart of IPU's work, a truly unique body that tirelessly aims to protect and defend the human rights of parliamentarians everywhere. Its work is dependent not only on the will of parliaments and governments to engage with cases affecting their own MPs, but also on the efforts of all parliamentarians around the world to engage in parliamentary solidarity. An attack on the rights of one MP to do his or her job is an attack on democracy. I urge you all to engage with the work of this Committee and to celebrate its many achievements over the last half century.

The usual accountability segment of the General Debate also fits with the emphasis we are giving at this Assembly to future generations: with its focus on youth participation, alongside the launch of a new IPU report; and on climate action, which of course at its heart is an intergenerational issue. I look forward to hearing how Member Parliaments are advancing on these two issues, alongside parliamentary action to safeguard human rights, which is the IPU's priority theme for 2026.

This is a pivotal Assembly for the IPU as an Organization. In the coming days, the Governing Council will be invited to adopt the IPU Strategy for 2027 to 2031: a comprehensive roadmap that will chart the course for the IPU to continue to support and strengthen the global parliamentary community over the next five years and beyond. And, by the end of this week, you, the Member Parliaments of the IPU, will have elected my successor as Secretary General. I am confident that, whoever that may be, he or she will continue to have the interests of the whole IPU membership at heart and will lead this Organization into a new era, looking to the future but building on the IPU's illustrious past. I wish all the candidates the very best.

Once again, I would like to thank our gracious hosts and all of those present representing our Member Parliaments, Associate Members and valued partners for their efforts to come to Istanbul this week and engage in the vital work of this Assembly. I look forward to fruitful debates and outcomes and hope to have the opportunity to speak to many of you in the coming days to express my gratitude for the support you have given me in my 12 years as Secretary General.

Thank you.