



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
149th IPU Assembly

General Debate: “*Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future*”

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse PICTET-ALTHANN,
Permanent Observer to the Inter-Parliamentary Union – Head of Delegation**

Geneva, 14-17 October 2024

Honourable President Ackson,
Mr. Secretary General,
Honourable Speakers and Members of Parliaments,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The Sovereign Order of Malta thanks the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) for its important work in advancing parliamentary diplomacy to address the many challenges the world faces and for providing a forum for dialogue amongst parliamentarians and other stakeholders to promote a more peaceful and sustainable future.

The theme of this General Debate, on science, technology and innovation (STI), is indeed timely and crucial in an interconnected and constantly changing world. AI and new technologies have an immense potential for good, such as combating climate change, food insecurity, ensuring access to clean water and healthcare, for a sustainable future.

However, they also pose significant risks that must be mitigated, especially affecting certain fundamental human rights such as freedom of thought, conscience and religion due to rising misinformation and disinformation. STI ought to be used in an ethical manner to promote democracy, avoid social tensions and the exacerbation of conflicts, and inequalities.

Therefore, parliamentarians can and should put in place sound legal frameworks to guide technology development and guard against its misuse, guaranteeing equal opportunity so as to bridge the technological gap, leaving no-one behind.



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Madam President,

The Sovereign Order of Malta is looking forward to actively participating in the second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, scheduled for next June in Rome, and is currently working closely with the IPU Secretariat. On that matter, allow me to sincerely thank the Secretary General for his leadership and support.

In conclusion, the Order of Malta, with its humanitarian diplomacy and action on the ground in 120 countries, appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the debates and engage with parliamentarians on issues of common interest, as we have done before and since our admission as Permanent Observer at IPU in 2021.

Thank you.