



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Dr. Tulia Ackson, IPU President

Closing of the 152nd IPU Assembly

Istanbul, 19 April 2026

Your Excellency, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, Mr. Numan Kurtulmuş,
Mr. Martin Chungong, distinguished Secretary General of the IPU,
Amb. Anda Filip, Distinguished Secretary General-elect of the IPU,
Honourable Speakers of Parliament,
Honourable Deputy Speakers and Heads of Delegation,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Colleagues, friends,

As this Assembly draws to a close, I am once again struck by the immense potential of parliamentary diplomacy. We have gathered here in Istanbul, a most inspiring place, with 113 Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament and over 700 parliamentarians from 129 countries.

This fact is far from trivial, especially when one takes into account the challenging political realities we faced in the run-up to this 152nd Assembly.

And yet, this Assembly happened. And it has not only *happened* – it has been a tremendously successful Assembly, with an inclusive emergency item adopted, a new Strategy that will guide our work for the coming years, and the election of the first woman IPU Secretary General. This has been an Assembly for the IPU's history books!

It is often events like this that lead us to ask: what have we taken for granted? And it is events like this that put into perspective the value and significance of gathering together.

I said in my inaugural speech that we should never take Assemblies for granted. In many ways, our Assemblies embody our peoples' common will to live in peace and harmony.

Moments like this remind us that we do not promote dialogue and democracy for the sake of it. We do so because they are the means through which differences are resolved peacefully. They are what allow equals to disagree without discord, and societies to balance the interests of the many with those of the few. At the core of IPU Assemblies lies a simple principle: inclusion. And without it, no democracy and no global society can truly stand.

There is no better place than an Assembly to realise that the challenges we face are shared across our borders. This is why the idea of turning our backs on the world and retreating into narrow national interest is a dangerous path. As history has taught us the hard way, that path leads to war, to destruction, and to the endless spiral of violence.

Multilateralism is under threat, and we must resist with conviction. But let me be clear: this is not a new test. Humanity has faced this challenge before, and humanity has prevailed. The League of Nations rose from the ruins of the First World War. The United Nations emerged from the ashes of the bloodiest conflict in human history. Each time the pendulum swung towards destruction, we found the will to come back to the table. And we *must* find it again. And we *will* find it again.

We came to Istanbul in record numbers to proclaim that we refuse to accept the immorality of war between nations.

We met in Istanbul against the backdrop of a world screaming for hope, peace and justice for present and future generations.

And parliaments must respond.

We carry the people's will. We turn commitments into laws, and laws into real change.

In Istanbul, we have adopted a landmark Istanbul Declaration that sets the horizon we are aiming for.

Our Declaration reflects a clear-eyed assessment of the challenges we face and a commitment to act. It reaffirms our belief in multilateralism, in international law, and in long-term, inclusive and accountable governance.

Through this Declaration, we have committed to strengthening democratic representation across generations, addressing the structural drivers of instability, governing emerging technologies responsibly, and advancing parliamentary diplomacy as a force for dialogue and conflict prevention.

Above all, this Declaration is an act of solidarity: intergenerational solidarity. As leaders of today, we commit to shaping for the better the political, social and environmental conditions that future generations will inherit.

This Declaration is not an endpoint. So we must take these choices back to our parliaments, translate them into legislation, oversight and budgets, and ensure that the hope we *nurtured* here in Istanbul through our speeches and conversations becomes *concrete action*.

Dear friends and colleagues,

Hope is indeed a powerful, enduring force. And intergenerational solidarity is the choice to breathe that hope into younger generations, to protect their dreams and aspirations, and to remind them that they are not alone.

I urge you to return to your countries carrying this truth: that the challenges humanity faces cannot be faced alone. Share with the children of your countries that there are hundreds of women and men, young and old, from every corner of the world, who gather in places like this not out of habit or obligation, but out of conviction. The conviction that dialogue is stronger than conflict and that cooperation is wiser than competition.

Without doubt, another highlight of this Assembly has been the adoption of an emergency item resolution. As you know, we have not always succeeded in adopting one; nonetheless, this is another example of how parliamentary diplomacy does not wind down in moments of crisis but rises to meet them. At this very moment, when the world, and the Middle East in particular, is drowning in conflict, this Assembly chose not to look away. We chose to speak.

The resolution we adopted is a message to the world that the drums of war ought to be silenced. It is a message to the world that international humanitarian law must be respected in all conflicts without exception; that impunity, wherever it takes root, only feeds the cycles of violence we seek to end; and that parliaments bear a moral responsibility to press for peace. We are the living proof that differences can be voiced, that disagreements can be resolved, and that common ground can be found, through the patient, imperfect, yet indispensable work of talking to one another.

That is the power of this Assembly. That is the promise of Istanbul.

Dear colleagues, dear friends, at the opening of this Assembly I asked three things of you:

1) to choose inclusion,

- 2) to choose dialogue,
- 3) and to lead with foresight and a sense of duty to future generations.

Looking back at these past few days, I believe you answered that call. You chose to be here. You chose to speak. You chose to act. And in doing so, you have given meaning to every one of those requests.

Since I opened the General Debate with a proverb about encouragement, allow me to close with a Turkish proverb that captures what we have achieved together: *“One hand has nothing; two hands have sound”*.

Thank you for your engagement, your support and your commitment to the people you represent and serve. The IPU, now more than ever, remains a place for those who believe in dialogue, respect and solidarity.

Thank you.