



PR241666

14.10.2024

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## **PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER**

### ***Speaker of the House of Representatives addresses the General Debate at the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly being held in Geneva***

Speaker Anġlu Farrugia delivered a keynote address during the high-level segment of the general debate at the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly, held in Geneva. The central theme of this year's general debate is "Harnessing Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) for a More Peaceful and Sustainable Future".

In his address, the Speaker emphasised the essential role that science, technology, and innovation (STI) play in improving lives and tackling global challenges, such as poverty, access to healthcare, clean water, food security, and clean energy. He noted that while STI offers vast potential to drive economic growth and job creation, it must also prioritise social responsibility and inclusivity.

Reflecting on the COVID-19 pandemic, Speaker Anġlu Farrugia praised the swift development of vaccines using science and technology, however, he also pointed out the disparities in access to such innovations, highlighting the need for equitable distribution of resources.

He also addressed the increasing digital transformation in sectors like banking, emphasising the importance of social responsibility alongside technological advancement. He stressed that as digital transformation progresses, politicians and parliamentarians must ensure no one is left behind, particularly vulnerable groups such as the elderly and less educated individuals.

Furthermore, he stressed the importance of tackling global challenges, including extreme poverty, hunger, and climate change. He underscored the need for global solutions to address sea-level rise and promote renewable energy transitions, with particular attention to small island developing states.

In his concluding remarks, the Speaker called for increased investments in education to ensure societies can keep pace with rapid scientific and technological developments. He also emphasised the importance of conducting social impact assessments in legislation to ensure inclusivity and equity.