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Head of delegation

National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia

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General debate: “Parliamentary leadership in promoting peace and development in the age of innovation and technological change”

Dear Chair,

Globalisation and rapid technological progress that we have seen in recent years pose new challenges for the society as a whole and for each and every one of us. I am therefore pleased that the Inter-Parliamentary Union decided to put this issue at the heart of this assembly.

There is no doubt whatsoever that new technologies bring many benefits and improve people's lives. In this regard, I would like to particularly highlight the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to which the Inter-Parliamentary Union pays a great deal of attention and which is closely linked to the effective introduction of new technologies. In this respect, an active role of the state with a well-formulated strategy of development and guaranteed investments in research and development is vital.

With its share of GDP allocated to R&D, Slovenia is still not at Europe's or world's cutting edge, which is why we still have a lot to do in this area.

As positive, I can mention the creation of eight centres of excellence in 2009, and the launch of a project last year enabling knowledge transfer through the operation of a knowledge transfer office. The professionalization of employees in this office will provide quality, efficient and professional support to researchers and companies in Slovenia, thus contributing to accelerating the spillover of research results to the economy as well as to the international connections of stakeholders.

We expect that the implementation of the said activities will aid the conclusion of contracts for the sale of knowledge and R&D contracts, and that licensing agreements and patent purchase agreements in the amount of EUR 300,000 and various contracts with the business sector in the amount of EUR 8 million will be concluded over the next years.

Establishing close cooperation between the state, the economy and all the research institutions is therefore of paramount importance. In doing so, Members of Parliament as legislators have a specific role to play, particularly in the legislative process, since they institutionalise an appropriate development environment. Moreover, parliamentarians can greatly contribute to raising the significance of the development of science and technology and the importance of ensuring adequate investment therein. Bringing this topic into public debates and decision-making process is therefore paramount.

Ladies and gentlemen,

New technologies also bring new risks which are revealed by increasingly obvious attempts of abuse or misuse when it comes to mass use of new technologies. I am thinking here of the issues concerning the protection of personal data and the social control, and, ultimately, also of the phenomenon of addiction to technology. At the same time, new technologies lead to lower job security and increase the possibility of poverty and isolation of certain social groups, something that could lead to new forms of violence and extremism.

As Chair of the Committee on Education, Science, Sport and Youth of the Slovenian National Assembly, I am of course aware of all the possibilities and opportunities that investment into R&D brings on the one hand and the dangers and traps that we are facing as a result on the other. I will therefore personally strive, during my term of office, for Slovenia to raise its share of GDP for investment in science and development, and adopt relevant regulations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Technological progress and development are global processes, which do not only boost economic progress, but also bring peace, political stability and prosperity for the people. Hence, the Inter-Parliamentary union, as the largest global parliamentary organization, has an important role to play in this process, allowing us to work together and share insights into possible approaches to future challenges. Ultimately, it is incumbent upon us to take advantage of these opportunities, while being mindful of the magnitude and extremes to which such development could take us.

Thank you!

