

**Speech, General Debate: Teres Lindberg, Sweden – 139th IPU  
Assembly, Geneva**

*“Parliamentary leadership in promoting peace and development in the age of innovation and technological change”*

Mr/Ms President,

Members of Parliament,

We are living in a time full of innovational activity and technological change, In that perspective I am glad that the Inter-Parliamentary Union is focusing on the role of science as an enabler of dialogue – as well as the role of parliamentarians in promoting peace and development in the age of innovation.

Our world today is undergoing fundamental changes. Some of the most important societal challenges include health, demographic change and well-being. Food security, and secure, clean and efficient energy are other challenges, as well as the need for smart, green and integrated transport.

Technology can be used to create a better future. The question is how we parliamentarians best promote and contribute to this process, and how we best implement concrete actions and mechanisms.

The rapidly changing labour market is an arena where sound policies play an important role. Societies develop through research and innovation, and through access to infrastructure. Today and in the future, many jobs are, and will be lost worldwide to automation because of advances in artificial intelligence and robotics. This will have a drastic impact on everyday working lives, in a way that can be compared to the shift away from agricultural societies during the

Industrial Revolution. The effects of automation on the labour market will differ from country to country. Developed economies are likely to be hit hardest by the coming changes.

Yesterday I participated in a seminar here I the conference center where Pew Research center showed their research on global attitude who shows us that most people over the glob think Robots and computers will take over many jobs that now is done by human.

As parliamentarians and leading politician both globally and in our home countries we need to be aware of people's insights and possible reactions of this facts. Easily this insight can be driven to destructiveness in society.

That's why we need to remember among ourselves as politicians that technology is not a destructive force. And as parliamentarians and political leader we need to point out the way further to a better future in order to help people to see the possibilities and make them, not only to dream about it. We need them to see that dreams can be fulfilled.

The technical revolution is rushing right here, in this very moment. We need to guarantee our inhabitants and in fact the hole human race that new jobs will be created, existing roles will be redefined, and workers will have the opportunity to switch careers.

The challenge for us parliamentarians and for the now living generation, in this very moment, is managing the transition. If we do not succeed Income inequality is likely to grow, contradiction between people will increase and possibilities lead to political instability. This tells us about the importance of managing these changes we have in front of us.

We can make a difference, crucial to the implementation of peace and development through technology.

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*We can and need to invest in research and innovation in order to create more jobs.* Global competition is increasing between companies and nations. In my home country Sweden, there has been a clear innovation strategy during the last 100 years to avoid low-wage competition, and instead compete with knowledge. Innovation is vital to long-term productivity development, and thereby to growth and future prosperity. A good innovation climate is a precondition for the competitiveness of companies, and the Swedish companies like Saab and Ericsson are examples of this. Clear and highly prioritized innovation policy work is particularly important for trade-oriented countries, with no major market of their own.

*We need to promote education.* We should not be afraid of the changes in our societies, instead we need to see changes as possibilities. The development of robotics gives us more free time. How can we use this fact as a possibility for people to educate, cultivate and communicate? *Education* is peacebuilding. Across countries, education and democracy are highly correlated. In a time when we are witnessing growing anti-democratic movements around the world - where hate campaigns are being spread on the Internet, and violence on the streets - we need to do our utmost to safeguard democracy. Education raises the benefits of civic engagement and participation in support of democracy. New technological developments will give people more free time and the opportunity to educate themselves - and this is important – we need to encourage and promote this development.

In the same time we can't be naïve of technological developments. We need to be aware that developments also bring new platforms and tools to powerful forces who are trying to make money, political influence or other benefits. Cyber threats or attacks to elections or voting infrastructures have been witnessed around the world. In social media we see every day miss leading information and fake news.

As politicians, we bear a great responsibility in which direction the further steps will take. I believe we have to be firmly committed and we need to take concrete measures, both internationally and within our countries.

Because, it is not what is being said here that will determine whether or not we succeed, it's actually being done.

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Mr/Ms President,  
Fellow parliamentarians,

We have a vital job ahead of us when we return to our national parliaments and address these challenges. If we are leading the way in the right direction we will, even though it will be stormy from time to time, see the sun rise tomorrow and the day after.

Thank you for your attention.

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