



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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# Speech for Dr. Tulia Ackson, IPU President

## Closing Remarks of the 148th IPU Assembly

Geneva, 27 March 2024

Mr. Secretary General,  
Honorable Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament,  
Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing my deepest gratitude to all the colleagues who played a pivotal role in the seamless organization and success of the 148th IPU Assembly. Your tireless work, passion and dedication have not gone unnoticed. I would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Swiss authorities for their warm welcome and for providing an ideal setting for our deliberations.

The IPU is headquartered in Geneva. As such, we have an “embassy” here—or, even better, a second home for us 46,000 parliamentarians worldwide. Six years after the last Geneva Assembly, I have to say I am very happy to be back here, and I cannot think of a better way to begin my term as IPU President.

719 MPs from 141 different countries, including 51 Speakers of Parliament, have come here to deliberate on the theme of “*Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding.*” This has sent a very strong signal to the international community. To our friends at the United Nations and international organizations, diplomats, international NGOs, and other multilateral stakeholders in this city and all over the world: As parliamentarians, we are contributing, supporting, and accompanying your efforts. We are eager to advance and reinvigorate multilateralism with a strong parliamentary dimension, and we must base our work on the principle of inclusive dialogue as the only way to achieve long-lasting peace.

My fellow parliamentarians, your active participation, insightful contributions, and unwavering commitment to the IPU have been the foundation of the Assembly's success. Over the last week, we have heard many inspiring examples of how you employ parliamentary diplomacy to address the multiple challenges to peace and international security our world is facing today. But we have not only heard examples in speeches; we have also practiced parliamentary diplomacy with the goal of taking much-needed steps toward peace:

- This Assembly will go down in history as the first time that the Speakers of Armenia and Azerbaijan sat down to discuss how their parliaments could support ongoing efforts to normalize relations between their two countries.
- The IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine continued to be one of the few remaining formats in which Ukrainians and Russians engage, and it is looking to make incremental progress on the issue of displaced children.
- We have adopted significant resolutions on the implications of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence, on affordable green energy, and a motion on Security Council reform; and
- We have held substantive discussions on multilateralism, interfaith dialogue, human and common security, and minority rights, among many other issues.
- We have adopted a major political Statement of the need to urgently address the situation in Gaza. We must now move from words to action.

We have adopted our Geneva Declaration on parliamentary diplomacy, emphasizing our collective responsibility to foster dialogue, mutual respect, and the pursuit of peaceful coexistence across political, ideological, religious, and geographical divides. This is not merely about conducting parliamentary diplomacy for the sake of it. It is about bringing the outcomes of our dialogue back to our home countries and making good use of our legislative, oversight, and budgetary powers to translate them into national realities for the well-being of our people.

Dear friends,

As I mentioned in my opening remarks to this Assembly, in 2024, the IPU will be celebrating its 135th anniversary. The world has changed dramatically since the 19th century, yet our mission remains ever-so vital. I would like to reiterate my invitation to take our Geneva Declaration back to your parliaments and organize a special event on parliamentary diplomacy, perhaps in advance of the International Day of Parliamentarism on June 30, which coincides with the IPU's anniversary.

In addition to commemorating the International Day of Parliamentarians, it is crucial for us to reflect upon the effectiveness of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and its impact on our respective nations. As we convene during the General debate, it is essential that parliamentarians not only share their views on the theme under discussion but also provide an account of the progress made in implementing IPU resolutions. This practice will enable us to learn from our colleagues who have effectively implemented relevant resolutions, while also holding ourselves accountable to the commitments made at IPU meetings. By measuring our own implementation efforts against these benchmarks, we can ensure that resolutions are not mere rhetoric but translate into concrete actions that benefit our societies.

This introspection and measurement of implementation will strengthen our collective endeavours to effectively implement IPU resolutions. It will foster mutual support, collaboration, and the exchange of best practices among Member Parliaments. Recognizing the areas where support and capacity-building are needed, we can seek the necessary resources to overcome challenges and fulfil our commitments. Through this process, we can ensure that the Inter-Parliamentary Union remains a driving force for genuine and impactful change, where resolutions are transformed into actions that positively shape our democratic societies.

This Assembly has marked the beginning of my tenure as IPU President, and I would like to say that the IPU is only as strong as its Membership, and through your engagement, unity, and determination, we will be able to make a tangible difference in the lives of the people we serve.

I look forward to seeing you at our next Assembly, thank you.