Speech by Ms. Anda Filip, IPU Secretary General

Inaugural Ceremony of the 153rd IPU Assembly

Arusha, 5 October 2026

Right Honourable Dr. Lameck Mwigulu Nchemba, Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania, representing Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania,
Honourable Mr. Mussa Azzan Zungu, Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania,
Mr. Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania,
Ms. Susan Ngogi Namondo, UN Resident Coordinator in Tanzania,
Madam President of the IPU,
Honourable Speakers and Members of Parliament,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address you, at the start of my first Assembly as Secretary General of the IPU. At the outset, I would like to thank our hosts for welcoming us to this beautiful country, for the warm hospitality and for your steadfast support of the IPU.

Let me also take this opportunity to express my congratulations to the IPU President, Dr. Tulia Ackson, for her tireless work at the helm of our organization over the past three years. We are delighted to be here, in her homeland, and there could hardly be a more fitting place to celebrate her extraordinary leadership.

And I would also like, once again, to express my sincere gratitude to you, the IPU Members, for your trust, having elected me Secretary General earlier this year. It is truly a privilege to serve the IPU, an extraordinary organization which for many decades has been dedicated to the pursuit of peace and understanding. An organization which has adapted to the times with great agility. An organization that continues to grow, with new Parliaments and other stakeholders eager to joining our global parliamentary community.

The IPU's resilience is no accident. It has endured because it has understood how to evolve without losing sight of why it exists. It has always been firmly rooted in its history, but never trapped by it. And as its new Secretary General, I will carry that spirit forward: helping to build a modern IPU for these new times, while preserving what has always made this Organization special: dialogue across political divides and the patient work of fostering understanding and cooperation among parliaments and parliamentarians.

It is therefore particularly timely that the beginning of my term coincides with the adoption of a new and ambitious IPU Strategy for 2027–2031. In that Strategy, you have given me a clear mandate to step up our work on three key objectives: building strong and inclusive parliaments; facilitating parliamentary diplomacy and joint action; and further strengthening the IPU as a responsive and accountable organization. Your Strategy will be my guiding light as we enter a new era for the IPU.

Mesdames, Messieurs les parlementaires,

Le thème de cette Assemblée, *Renforcer la bonne gouvernance et les capacités des populations locales grâce à l'inclusion, à la confiance et à l'égalité des chances*, s'inscrit directement dans le premier objectif de la nouvelle Stratégie. Pour que la démocratie soit florissante, il faut que les parlements soient inclusifs et efficaces. Ils doivent être le reflet des sociétés qu'ils représentent : ils doivent non seulement

respecter l’égalité entre les sexes, mais aussi être sensibles au genre ; et ils doivent ouvrir leurs portes aux jeunes et aux autres groupes sous-représentés.

La bonne gouvernance implique que les parlements et les autres institutions publiques soient au service de la population et lui permettent d'influencer les décisions qui ont une incidence sur sa vie. J'attends donc avec intérêt les contributions de nos Membres sur ce point essentiel. Vos débats permettront d'aboutir à la Déclaration d'Arusha, qui, j'en suis convaincue, servira de référence pratique pour rendre les parlements plus forts, plus représentatifs et plus respectés.

Le deuxième objectif de la nouvelle Stratégie, consacré à la diplomatie parlementaire et à l’action commune, prend tout son sens lors de nos Assemblées. Aucune autre instance ne rassemble les parlementaires de cette manière, en leur offrant un espace de dialogue et collaboration par-delà les clivages et divisions. Et cette Assemblée ne fait pas exception. Nos organes spécialisés se réuniront pour partager leurs bonnes pratiques et rechercher des solutions aux défis de notre époque – notamment en menant des consultations sur les voies d’une coexistence pacifique au Moyen-Orient et sur le règlement pacifique de la guerre en Ukraine. Je suis fermement convaincue que nous pouvons mobiliser la volonté politique des parlementaires du monde entier pour faire en sorte que les voix de la raison et de la paix se fassent entendre au-delà du bruit des affrontements.

The third strategic objective requires a collective effort, to make our organization as effective as possible, at a time when the world is in a state of rapid change. It requires enhanced engagement and follow-up to IPU outcomes, better impact tracking systems to give visibility to your results, strategic partnerships, and amplification of our communication efforts. These are the ingredients for a more accountable and responsive IPU.

Indeed, responding to major issues is part of our organizational culture, and today I wish to draw your attention to one that is moving at an extraordinary pace and reshaping our societies in the most unexpected ways: artificial intelligence, widely acknowledged to offer both incredible opportunities and extreme risks.

The IPU resolutions adopted in 2024 on lethal autonomous weapons and the impact of AI on democracy and the rule of law provide a strong mandate. We have documented work in over 70 parliaments on AI-related matters, including in terms of required legislative changes. But the speed of change is, quite frankly, frightening. AI is developing on a technological timetable, while governance works on a political one. The gap between the two is already enormous and keeps growing wider. We need to do more, both at the IPU and within our respective parliaments.

At this Assembly, we will discuss military uses of AI, AI and jobs, AI and children, ethical questions, and digital violence against parliamentarians. I would respectfully call upon all Members to prioritize debate on AI within your own parliaments. We need to ensure democratic oversight of the development and use of AI, keeping humans firmly in control. We also need greater international cooperation to agree on shared rules on AI safety – as a first step, we have called for a Global Compact on extreme AI risks. Innovation needs to flourish, but it also needs democratically agreed guardrails. I am convinced that parliamentary diplomacy can help build cooperation – including among the major players, so that together we can ensure responsible AI governance.

Lastly, a word about the state of multilateralism today. As with AI, the turmoil in the global multilateral system is a source of deep concern. It confronts us with a choice: to allow an imperfect system to erode further, or to have the courage to renew it. I believe that parliaments must take their rightful place at the forefront of efforts to build a strong UN that is fit for purpose. The IPU will continue to bring the voice for parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, to global processes. Because a multilateral system that speaks about people but leaves their elected representatives at the margins is missing an essential part of the democratic equation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We see how the the world is suffering from conflict and disagreement. What it increasingly lacks are places where disagreement can be turned into dialogue, and dialogue into progress. The IPU is one of those rare places; I believe this wholeheartedly.

At a time when divisions are deepening, and trust is wearing thin, the need for parliamentary diplomacy has never been greater. And never has the IPU been so ready to fulfil its global role as the organization of national parliaments, bringing parliamentarians together when the world is pulling them apart.

That is the task before us. And I look forward to writing that next chapter in the illustrious history of this Organization together with you.

Thank you.