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T +41 22 919 41 50  
F +41 22 919 41 60  
E [postbox@ipu.org](mailto:postbox@ipu.org)  
[www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

Chemin du Pommier 5  
Case postale 330  
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex  
Geneva – Switzerland

# Speech by Dr. Ackson, IPU President

Opening remarks at the Parliamentary Meeting at COP28

Dubai, 6 December 2023

Distinguished Speaker of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates,  
Your Excellency President for COP28,  
Director of the Legal Affairs Division of the United Nations Climate Change Secretariat,  
Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,  
Esteemed parliamentarians, and distinguished guests.

I stand before you today with immense honour and a deep sense of responsibility as the newly elected President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union undertaking my first international engagement in this esteemed role. It is a historic moment for me, personally, and for the IPU, as I am the first African woman to assume this prestigious position.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the United Arab Emirates for hosting COP28, a crucial moment in global climate action. Their unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity, and ensuring diverse voices are heard represents a commendable step forward in addressing climate challenges with an inclusive and participatory approach. This approach is crucial for shaping practical solutions that address the gaps to 2030 and respond effectively to the outcomes of the Global Stocktake.

Our gratitude is extended to the Federal National Council for co-hosting this event and making it the first Parliamentary Meeting to take place within the COP Green Zone. This achievement both reflects and contributes to the increased recognition of the indispensable role that parliamentarians play in addressing the urgent challenges of climate change. Your commitment to fostering dialogue and collaboration is evident, and we are privileged to be part of this significant event. The warm hospitality extended to us reflects the spirit of inclusion and cooperation defining this important gathering.

Esteemed participants, the first-ever Global Stocktake exercise, concluding here at COP28, will illuminate a stark reality that will come as no surprise to many in this room and beyond: the global community is not on track to achieve the goals set out in the Paris Agreement. This acknowledgement serves as an urgent call to action, signalling that current efforts have fallen short in the face of the climate crisis. The clear recognition that more decisive and transformative actions are urgently required underscores the importance, weight, and urgency of our discussions today.

Recognizing that climate change is a shared challenge transcending borders, the importance of our discussions today cannot be overstated. It is not a distant threat but a pressing reality requiring our collective attention and swift action. The IPU acknowledged the gravity of the situation, with our members prioritizing climate action in our 2022-2026 strategic framework.

As parliamentarians, we play a crucial role in addressing the pressing climate challenges of our time. The responsibility on our shoulders is immense, and the decisions we make resonate beyond these walls and our institutions, shaping our shared future.

It is crucial to recognize that our role extends beyond our traditional parliamentary functions; as leaders, we must embody the principles we espouse. Enacting behaviours that promote sustainability, both as individuals and as institutions, is integral to the impact we seek.

In this context, I am proud to highlight the "Parliaments for the Planet" campaign, an IPU initiative empowering parliaments worldwide to embrace sustainable practices. By advocating for greener parliamentary operations and providing support for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, this campaign underscores our commitment to translating words into actions for a more sustainable future.

Our deliberations today on adaptation, on operationalizing loss and damage and on parliamentary oversight of the Paris Agreement and COP28 outcomes are driven by a shared sense of urgency and compassion for nations and people on the front lines of climate change. The differential impacts of climate change exacerbate existing inequalities and pose severe threats to the lives, livelihoods and well-being of vulnerable and marginalised nations and communities which many parliamentarians in this room represent. Urgent climate action is not only a necessity but a moral imperative to support and uplift those who bear the brunt of these challenges. Let our discussions serve as a powerful call to stand in solidarity and implement measures that prioritize the well-being and resilience of all and in particular the most vulnerable and marginalised populations around the world.

It is imperative that we, as parliamentarians, uphold our duty to monitor and drive the effective implementation of the commitments made on the global stage. We must also recognise the leadership of women parliamentarians and young parliamentarians in climate action highlighting the indispensable role they play in shaping a sustainable future.

As the meeting concludes today, let us respond with urgency. Translate the commitments made here and throughout the COP into tangible action, forging inclusive partnerships that transcend borders, recognizing that collective efforts are essential to combat climate change. Together, we possess the ability to drive positive change through coordinated climate action that considers the diverse needs and perspectives of all nations and communities. Let us rise to the occasion, united in our pursuit of a climate-resilient world and a thriving planet.

In conclusion, I extend my best wishes to each of you for fruitful discussions, productive engagements, and meaningful outcomes during this meeting.

Thank you.