



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Dr. Tulia Ackson, IPU President

Official meeting with H.E. Zhao Leji, Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee and Heads of delegations

Beijing, 20 August 2024

Distinguished Colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 2024 Interregional Seminar on the Achievement of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries, an important event that the IPU has been jointly organizing with the National People's Congress of China since 2016.

My deepest thanks go to our hosts – in particular Honorable Leji Zhao, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, for receiving us with such warm and impeccable hospitality – and to the NPC staff for having worked tirelessly for the success of this event.

This year's seminar edition is a special one as it marks the 40th anniversary of the accession of the National People's Congress of China to the IPU. Since 1984, the NPC has played a prominent role in the work of the IPU through membership of its governing bodies and specialized committees, as well as through robust participation in the work of the Organization.

Keen to do its utmost to promote sustainable development, global peace and cooperation, the NPC is providing an important support to achieve the strategic objectives of the IPU including at a financial level.

Already the largest contributor to our core budget, China has also made extensive voluntary contributions in recent years to support our work on sustainable development and counter-terrorism.

On behalf of all Member Parliaments of the IPU I would like to warmly thank the NPC for its continued support to our umbrella organization. We are deeply grateful for the precious collaboration provided over the years.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Today we gather here in Beijing to celebrate the 40th anniversary of China being a member of the IPU, but we are also here because all of us value the importance of dialogue and collaboration.

We are currently at a critical juncture in human history. According to the United Nations' latest report, the achievement of sustainable development by 2030 is in peril.

The COVID-19 pandemic and parallel crises at the economic, social and environmental levels have led to 23 million more people living in extreme poverty and 123 million more suffering from hunger in 2022 compared to 2019.

Inequalities persist and have been exacerbated also by the climate crisis which reached unprecedented levels in 2023. Extreme weather events have disproportionately affected the poorest communities.

Parliamentary cooperation, diplomacy and solidarity are now more important than ever. The current problems we are facing are exacerbated by the fact that developing countries are inadequately represented in global governance structures but over-represented in the very challenges these structures are designed to address.

As also mentioned by the Secretary-General of the United Nations during the 9702nd meeting of the Security Council last week (12 August 2024), it is important to ensure that all countries can meaningfully participate in global governance structures as equals.

We know that China is a firm advocate of a strong multilateral system based on mutual respect, the strict observance of international law and the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter.

We know that China also advocates for greater synergy of development strategies at global, regional, subregional and national levels. As underscored by parliamentary leaders on the occasion of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2021, we share a firm commitment to strong and effective multilateralism that delivers peace and sustainable development for the people and the planet.

The organization of Interregional Seminar on the Achievement of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries, like the one we will be soon attending, is the demonstration of the importance China places on cooperation, inclusiveness and mutual learning.

As you are aware, the SDGs are a roadmap for a better, fairer and more sustainable world. They are a political commitment that all countries have made, and they are also a robust framework that can facilitate our work as they indicate specific priorities, we should work on to address enduring challenges in a structural way. Parliaments, the bastion of societies, have a crucial role to play in making sure that sustainable development is truly implemented, leaving no one behind.

Parliaments must enhance their actions to meet the SDGs, to protect our planet, and to secure peace and security for all. The IPU stands ready to support these efforts. Our greatest strength lies in our unity and collaboration— no nation can in fact solve the existing problems – like inequalities, climate change, conflicts - alone.

Let's seize the precious opportunity offered by this event kindly hosted by the NPC to exchange with colleagues from other countries and discuss how to boost our actions. Together we can build a world that is more just, more sustainable, and more peaceful – a world that we can proudly pass on to future generations.

Thank you all for listening.