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PRESS RELEASE BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Parliamentary delegation participates in the 149th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva

The 149th Assembly taking place between 13 and 17 October is focusing on harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future. The Assembly provides a platform for delegates to deliberate, exchange views and galvanize parliamentary action. The Maltese delegation participating in this Assembly was led by Speaker Anglu Farrugia and comprised Davina Sammut Hili and Ivan Castillo.

Davina Sammut Hili addressed the plenary as a young Member of Parliament. She stated that science equips humans with the knowledge necessary to understand the world and find solutions to the complexities of the challenges they face. Sammut Hili opined that by cultivating a culture of innovation, humans can devise solutions that align economic growth with environmental responsibility. This involves reimagining production and consumption methods, promoting circular economies, and investing in green technologies that create jobs while safeguarding our ecosystems. Sammut Hili stressed that in order to effectively harness these powerful tools, humans must prioritize education. She concluded by stating that it is crucial to equip future generations with the skills to navigate and innovate in a rapidly evolving world.

The Assembly will be adopting a resolution on the subject item taken up by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights entitled ‘The impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on democracy, human rights and the rule of law’. During the debate on the draft resolution, Ivan Castillo stated that it is crucial to address the impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. It is therefore crucial that AI development be rooted in ethical principles, accountability, and transparency. Castillo stressed that human rights must remain at the centre of any AI framework, safeguarding freedoms such as speech, privacy, and equal treatment. On the other hand, Castillo pointed out that AI offers immense potential to strengthen our democracies and empower citizens. Castillo concluded that by embracing AI in the right way, societies will be more inclusive, equitable, and resilient; therefore, AI can be a force for good, bringing citizens closer to their governments and enhancing democratic participation.

The Assembly voted on an emergency item proposal put forward by the parliamentary delegations of France, UK, Germany, Canada and the Netherlands. The proposal for a resolution seeks a response by parliamentarians to the urgent plea by the UN Secretary General to recommit multilateralism for global peace, justice and sustainability. A resolution is expected to be adopted at the end of the Assembly. The Assembly is expected to conclude with the adoption of an outcome document on the overall theme of the General Debate.



PRESS RELEASE

Speaker Farrugia together with the rest of the delegation participated in an open session on the theme of Armed conflict and disability: Enhancing parliamentary action to address disability during armed conflicts and their aftermath. Speaker Farrugia stressed that while it is important that Parliaments and jurisdictions sign and ratify the relevant conventions, however it is important that such conventions are enforced. He proposed that those who refuse to enforce the conventions should be mentioned as such. Speaker Farrugia also participated in the meeting of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, during which he was elected as its President.