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 (MEMBER OF DELEGATION)

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**13TH PARLIAMENT
 (FIFTH SESSION)**

**REPORT OF THE 9TH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU)
 GLOBAL CONFERENCE OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS
 HELD IN HANOI, VIET NAM
 15TH TO 17TH SEPTEMBER, 2023**



Clerks Chambers
 Parliament Buildings
NAIROBI

April, 2026

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
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| AI | Artificial Intelligence |
| AIPA | ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly |
| IPU | Inter-Parliamentary Union |
| ITU | International Telecommunication Union |
| PARLASUR | Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia (|
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| UNAC | United Nations Alliance of Civilizations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNGA | United Nations General Assembly |

PART ONE

PREFACE

Honourable Speaker,

1. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the world organization of Parliaments, is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue, co-operation and action. The Union advances democracy and assists Parliaments and parliamentarians throughout the world to fulfill their mandates. The Assembly is made up of 179 member parliaments. The IPU facilitates parliamentary debate, dialogue and cooperation and also promotes and defends democracy and the rule of law while assisting Parliaments in coping with growing international agenda relevant to their duties.
2. The IPU Assembly is the principle statutory body that expresses the views of the Inter Parliamentary Union on political issues. It brings together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations for parliamentary and governmental action. The Assembly meets twice a year and is held each time in a different country, providing participants with an opportunity to see various national realities.
3. The 9th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians took place from 15th to 17th September, 2023, in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The theme of this conference was **'The role of youth in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs through digital transformation and innovation'**.
4. Since 2014, the Global Conferences have addressed topical issues linked to youth empowerment and have provided policy orientation in areas such as political participation, peace and security, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), social and economic inclusion, education and employment, well-being, recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and climate action.
5. The Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians took place eight years after the adoption of the *Hanoi Declaration on The Sustainable Development Goals: Turning Words into Action by IPU Member Parliaments in 2015*. As this is the mid-way point to achieving the SDGs by 2030, the

Conference took stock of progress, and highlighted the rising importance of technology and innovation to accelerate action towards these global goals. More specifically, the Conference empowered young MPs to build knowledge and experience to better position themselves to perform their roles on timely topics such as digital transformation, innovation and start-ups, and cultural and human values for sustainable development. Delegations were therefore encouraged to come prepared with examples of good practices to share with their colleagues.

6. The conference encompassed three primary sessions “Digital Transformation,” “Innovation and Startups,” and “Promoting Respect for Cultural Diversity in Support of Sustainable Development.”
7. Nearly 500 delegates, including 300 international delegates from 70 IPU member parliaments and international organisations, gathered together making it the biggest one since the conception of the Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians. The three primary thematic discussions received lively participation from the international delegates, with the "Digital Transformation" session featuring about 30 presentations, 30 presentations in the "Innovation and Startups", and up to 40 in the “Promoting respect for cultural diversity in support of sustainable development.”

Honourable Speaker,

8. During the 9th IPU Global Conference, 61 Parliamentary delegations were represented. The Network of Young Parliamentarians of La Francophonie (APF) took part in the conference as an Associate Members. The conference also welcomed seven delegations in the observer capacity: ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia (PARLASUR), PA-UfM, United Nations Development Programme, UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), BRUNEI DARUSSALAM, East African Youth Parliament, Economic Research Institute for Asean and East Asia, Parliamentary Centre of Asia.
9. In continuation of practices established at recent conferences, the 9th Global Conference for Young Parliamentarians was an in-person event with adaptations for hybrid participation. All of the session rooms were equipped for external engagement and remote interpretation and these technical capacities were well used throughout the conference.

Honourable Speaker,

10. The Kenyan delegation to the 9th IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians comprised the following-
- i) Sen. John Muthia Methu, MP- Leader of Delegation
 - ii) Sen. Crystal Asige, MP -Delegate
 - iii) Hon. Jane Njeri Maina, MP -Delegate
 - iv) Ms. Anne Shibuko, Clerk Assistant I -Secretary to the Delegation (National Assembly)
 - v) Ms. Tiffany Kiarie, Clerk Assistant III - Secretary to the Delegation (Senate)
11. During the conference, members of the Kenya delegation were actively involved in the deliberations that greatly enriched the resolutions. In his contribution during the General Assembly, the Leader of Delegation, Senator Methu, emphasized the generational responsibility of young legislators, urging them to ensure that allocated resources align with the declarations made during discussions.

Honourable Speaker,

12. On behalf of the delegation, I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your support in ensuring that Kenya was well represented during the 9th IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians.

Honourable Speaker,

13. Article 7 of the IPU Statutes mandates Members of the IPU to submit the resolutions of the IPU within their respective Parliament, in the most appropriate form; to communicate them to the Government; to stimulate their implementation and to inform the IPU Secretariat, as often and fully as possible, particularly in its annual reports, of the steps taken and the results obtained.
14. In accordance with Article 7 of the Statutes of the IPU, it is my pleasure and humble duty to submit this report, highlighting the discussions and the conference statement of the 9th Inter-Parliamentary Union Global

Confernece for young parliamentarians to Parliament for noting and necessary action.



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HON. JANE NJERI MAINA, M.P.
LEADER OF THE DELEGATION

DATE 15 / April / 2026
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1. ABOUT THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION

1. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was established in 1889 as the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue. It exists to protect and build global democracy through political dialogue and concrete action. The current membership is 179 parliaments and 12 associate members. The IPU works closely with the United Nations and other partner organizations with similar ideals. To this end, the IPU aims at -
 - i) Fostering contacts, coordination and the exchange of experience among Parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;
 - ii) Considering questions of international interest and express its views on such issues with the aim of bringing about action by Parliaments and their members;
 - iii) Contributing to the defence and promotion of human rights, which are universal in scope and respect for which is an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development; and
 - iv) Contributing to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.
2. The IPU's main areas of activity are representative democracy, international peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian law, women in politics and education science and culture.
3. The IPU Assembly is the principle statutory body that expresses the views of the Inter Parliamentary Union on political issues. It brings together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations for parliamentary and governmental action. The Assembly meets twice a year and is held each time in a different country, providing participants with an opportunity to see various national realities.
4. The organs of the IPU are the Assembly, the Governing Council, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat. IPU also works through committees, working groups and other *ad hoc* bodies. The following committees and bodies are currently in place:
 - i) Standing Committee on Peace and International Security;
 - ii) Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade;
 - iii) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights;
 - iv) Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs;

- v) Committee on Human Rights of Parliamentarians;
- vi) Committee on Middle East Questions;
- vii) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus;
- viii) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law;
- ix) Advisory Group on Health;
- x) Gender Partnership Group;
- xi) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism;
- xii) Forum of Women Parliamentarians; and
- xiii) Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

5. The current President of the IPU is Mr. Duarte Pacheco from Portugal.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE IPU ANNUAL GLOBAL CONFERENCE OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS

6. The IPU's annual Global Conferences of Young Parliamentarians are unique platforms for young members of parliament to get together, exchange, learn and define common and innovative strategies to advance youth empowerment.
7. In 2010, the IPU Member Parliaments adopted a landmark resolution entitled Youth participation in the democratic process at the 122nd IPU General Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand. The resolution stated that achieving meaningful democracy required the full and active participation of youth and youth organizations in democratic processes at the local, national, regional, and international levels. In that spirit, in 2013, the IPU established the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, a formal and permanent body dedicated to enhancing the quantitative and qualitative participation of young people in parliaments and in the IPU.
8. In 2014, the IPU established the annual Global Conference mechanism to contribute to: strengthening the role of young parliamentarians and youth participation in parliamentary activities; making recommendations from the perspective of young people's views on the activities and agenda of the IPU; and networking, solidarity and capacity building, broadening young people's approaches to issues of mutual concern.
9. Eight Global Conferences have taken place on various topics as follows:
 - i) Youth participation in Politics and Democracy (Switzerland, 2014);
 - ii) Democracy, Peace and Prosperity (Japan, 2015);
 - iii) The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Zambia, 2016);
 - iv) Economic, Social and Political inclusion (Canada, 2017);
 - v) The promotion of sustainability and the Protection of the interests of future generations (Azerbaijan, 2018);
 - vi) Achieving the SDGs and empowering youth through social welfare (Paraguay, 2019);
 - vii) Post COVID-19 Youth approach (2021, online conference format); and
 - viii) Responding to Climate change (Egypt, 2022).

3. THE 9TH IPU GLOBAL CONFERENCE OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS

10. At the invitation of the National Assembly of Viet Nam, the 9th IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians from Friday, 15th to Sunday, 17th September 2023.
11. Young MPs from around the world convened during this conference. The Conference focused on the overall theme of ***“The role of youth in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through digital transformation and innovation”*** and provided a unique platform for young members of parliament to get together, exchange, learn and define common and innovative strategies to advance youth empowerment.
12. The Conference discussions were based primarily on the sharing of laws, policies, and creative practices to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs through digital transformation and innovation. It featured a mix of case studies, inspirational speakers, and technical briefings, all aimed to position young parliamentarians to take leadership roles on this topic in their countries. Delegations were encouraged to come prepared with examples of good practices from their home countries to share with their colleagues.
13. The following outlines the main topics of the Conference -
 - i. **Seminar: “Strengthening Digital Capacity for Youth: Case of VietNam:** the seminar was comprised of specialised discussions on digital transformation, entrepreneurship, innovation, and the promotion of cultural diversity in sustainable development, which are timely and aligned with the contemporary global trends and the developmental direction of nations worldwide.
 - ii. **Digital transformation:** Under this topic participants looked at institutions, policies, experiences of national parliaments and the role of young parliamentarians in promoting the digital transformation process to enhance opportunities for sustainable economic development in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

- iii. **Innovation and start-ups:** The focus of this topic was on institutions, policies, experiences of national parliaments and the role of young parliamentarians in promoting innovation and startups (including youth start-ups) as the driving force for inclusive and sustainable development, including food technology (foodtech).
- iv. **Promoting respect for cultural diversity in support of sustainable development:** The role of parliaments and young parliamentarians in promoting respect for cultural diversity during a time of technological transition and globalization was examined. Key areas included:
 - a) digital cooperation founded on ethics and mitigating unwanted implications of digital transformation for privacy, security, and well-being;
 - b) promoting the role of culture in development policies at national, regional and international levels;
 - c) commitment to protecting and promoting cultural diversity, and creating a favourable environment and ecosystem for culture and cultural diversity; and
 - d) the role of culture and cultural diversity in sustainable development.

3.1 Seminar: “Strengthening Digital Capacity For Youth: Case of Viet Nam

14. Member parliaments and governments alike recognise that digital transformation and innovation are inevitable trends, allowing for accelerated and equitable development for each nation and its citizens, ensuring that no one is left behind. These are also top priorities for Việt Nam as it strives toward achieving its ambitious goals set out in the 100-year aspirations outlined at the 13th National Party Congress.

15. In reality, the progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been slow, with only 12 per cent of the SDGs being implemented correctly, while 50 per cent deviate to some extent, at an average or critical level. This calls for a stronger and more breakthrough effort from the international community to reach the SDGs by 2030. This includes embracing digital transformation, leveraging technology, innovating, and accelerating to find new approaches and solutions. In addition, the imperative to promote respect for cultural diversity and harness the role of culture in the context of technological advancements and globalisation, all tied to sustainable development are necessary.

16. Through this conference, Việt Nam hoped that the young parliamentarians of the IPU, who are the closest political representatives to the younger generation and understand new sciences and technologies, will join forces to drive the implementation of the SDGs through digital transformation and innovation.
17. In his opening statement Vương Đình Huệ, the Chairman of the National Assembly of Việt Nam's, emphasized that the organization of this conference underscored the commitment of the country to prioritizing and addressing youth-related issues on a global scale.
18. Chairman Huệ further articulated that young people play a pivotal role as the driving force and bearers of "historical responsibilities" in the international integration and national development efforts of each country, contributing significantly to global prosperity. He urged the young parliamentarians to harness their intelligence, youth, creativity, and enthusiasm to make positive contributions to the success of the conference.
19. In his address, IPU President Duarte Pacheco expressed gratitude to the Viet Nam National Assembly for hosting the IPU meeting, acknowledging the exceptional setting provided. He commended Viet Nam's commitment, specifically noting its exemplary leadership in youth empowerment.
20. Addressing the progress and challenges related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), President Pacheco emphasized the acceleration of technological advancements. He stressed the need to integrate this technological progress with SDG efforts, highlighting digitalization and innovation as crucial opportunities.
21. President Pacheco underscored the importance of responsible technology and innovation usage. He cautioned against a one-size-fits-all approach, emphasizing the richness of global diversity in traditions, languages, and perspectives. He asserted that this diversity not only enhances our lives but, when combined with technology, fosters creativity and effective problem-solving.
22. Drawing a direct link to parliamentary roles, President Pacheco urged fellow parliamentarians to champion inclusivity, intercultural dialogues, and respect for diversity. He viewed these values as essential drivers of

sustainable development and peace, emphasizing the need for parliaments to actively promote and embody these principles.

23. The IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong highlighted the pivotal roles of young parliamentarians and the constituents they represent, identifying them as the "main champions who can be at the vanguard of this transformation."
24. Mr. Chungong emphasized the potential of young parliamentarians to serve as a driving force for progress, infusing parliamentary processes with fresh perspectives, energy, and innovative solutions. He underscored the purpose of the Conference, stating that it aimed to facilitate the sharing of practices, amplify voices on issues of concern, and enhance connections within the youth community.
25. Recognizing the passion, enthusiasm, and dedication of the youth in accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through digital transformation and innovation, the Secretary General referred to their efforts as a guiding light for everyone involved.
26. Secretary General Chungong took the opportunity to address the underrepresentation of young women in parliaments, emphasizing that their contributions were indispensable in advancing the SDGs through digital transformation and innovation. He underscored the crucial role of young women and called for increased efforts to ensure their meaningful participation in parliamentary processes.
27. Mr. Dan Carden, UK Parliament member and President of the Board Forum of Young Parliamentarians, emphasized the crucial role of young parliamentarians in supporting the tech-savvy and problem-solving youth for sustainable development and peace. He outlined key areas of contribution, including advocating for increased national investments in education, especially for digital skills and science, promoting training for transitioning to clean technologies and green jobs, channeling youth voices through parliamentary bodies, particularly during the examination of laws related to digital transformation, and facilitating the transition from education to employment. Carden positioned young parliamentarians as instrumental in shaping policies that positively impact education, technology, and sustainable development.

3.2 Opening Ceremony

28. The Acting Chairperson for this session was, Ms. Emma Tangi Muteka, MP, Namibia, Member of the IPU Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. While the Master of Ceremonies was Ms. Thai Quynh Mai Dung, Member of the Viet Nam National Assembly.

29. H.E. Mr. Vuong Dinh Hue, President of the Viet Nam National Assembly, began by emphasizing that priority and good interest needs to be given to the Youth and the the issues faced by the youth over the past 30 years. He stated that in terms of the Millenial goals, Viet Nam is committed to reaching net 0%, as Viet Nam is 10th in Asia and 34th in the World and that implementation of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals is slowing down, Climate Change had direct influences.

30. President Hue acknowledged the slowing implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, attributing it to the direct influences of climate change.

31. National Assembly Chairman Vương Đình Huệ outlined five key points for delegates to focus on during discussions:

- i. Compliance with international law and the United Nations Charter.
- ii. The roles of developed countries, international organizations, business communities, and youth in addressing global issues.
- iii. Ensuring people and businesses are central to all policies in the development process.
- iv. Promoting cultural values and human aspects in sustainable development, respecting cultural diversity in the Fourth Industrial Revolution context.
- v. Progress on establishing a global network of young parliamentarians dedicated to innovation, fostering exchange and learning opportunities.

32. In a video message, H.E. Mr. Vo Van Thuong, the President of Viet Nam, remarked that the youth were capable of effectively tackling current and future challenges worldwide by utilizing the remarkable accomplishments provided by Science, Technology and Innovation to bolster international connectivity, thereby expediting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and contributing to peace and prosperity in all countries.

33. In his address, H.E. Mr. Duarte Pacheco, President of the IPU emphasized that the decisions made today would significantly influence the future, highlighting the importance of meetings with young parliamentarians who represent the youth. He noted that the youth exhibit a dynamic spirit of innovation and an optimistic outlook on the world, traits known to decline over the years.
34. Regarding the involvement of young people in politics, President Pacheco expressed concern about young individuals being against politics and politicians. He stressed the need to engage more young people in politics to ensure they understand and actively participate, preventing others from deciding their future.
35. President Pacheco highlighted the significant delays in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, with only 12% achieved thus far. Therefore, he underscored the importance of articulating the changes needed, setting clear goals, and fostering innovation within individual parliaments. This approach, he argued, would empower all to effect change within their respective parliamentary contexts.
36. In his remarks, Hon. Mr. Dan Carden, Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom and President of the Board of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians.
37. Taking a broader perspective, Mr. Carden noted the unprecedented circumstances humanity faces, emphasizing the need for collective international action to address the common existential threat of climate change. He acknowledged the necessity to overcome disagreements, rethink economic and social models, and make sacrifices. Despite these challenges, he highlighted the shared sense of urgency among generations, particularly in confronting the climate crisis.
38. Mr. Carden pointed to existing initiatives like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a roadmap for radical action. He stressed on the need to bridge the gap between governments and societies, injecting generational urgency into national conversations, and took pride in the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) for breaking down barriers to youth involvement in politics, recognizing the crucial role of a vocal youth presence in overcoming the challenges faced.

39. In his speech, H.E. Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU discussed the significance of the Hanoi Declaration, adopted as a blueprint, which has mainstreamed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) globally. Mr. Chungong noted that parliaments worldwide have aligned legislative policies with the SDGs, focusing on areas such as environmental protection.

40. The Secretary General emphasized the crucial role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in providing a platform for parliamentary dialogue, sharing best practices, and promoting the SDGs, Innovation, and Digital Transformation. He expressed the IPU's commitment to embracing change and positioning itself as a center for innovation in parliaments through support, collaboration, and best practices.

41. To navigate the digital era, Mr. Chungong outlined three focal points:

- i. Revision of parliamentary procedures to enhance virtual participation by Members of Parliaments (MPs).
- ii. Development of new platforms for MPs and Parliaments, including the formation or enhancement of forward-looking Parliamentary bodies like "Committees of the Future."
- iii. Elimination of the possibility of technology being used as grounds for Gender-Based Violence through policy regulations.

42. He highlighted the discrimination faced by young women parliamentarians, stressing the essential contribution of young women in parliaments, transformation, and innovation. The IPU, through partnerships with the Generation Equality Forum, UN Women, and others, is fully committed to supporting this cause.

43. Mr. Chungong underscored the importance of a network of international leaders dedicated to accelerating the SDGs through Digital Transformation and Innovation, considering it a guiding light for all. He concluded by affirming that parliaments are ready to support the efforts of this global mission.

44. In his speech, Hon. Mr. Nguyen Anh Tuan, President of the Young Parliamentarians Group of the Viet Nam National Assembly, highlighted Vietnam's young population of nearly 22 million, constituting 21% of the

national population and playing a vital role in national development. He discussed the establishment of the Vietnamese young parliamentarians group in 2015, focusing on members under 45 years old. This group serves as a platform for young parliamentarians to discuss and propose youth-related matters in the parliamentary agenda, promoting their contribution to National Assembly activities and facilitating exchange with young parliamentarians globally.

45. The President of the Young Parliamentarians Group highlighted the strength of the youth in promoting green growth models, circular economies, reasonable consumption, and digital transformation. In Vietnam, he mentioned ongoing efforts by the National Assembly to improve the legal framework for digital transformation, innovation, and entrepreneurship while preserving cultural values during global integration.

46. Mr. Nguyen Anh Tuan expressed the awareness of young members regarding their responsibilities and commitment to actively contribute to developing and improving institutional legal frameworks. He emphasized the importance of circulating conference messages to young voters, providing knowledge and skills to become global digital citizens, and promoting Vietnamese cultural values to the world.

47. He concluded by expressing hopes for the conference to adopt a joint declaration contributing to the effective implementation of goals related to digital transformation, innovation, entrepreneurship, and the promotion of cultural diversity for sustainable development. Finally, he wished good health, happiness, and great success to the conference.

3.3 Keynote Addresses: Implementation of the SDGs and the Role of Digital Transformation and Innovation

48. In her keynote address, Ms. Trinh Thi Tu Anh, Member of the Viet Nam National Assembly, highlighted the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the pivotal role of Digital Transition and Innovation in the current international context. Noting the multifaceted impacts faced by many countries, she stressed the need for assessment and adjustment to achieve development goals rapidly and sustainably.

49. Ms. Tu Anh discussed the global trends of digital transition, emphasizing the importance of digital and circular economies, green growth, and

renewable energy strategies. Science, Technology, and Innovation were identified as decisive factors in promoting a country's competitiveness. The transformative impact of technology was highlighted, not only in economic and societal management but also in production, business, consumption, and cultural and social life.

50. She highlighted the significant role of parliaments, as supreme organs of countries, in realizing SDGs through digital transition and innovation. This involves creating legal frameworks, adopting and allocating budgets, strengthening government actions, and ensuring open and transparent connections at different levels.

51. Referring to the Hanoi Declaration adopted in 2015, Ms. Tu Anh underscored the commitment of the IPU General Assembly and its member parliaments to promote the realization of SDGs. She provided an overview of the 2030 agenda adopted by UN member states and highlighted Vietnam's exemplary progress in implementing SDGs despite global challenges.

52. Ms. Tu Anh pointed out key achievements in Vietnam's implementation of SDGs, such as reduced multidimensional poverty rates, improved access to health services and clean water, increased coverage of electricity and mobile phone services, and growth in forest area. She also highlighted gender equality efforts, climate change commitments, and Vietnam's recognition on the global stage.

53. She concluded her speech with insights into Vietnam's economic achievements, including successful partnerships, export growth, and advancements in the global SDG performance index. Additionally, Vietnam's progress in digital transformation and innovation was noted, with improvements in global innovation rankings and the development of a dynamic innovation ecosystem, particularly in Ho Chi Minh City.

54. In a video message, Mr. Tomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), delivered the second keynote address to the conference. He lauded the active engagement of hundreds of young people worldwide through Generation Connect, emphasizing their collaborative efforts to co-create solutions for a more inclusive, sustainable, and connected future.

55. Mr. Lamanauskas underscored the importance of establishing clear guardrails to ensure that technology benefits society without causing harm. He raised concerns about the escalating energy needs for digitalization, powering networks and data centers, as well as the growing issue of E-Waste, projected to double by 2050.
56. Addressing the persistent digital divide in an increasingly digitized world, he expressed the potential for digital exclusion to worsen existing social and economic inequalities. Mr. Lamanauskas called on young parliamentarians to bring unique perspectives and fresh energy to advocate for bold and forward-looking policies. These policies, he argued, are essential to fostering enabling environments that balance innovation and sustainable development.
57. Concluding his message, Mr. Lamanauskas emphasized that the digital world is evolving and is truly experienced by every individual in every corner of the globe.

3.4 Session 1: Digital Transformation

3.4.1 Part One

58. During the first session chaired by Mr. Lord Fakafanua, Speaker of Parliament, Tonga, and Member of the IPU Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, significant advances in parliamentary contributions to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were acknowledged since the adoption of the Hanoi Declaration four years ago. Mr. Fakafanua, the youngest member of his parliament since 2009, highlighted the ongoing challenges.
59. In his opening remarks during the session, Mr. Dan Carden, President of the Board of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians, highlighted the significant demographic representation of young people globally, constituting over 50 percent of the population, with over 50 percent under the age of 30. However, only 2.8 percent of legislators are currently under 30.
60. Mr. Carden emphasized the importance of involving young people in parliamentary processes, noting their unique perspectives and experiences. He stressed that the absence of youth representation in parliaments could render these institutions irrelevant and advocated for creating space for

youth representation and participation to ensure relevance to younger generations.

61. Addressing challenges faced globally, particularly in the UK, Mr. Carden discussed issues such as the spread of fake news and political and social divisions, emphasizing the potential of technology to address these challenges. He expressed the hope that the conference would foster a deeper understanding of how technology can enhance communication, organization, and decision-making, especially in critical areas like health and climate change. Mr. Carden appreciated the technological advances showcased at the conference's exhibition.

62. In her speech, Miss Cynthia Lopez Castro, President of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, addressed the importance of ensuring universal access to the internet as a fundamental right. She shared insights into a recently approved law in Mexico called the Olympia Law, designed to combat digital violence, particularly against women.

63. The Olympia Law originated from an incident involving the unauthorized dissemination of a sexually explicit video of a woman in Mexico. This digital violence, initially not recognized as a crime, led to the creation of the Olympia Law, which criminalizes the dissemination of non-consensual sexual content. The law aims to protect privacy and has been adopted in various states, with Argentina also passing a similar law in July 2022.

64. Miss Castro highlighted the exceptional nature of the Olympia Law, emphasizing its origins in civil society and the determination of a young woman who turned her personal hardship into a legacy of dignity and protection for future generations of women. The law is seen not only as a legal milestone but as a symbol of positive change achieved through individual determination and grassroots movements.

65. Additionally, Miss Castro pointed out Mexico's gender parity, with women holding key positions such as the Speaker and the President of the Supreme Court. She concluded her remarks by stressing the importance of equal access to digital services and encouraged delegates to advocate for laws against digital harassment and violence.

66. Mr. Luu Ba Mac, a Member of the Viet Nam National Assembly He presented key ideas for discussion, emphasizing the critical role of digital

transformation in addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities for economic growth and development. He highlighted several issues related to digital transformation:

- i. *Differences in Digital Transformation:* Countries exhibit varying levels of digital transformation, underscoring the importance of strengthening institutions and policies as foundational elements to promote inclusive and sustainable development. There was need to prioritize people-centric approaches, foster digital infrastructure and ecosystems, and ensure that digital transformation benefits everyone.
- ii. *National Digital Platforms:* Construction and development of national digital platforms as a breakthrough solution was proposed as soft infrastructure in the digital space, that can address specific issues related to digital transformation, such as user data creation and storage, with the potential for increased value at lower costs as user numbers grow.
- iii. *Digital Awareness and Skills:* Raising awareness and enhancing digital skills, particularly in remote areas, is crucial for a smooth digital transformation process. With numerous basic social activities conducted in the digital space, countries should focus on policies to develop digital governments, economies, and societies. This includes promoting awareness and providing training in digital technology services and applications to enhance production, business, and overall quality of life.
- iv. *National Sovereignty in Cyberspace:* Digital transformation raises the issue of national sovereignty in cyberspace. While respect for national sovereignty is established in the physical world, cyberspace presents new and complex challenges due to its borderless nature. It was important to implement synchronous solutions to protect national digital sovereignty, with regional and global cooperation playing crucial roles in ensuring a safe, healthy, and sustainable cyberspace.
- v. *Digital Transformation in Parliamentary Activities:* Acknowledging that digital transformation is integral to overall societal change, there was need for Information Technology to be regularly applied in parliamentary activities. Accelerating the adoption of digital tools and platforms would not only support parliamentary

operations but also enhance parliamentarians' awareness of the benefits and impacts of new technologies on various aspects of life.

67. In conclusion, he characterized digital transformation as more of an institutional revolution than a technological one, emphasizing its profound impact on global society. He encouraged fruitful discussions and the sharing of valuable experiences and lessons to contribute to effective digital transformation, innovation, and the realization of sustainable development goals.

68. Ms. Yetunde Bakare, Manager at YIAGA Africa in Nigeria, highlighted the transformative impact of technology on human interaction, living, and information consumption. She emphasized the digital disparities that persist globally, especially among those in rural or remote areas with limited broadband infrastructure, as well as disparities related to race, gender, and socio-economic class.

69. Ms. Bakare drew attention to the fact that 75 percent of young people aged 15 to 25 are the highest internet users, posing a challenge for parliamentarians to engage effectively with this demographic. She posed questions to parliamentarians about strategies to use digital tools for engaging Generation Z, considering their low attention span and the need for instant information.

70. To address the digital gap, Ms. Bakare proposed several strategies for young MPs:

- i. *Investment in Digital Education:* Utilize oversight functions to advocate for substantial investment in digital education for both young people and adults to bridge the digital divide and promote digital inclusion.
- ii. *Collaboration and Partnership:* Advocate for collaboration and partnerships involving government agencies, public-private partnerships, and civil society organizations to contribute to developing solutions to challenges limiting digital inclusion.
- iii. *Civic Education:* Emphasize civic education using digital tools to enhance citizens' understanding of the roles and responsibilities of legislators to help citizens participate more effectively in the political process, both as voters and potential candidates, fostering transparency and accountability.

- iv. *Adaptability to Local Context:* Stress the importance of adapting digital inclusion policies to the local context through conducting assessments to identify suitable tools for specific communities or constituencies and ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation to enhance effectiveness.

71. Ms. Bakare urged parliamentarians to prioritize self-development and continuous learning, acknowledging the need to understand and respond to emerging changes in technology. She called for a review of legislative practices and procedures to encourage digital inclusion, using examples from countries like Finland and Brazil where technological tools have successfully harvested citizens' feedback and input into legislation. She encouraged sharing such experiences for the benefit of all participants.

72. In a video message, Mr. Walter Cervini, a young MP from Uruguay, emphasized the importance of incorporating technological advancements into parliamentary actions globally. He highlighted the need to creatively engage young people in current parliamentary activities, recognizing the rapid and unstoppable development of artificial intelligence.

73. Mr. Cervini stressed the benefits of applying AI in parliaments, making actions more efficient and enabling simultaneous handling of multiple tasks. He acknowledged the associated challenges, such as privacy concerns, urging a proactive approach to address these issues rather than blaming them.

74. He concluded by announcing that Uruguay would host a summit on *Committees of the Future* from the 25th to the 27th of September, 2023 emphasizing the significance of including future challenges in current parliamentary actions. The conference aims to facilitate exchanges between parliaments and young legislators to collaboratively address common problems and work towards shared solutions.

75. The presentations by the panelists were followed by the Chairperson opening the floor to discussions from the various delegates. They shared examples from their countries, allowing others to reflect on the topics discussed and provide their remarks. Delegates also posed questions about the challenges their countries are facing.

76. Senator Crystal Asige, MP contributed to the discussion, highlighting Kenya's laws addressing violence against women, particularly in response to

the remarks made by Miss Cynthia Lopez Castro, President of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

77. Hon. Jane Njeri Maina reported that Kenya has robust provisions concerning cyberbullying and harassment. Specifically, she informed the conference about the following sections of the Computer Misuse and Cyber Crime Act of 2018:

- i. Section 24 that addresses child pornography, making it an offense to produce, publish, distribute, download, or possess such content. The punishment includes a fine of up to 20 million Kenyan Shillings, a 25-year jail term, or both.
- ii. section 27 that addresses cyber harassment, defining it as digital content or behavior likely to cause apprehension, fear of violence, damage, or loss to someone. The section also considers digital content that is indecent or grossly offensive. Additionally, provisions are made for obtaining a restraining order against digital harassment, which can be applied for outside of court hours, emphasizing urgency. Violating the restraining order is an offense punishable by a fine of one million Kenyan Shillings or a six-month jail term, or both.
- iii. section 37 that deals with revenge porn—digitally distributing obscene images of somebody. This offense carries a punishment of a fine of up to 200,000 Kenyan Shillings, imprisonment of up to two years, or both.

78. Hon. Jane Njeri Maina concluded by emphasizing Kenya's serious approach to addressing cyberbullying and encouraged other parliamentarians to consider Kenya as an example in this regard.

3.4.2 Part Two

79. In the second part of the Session, focus shifted to highlighting the experiences of National Assemblies, specifically by sharing best practices and experiences.

80. In his presentation, Mr. Marius Matijošaitis, MP from Lithuania, outlined several successful digital transition initiatives in his country. The primary ambition is to consolidate the state IT infrastructure, managing state information resources, public services, and institutional processes centrally, efficiently, and securely. The centralization of IT services has seen

significant growth, with a plan to involve all 325 institutions by the program's completion in 2026. This consolidation eliminates the need for individual institutions to invest in their IT infrastructure, enhancing efficiency, flexibility, and security.

81. The initiative also focuses on improving digital skills, particularly for socially vulnerable groups, aiming for 90% of the population to use the internet by 2030. Financially, the centralization of IT services is projected to cut expenses by 30%, amounting to savings of 480.
82. Mr. Matijošaitis discussed various digital platforms, including an e-government Gateway platform, offering 39 categories of online governmental services. The E-residency program allows foreigners to access administrative, public, or commercial services remotely. Additionally, Lithuania has created a "digital embassy" to store critical systems' data outside its territory for disaster recovery.
83. The country is actively promoting digital innovations through projects like creating Lithuanian language resources for artificial intelligence solutions. The electronic identification scheme for issuing identity cards conforms to high assurance levels, allowing cross-border use of e-services within the European Union.
84. Mr. Matijošaitis encouraged international cooperation, inviting others to learn from Lithuania's practices and share their success stories in digital transition.
85. Senator John Methu, MP from Kenya, shared insights into the digital transition practices in Kenya, highlighting both successful initiatives and those currently in development. He emphasized the significance of digital transformation, particularly considering Nairobi's reputation as "Silicon Savannah" due to its dynamic ICT and innovative startups.
86. Senator Methu pointed out that 63 percent of Kenya's population is below the age of 35, projecting a high demand for digital skills by 2030. The government has set a target to lay over 100,000 kilometers of fiber optic in Kenya, aiming to impact digital knowledge across the country. Efforts include training over 60 percent of teachers, distributing 260,000 digital devices to educational institutions, and establishing digital laboratories in 2,450 villages by 2025.

87. Kenya's success in mobile money banking, exemplified by the M-pesa model, was highlighted, transacting over \$29 billion in the financial year 2022. The government introduced the "Hustler fund," providing financial support through a mobile platform. Addressing connectivity challenges, Kenya plans to implement over 25,000 Wi-Fi hotspots in markets, schools, and hospitals.
88. In the agricultural sector, Kenya offers support through digital platforms, simplifying processes such as applying for government-subsidized fertilizer. Senator Methu emphasized the generational responsibility of young legislators, urging them to ensure that allocated resources align with the promises made during discussions.
89. In a video message, Mr. Brando Benifei, Member of the European Parliament and a reporter of the European Artificial Intelligence Act, discussed the significance of the upcoming European Artificial Intelligence Act regulations. The regulations, expected to be approved at the beginning of 2024, will be a global cornerstone for regulating AI's integration into society, markets, and daily life.
90. Mr. Benifei highlighted the legislative focus on mitigating risks, identifying dangers, and expanding opportunities associated with AI. The goal is to harness AI to reduce inequalities, safeguard freedoms, and control risks related to data, personal security, and potential surveillance. The regulation includes a list of high-risk AI use cases, with proposals to ban certain applications such as predictive policing and emotion recognition for workers and students.
91. The European Parliament approach involves bringing together existing practices around risk mitigation and best practices to reduce potential harm, fostering AI's large-scale opportunities, including support for small businesses. Mr. Benifei stressed the need for a regulatory framework rather than relying solely on voluntary commitments and schemes. The objective is to establish a law that protects consumers, citizens, and businesses while building trust and understanding of AI's role in society.
92. International collaboration, especially through parliamentary dialogue, was emphasized as crucial for addressing regulatory challenges related to AI. Mr. Benifei suggested the importance of developing a common language on AI

definitions, risk assessments, and regulatory needs, encouraging global cooperation through treaties and agreements. He highlighted two key aspects: addressing daily challenges for those affected by AI and addressing systemic risks at a global level, such as cybersecurity threats and the potential catastrophic impacts of AI on humanity.

93. Mr. Benifei concluded by expressing the need for ongoing collaboration and global cooperation to ensure the safe and ethical development of AI for the benefit of all humanity.

94. After the panellists' presentations, the Chairperson initiated a discussion, providing an opportunity for debate and the exchange of good practices.

3.5 Session 3: Innovation and Startups

95. Mr. Denis Naughten, MP from Ireland and Chairperson of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, highlighted various initiatives supporting sustainable development and food industries in Ireland. The country incorporates sustainability in its education system, introducing entrepreneurship concepts through programs like the Junior Entrepreneur Program for 11 to 12-year-olds. Secondary schools engage in the Student Enterprise Program, and there's a young entrepreneurial competition for those aged up to 35.

96. In the technology sector, Ireland has established a network of over 300 co-working digital hubs with enterprise development officers to support innovative ideas. Successful startups can transition to more intensive digital homes that facilitate scaling up. Naughten emphasized the importance of universal access to science and technology, suggesting the promotion of innovation vouchers to connect businesses with researchers. Ireland's Innovation Voucher Program encourages collaboration between higher education institutes and small and medium-sized businesses, fostering innovation.

97. In the food sector, Ireland has the Leader Food Initiative, assisting artisan food producers and farm diversification enterprises in establishing sustainable routes to market. This initiative supports local businesses, creates employment opportunities, and emphasizes sustainability. Additionally, a food technology cluster accommodates the growth of companies in the sector.

98. Mr. Nguyen Thanh Trung, Founder and CEO of Sky Mavis in Vietnam, shared the story of his company's journey in blockchain technology and startups. In 2018, the company embarked on the X Infinity Game project, which proved to be extraordinary, risky, yet creative and interesting. Despite facing challenges and hitting rock bottom, including a significant financial loss due to hacking, it managed to recover, learning valuable lessons about trade-offs, cybersecurity, and effective management practices.
99. Mr. Trung emphasized the role of technology startups in the fourth Industrial Revolution, particularly in areas like AI, blockchain, IoT, and machine learning. He highlighted the importance of a robust startup ecosystem, involving various players such as accelerators, incubators, investors, and the government.
100. He called for a comprehensive policy and legal framework for blockchain technology and tech startups and emphasized the need for legal clarity to allow startups to focus on growth rather than spending excessive time on structural and legal issues. Trung stressed the government's crucial role in creating a positive and informed view of these technologies, urging education and awareness. He Mr. Trung concluded by noting that the global push for policies related to new technologies and digital transformation is no longer optional but a necessity. Governments, businesses, and users must adapt to this new normal driven by advanced technologies.
101. Ms. Tingyu Yuan, Manager of HICOOL, an all-in-one ecosystem platform for startups, shared insights on how China promotes innovation and startups through systematic policies and institutional efforts. The promotion of innovation in China began in 2015 under former Prime Minister Li Keqiang, marked by the issuance of guiding opinions on supporting platforms for mass entrepreneurship and innovation by the State Council.
102. Under the mass entrepreneurship and innovation policies, several measures have been implemented to simplify the startup registration process, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and encourage more people to participate in entrepreneurship. Online platforms now allow entrepreneurs to complete registration without physically visiting different government departments, providing clear guidelines and forms. This has particularly benefited young graduates, allowing them to creatively consider their careers.

103. Supportive policies at various government levels, including tax relief, reduced corporate income tax, and value-added tax, lighten the financial burden on startups, enabling continuous investment in innovation and research and development activities. Comprehensive support is provided to startups, including low-interest venture loans, financial education programs, and training to improve financial literacy and management skills.
104. HICOOL serves as an all-in-one startup ecosystem platform, focusing on seven tech knowledge and innovation verticals. It conducts the HICOOL Global Entrepreneurship Competition and Entrepreneur Summit, offering prizes, guidance, training, resource sharing, and matchmaking to foster the growth of startups. The platform is open to international and national participants, creating opportunities for startups to showcase their ideas and projects in the Chinese market.
105. Ms. Yuan emphasized the ongoing need for improvements in institutions and policies to build a supportive, tolerant, and encouraging environment for cultivating entrepreneurial generations across various social segments.
106. Mr. Beniam Gebrezghi, Specialist, Civil Society and Youth, Governance and Peace Building Team, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) explained that together with a few Partners it's ILO, Commonwealth Secretariat, Islamic Development Bank and a range of other partners we've had founded the Strategic intelligence Hub aimed at addressing gaps are in the entrepreneurship ecosystem across Asia Pacific countries. The team was currently undertaking a youth responsive and youth inclusive National Diagnostics in different countries, having concluded Bangladesh, Indonesia, Singapore and almost finalizing Pakistan and Brunei.
107. Following the presentations by panelists, there were discussions aimed at exchanging opinions on the optimal ways to leverage the opportunities presented by innovation and startups.

3.6 Session 4: Promoting Respect for Cultural Diversity for Sustainable Development

108. Dr. Maurizio Bona, a former advisor to the Director-General of CERN and professor at the University of Pavia, discussed the collaboration between CERN and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to emphasize the importance of science in society. He introduced the development of the Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology for Parliaments by the IPU working group

on science and technology. The charter aims to establish ethical boundaries for science and technology, ensuring respect for human rights and dignity. While scientists cannot solely define these limits, the charter, based on fundamental principles, will provide clear guidelines for parliaments to scrutinize legislation and promote ethical contributions from scientific progress. The charter, viewed as a constitution on ethics, will be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect societal evolution. The draft is in progress and is expected to be adopted by the working group in March 2024, offering young parliamentarians the opportunity to shape a positive role for science and technology in the long-term future of society.

109. Ms. Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences at UNESCO, emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation with the IPU to enhance youth participation in decision-making. She highlighted the challenges faced in sustainable development efforts, including climate change, conflicts, the war in Ukraine, the pandemic, and digital divides, which disproportionately impact young people. Ms. Ramos underscored the need for intergenerational and intercultural dialogue to support sustainable peace and development.
110. UNESCO, she mentioned, works with governments to design youth policies and supports decision-makers in engaging with young people for development. The organization has developed tools like the Dual Policy Toolkit, designed to generate sustainable solutions and a Global Youth Grant scheme supporting youth-led projects with social and environmental impact. Emphasizing the importance of intercultural dialogue, Ms. Ramos shared UNESCO's methodology for building intercultural skills and fostering dialogue.
111. UNESCO's efforts also include promoting the inclusion of culture in sustainable development, with 150 Ministers of Culture calling for culture to be a standalone goal in the post-2030 agenda. Ms. Ramos highlighted UNESCO's recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence and the importance of ethical AI literacy. She emphasized the need to empower youth with digital media and information literacy skills, enabling them to navigate the digital transformation and fostering critical thinking. UNESCO is committed to working with young people to advance programs and ensure they play a crucial role in creating a sustainable future.

112. Professor Jean Tran Thanh Van, the President of Rencontres du Vietnam and Director of ICISE Center, delivered a compelling address emphasizing the paramount significance of science and technology in driving sustainable development. He underscored the indispensable need for collaboration among scientists, parliamentarians, and decision-makers. Stressing the foundational role of science, particularly fundamental science, in societal progress, Professor Thanh Van highlighted its vital contribution to applied science, asserting its applicability in daily life and its crucial role in ensuring the sustainable development of societies. He applauded the inquisitiveness of the younger generation as the bedrock for societal development and national competitiveness. The professor provided tangible examples, such as the pivotal role of science in overcoming global challenges, including the triumph against COVID-19 through genetic discoveries.
113. Furthermore, he shared significant developments on the international stage, including recommendations made to the United Nations designating 2023 as a fundamental year for sustainable science and proposing a Decade of Science (2024-2034), a proposal that gained official recognition by the UN. The establishment of ICISE in Vietnam, with its mission to facilitate science and technology exchanges within Southeast Asia, was highlighted as a testament to Vietnam's commitment to scientific development.
114. The collaborative efforts between world parliamentarians, as evidenced by the signing of an MOU for organizing science seminars and workshops for peace, were emphasized, creating a global platform for the convergence of scientists and parliamentarians. Professor Thanh Van elucidated the concept of scientific diplomacy, aligning it with the principles of science for peace developed by IPU and ICISE, as a tool for addressing issues of common interest.
115. The Professor shared insights from recent Science for Peace seminars, particularly one focused on the critical issue of water security. He emphasized the importance of addressing water security through strong parliamentary actions and collaborations globally. Tools facilitating data exchange, free of charge, were deemed crucial, and the promotion of cooperation through regular meetings, as recognized by the IPU working group on Science and Technology and committees for development and sustainable development, was underscored. The need for establishing a network of parliamentarians dedicated to water and water security for

substantive exchanges was also stressed. The commitment to organizing annual Science for Peace seminars as a meaningful platform for discussions between parliamentarians and scientists was reiterated.

116. In conclusion, Professor Thanh Van reiterated the central role of science and technology in sustainable development. He highlighted the essential collaboration between parliamentarians and policymakers, defining the conditions and purpose of cooperation between IPU and ICISE Vietnam.

117. Mr. Bui Hoai Son, a Member of the Vietnam National Assembly, highlighted the crucial role of cultural diversity for sustainable development. Making reference to UNESCO's affirmation on the richness of cultural diversity as a valuable asset for humanity, similar to biodiversity, Mr. Son emphasized the importance of honoring and protecting cultural diversity for the benefit of all. Cultural diversity, he argued, serves as a driving force for sustainable development at various levels, fostering peace and security locally, nationally, and internationally. He stressed its implications for human rights, fundamental freedoms, gender equality, social cohesion, and harmony.

118. Discussing Vietnam's cultural landscape, comprising 54 ethnic groups, Vietnam has prioritized cultural diversity in its development policies, considering it a foundational and endogenous strength for sustainable progress. The National Assembly of Vietnam has been actively working on improving the legal system and issuing policies that promote respect for cultural diversity. Key initiatives include constitutional provisions affirming equal rights for ethnic groups, emphasizing equality, solidarity, and the prohibition of ethnic discrimination.

119. Vietnam has successfully achieved numerous cultural milestones recognized by UNESCO, including UNESCO Heritage sites and intangible cultural heritage elements. Acknowledging the challenges posed by the digital era and globalization to cultural sustainability, Mr. Son presented directions for young parliamentarians. These include promoting digital cooperation while safeguarding privacy and confidentiality, integrating cultural considerations into development policies at various levels, and contributing to discussions on cultural diversity in sustainable development.

120. In conclusion, Mr. Son offered recommendations for consideration and discussion at the Global Conference on Young Parliamentarians. These recommendations encompass recognizing the role and value of culture as a foundation for sustainable development, promoting cultural roles in development policies at different levels, positioning culture as an independent goal in development agendas, and emphasizing the key role of parliamentarians in recognizing and promoting cultural diversity for peace and cohesion among communities and countries.
121. Mr. Andy Williamson, Senior Researcher at the Centre for Innovation in Parliament, addressed the challenges and opportunities brought about by digital transformation in his video message. Focusing on three specific aspects—misinformation and disinformation, trust, and artificial intelligence (AI), he emphasized the need for enthusiastic yet cautious embracing of these technologies.
122. Mr. Williamson acknowledged the transformative impact of social media and digital technologies on parliamentary work, citing the rapid adoption of hybrid sittings and remote plenaries, especially notable during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, he highlighted the associated challenges, including the rise of misinformation, disinformation, and abusive content on platforms like Twitter.
123. He underscored the importance of recognizing the value-add of digital tools, cautioning against rushing into adopting every new platform without establishing its relevance and significance. The speaker stressed that tools like Twitter, when excessively negative and abusive, risk becoming irrelevant.
124. Addressing the issue of online abuse, Mr. Williamson encouraged parliamentarians, especially women who often receive more abuse, to be aware of the impact on mental health and to take measures such as blocking or reporting threats. He advocated for rules that set acceptable behavior standards on social media.
125. Regarding information security, the speaker urged public figures, including parliamentarians, to be aware of how digital tools can compromise personal safety and information security. He emphasized the importance of protecting digital selves from harm and misuse.

126. Discussing AI, Mr. Williamson acknowledged its pros, such as aiding research and parliamentary work, but also highlighted the cons, including the manipulation of images and text. He emphasized the need to address the risks associated with AI, such as its ethnocentric nature, and called for increased awareness and digital literacy.
127. In conclusion, Mr. Williamson recognized the benefits of digital tools for parliaments but emphasized the importance of adopting different strategies and skills to use them safely and positively. He encouraged younger parliamentarians to promote their use in a measured way, considering both the risks and benefits.
128. In a video message to the UNAC (United Nations Alliance of Civilizations) and the unique platform of young parliamentarians at the ninth Global Youth Conference, Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, Inter-Parliamentary Union High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, emphasized the significance of the conference coinciding with the UN General Assembly's 78th session.
129. He highlighted the concurrent SDG Summit during the UNGA session, serving as a midpoint review of the 2030 agenda's implementation. The summit, attended by leaders from various sectors, aimed to comprehensively assess the SDGs' status, respond to global crises, and offer high-level political guidance for accelerated efforts toward achieving the SDGs by 2030.
130. The SDG Summit, chaired by the President of the General Assembly, would result in a negotiated political declaration focusing on people. Moratinos emphasized the involvement of diverse stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, women, youth, and parliaments. Parliaments, seen as vital contributors to democracy, link the local and global through legislative decisions. Moratinos acknowledged the current dominance of older men in parliaments and applauded the unique platform for young parliamentarians, emphasizing the value they bring. He expressed the UNAC's commitment to strengthening its collaboration with youth.

4. CONFERENCE STATEMENT OF THE 9TH IPU GLOBAL CONFERENCE FOR YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS

131. At the conclusion of the 9th IPU Global Conference for Young Parliamentarians adopted the following Conference Statement-

a) Hanoi Conference Statement: The Role of Youth in Accelerating the Achievement of the SDGs Through Digital Transformation and Innovation

(Endorsed by the 9th IPU Global Youth Conference on 16th September 2023)

We, almost 300 young parliamentarians, came together at the Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians on 14 – 17 September 2023 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam to affirm our commitment to accelerating the achievement of the SDGs, especially through digital transformation and innovation. Our average age was 38.4 years and approximately 44% of us were women MPs, along with representatives from global and regional organizations, youth groups, start-ups, academia, and influential leaders of the IPU and Viet Nam. We are delighted that the Conference coincided with the United Nations' International Day for Democracy on 15 September.

Our meeting in Viet Nam marked the eighth anniversary of the Hanoi Declaration on the SDGs, adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2015 and setting out the commitment of parliamentarians to address global development priorities. As we pass the midway point of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), we are at a momentous and critical juncture.

We emphasize and share great concern regarding the fact that, with less than seven years remaining to achieve the SDGs, only 12% of SDG targets are being well implemented, while we are still behind on 50% of the targets, with levels ranging from moderately to severely off track. These results warrant not only our reflection, but resolute action, especially drawing attention to gaps in achieving the goals related to education, gender equality, decent work, economic growth, climate action, peace, justice and strong institutions, which are of vital concern to youth. 258 million young people are still out of school, when we need universal education that leaves no one behind. The number of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET) is increasing considerably, rising to 23.3%. Young women remain worse off than young men, being roughly two-thirds as likely to be employed. We are also nowhere near

equity when it comes to representation of women and young people in politics. Less than 27% of MPs around the world are women, and only 2.8% of MPs are 30 years of age or under. We need to work faster, more creatively, and with a far greater sense of urgency, to achieve the agenda on which we all agreed.

Our world is characterized by the rapid growth of technology, digital transformation and innovation. We need to harness their potential to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, especially for issues important to youth. For example, in education, digital tools can open up educational and training opportunities to more young people through online means. By unleashing innovation, we can help scale up start-ups led by young people that in turn can employ more young men and women. When these are enterprises that help adapt to or mitigate climate change, investing in youth for the clean jobs of tomorrow can have multiplier positive effects.

The opportunities are clear, and they must be available to everyone, yet significant gender gaps persist. The fact that women are 26% less likely to own a mobile phone than men is Page 2 of 4 unreasonable. Digital transformation and innovation must be opportunities that bolster gender equality by facilitating new avenues for empowerment.

As key inventors, users and promoters of technological evolution, young people are uniquely positioned to lead in the positioning of digital transformation and innovation at the centre of action to accelerate progress in making development sustainable for the planet and accessible for the people, leaving no one behind. Young people are already leaders in the private sector, as CEOs of tech companies and innovative startups, or, as investors in digital transformation. This should also be mirrored with young people leading in our political institutions.

We, young MPs, know how to navigate the complexities of the digital landscape, and we know best the pulse of our country's youth and future generations. It is our role to give voice to their aspirations. Young people are natives of the latest technologies and are well positioned to drive new solutions for the good of all. This includes through start-ups, developing new technologies and harnessing the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI). We reiterate our call for MPs and political leaders to take transformative action for more youth in politics by joining the IPU Campaign I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the strategic importance of digital tools in our parliaments. These can contribute to more inclusive legislative, monitoring and decision-making processes on important issues, making them

more comprehensive, with greater transparency and increased public participation. Real-time engagement channels can enable immediate interaction between constituents and representatives. By facilitating participation, digital transformation can empower citizens, particularly youth, to actively engage in the political process and contribute to shaping policy decisions. For parliamentarians, these digital tools offer greater opportunities for combining their work and private life, especially for those with caring responsibilities. We welcome the IPU self-assessment toolkit on the SDGs as an innovative approach to helping parliaments integrate the SDGs into parliamentary work according to the specificities of each parliament and contributing to the effective implementation of the SDGs in a more coherent and sustainable manner.

Science and technology are cornerstones for advancing peace and sustainable development and providing solutions to today's complex challenges. They enable evidence-based and informed policymaking, whether on environmental protection, development or conflict resolution. Science and the common search for knowledge and solutions can unite in collective cause, providing a neutral platform for cooperation and an incentive for peaceful coexistence. We, young MPs, can play an important role in helping foster the next generation of tech-savvy and problem-solving youth to help realize sustainable development and peace.

When harnessing the power of technology and innovation in a transforming world, we must work to maximize the positive outcomes that these bring, while mitigating unwanted risks. This includes taking an ethical and prudent approach to science and technology that ensures that they are used for the betterment of humanity and the environment, as well as privacy, security and well-being. At the same time, our pursuit of digital transformation and innovation should not push us towards global homogeneity. It should amplify our rich tapestry of cultures, experiences and perspectives. Cultural diversity is a strength for sustainable development, which should not only be protected but embraced, as it is an indispensable ingredient that can nurture even more creativity and innovation.

To help accelerate the achievement of the SDGs through digital transformation and innovation, we, young MPs, discussed the following proposed actions:

1. Regarding digital transformation, we are calling for and suggesting that Member Parliaments:

- a. Update parliamentary rules and working methods to allow for greater virtual participation of MPs, utilize interactive platforms that facilitate inclusive direct communication between constituents and representatives, and foster meaningful engagement of specific demographic groups, particularly youth, in the work of parliamentary committees;
- b. Consider developing or strengthening forward-looking parliamentary bodies, such as Committees of the Future and other suitable mechanisms with respect to each country's specific conditions, to help parliaments anticipate and respond to long-term trends or potential shocks, and ensuring that youth are involved in such bodies;
- c. Ensure all parliamentarians are equipped with the necessary knowledge and technical support to fully participate in online proceedings; enhance the use of virtual assistance to support parliamentarians; use AI tools to enhance the quality of legislative work; and develop a digital library of legal documents;
- d. Adopt laws and policies that help close the digital gap and ensure accessibility to all, including through low-cost access, building of digital infrastructure and skills-building;
- e. Develop suitable legal frameworks and strengthen international cooperation to protect their respective digital sovereignty to bring about a safe, healthy network environment and sustainable development;
- f. Adopt adequate policies and procedures to prevent and respond to any form of technology-facilitated harassment and violence against members of parliament, including violence against women parliamentarians;
- g. Advocate for the development of effective mechanisms and methods for collecting information and data to monitor the implementation of the SDGs;
- h. Support the role of the United Nations in developing standards and legal frameworks on cyberspace, digital transformation and AI on the basis of consensus.

2. Regarding innovation and start-ups, we are calling for and suggesting that Member Parliaments:

- a. Strengthen the innovation and start-up eco-system, including by developing legal frameworks for innovation and start-ups, scaling up our budgets to support youth-led and youth-inclusive enterprises, start-ups and innovation initiatives, including through funding, grants and technical assistance, and making sure they are aligned with the SDGs, especially on empowering young women;
- b. Promote education curricula that provide the necessary skills to prepare the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs, with an emphasis on digital skillsets; special focus should also be given to young women, including by incentivizing more to study in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields;
- c. Urge the IPU to consider possible avenues within existing structures for engaging on innovation and digital transformation issues;
- d. Promote global networking of young parliamentarians in digital transformation and innovation, within the framework of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, in close cooperation with the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament;
- e. Strengthen the nexus between the scientific and parliamentary communities to create more space for science to contribute to peace and sustainable development, with a priority being the involvement of youth;
- f. Encourage start-ups and innovation initiatives among youth and students, especially women, strengthen gender mainstreaming in accordance with the SDGs, and develop a separate programme for digital innovation and start-ups;
- g. Promote innovation and sustainable entrepreneurship in all fields, with a focus on FoodTech, as a way to actively contribute to the process of implementing the SDGs, by solving food security issues and ending famine.

3. Regarding promoting respect for cultural diversity for sustainable development, we call for and suggest that Member Parliaments:

- a. Help develop a common parliamentary approach to establishing a framework of principles and values in the decision-making, research and development around science and technology, such as the forthcoming IPU International Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology, which aims at ensuring that the development and application of science and technology are carried out in a responsible, ethical and sustainable manner;
- b. Contribute robustly to efforts intended to stem online violence against women and girls, including by promoting gender equality, curbing hate speech and regulating and managing AI in a way in which women and girls are protected and new technologies do not perpetuate gender biases;
- c. Strengthen data protection framework laws and other statutory instruments, especially concerning personal data and cyberthreats, and promote transparent and open-source algorithms;
- d. Promote inclusivity, intercultural dialogue, and respect for cultural diversity and local knowledge as drivers of sustainable development, prosperity and peaceful coexistence;
- e. Promote culture as a driving force of sustainable development, commit to protecting and promoting cultural diversity, affirm the role of the creative economy and cultural industries and the role of culture and cultural diversity in the process of solving the difficulties and challenges facing humanity today, especially climate change, and prevent illegal trafficking and transfer of cultural heritage property;
- f. Promote respect for cultural diversity in the context of the fourth industrial revolution; strengthen cooperation for economic innovation, increased efficiency, and drivers for economic growth; at the same time, help State agencies operate more transparently and effectively on the roadmap for digitalization to narrow the development gap and ensure personal privacy in cyberspace, while keeping in mind national sovereignty.

We express our gratitude to the National Assembly of Viet Nam for having considerably, successfully and professionally hosted this Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, championing youth participation and promoting the

achievement of the SDGs, including through the IPU and international and regional inter-parliamentary mechanisms. We stand ready to do our part in the mission to harness the power of technology and innovation for the SDGs, in a responsible way that leaves no one behind, especially not future generations, while respecting the United Nations Charter and international law. We stand together to keep the promises of the 2015 Hanoi Declaration, and to answer the urgent call of the 2030 Agenda.

5. RECOMENDATIONS BY THE KENYA DELEGATION

The Kenya Parliament Delegation to the 9th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Global Conference of the Young Parliamentarians, pursuant to Article 7 of the IPU Statutes, urges the National Assembly to Note this Report.