



THE PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK
On The World Bank & International Monetary Fund

2024 GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

AT THE WORLD BANK & IMF SPRING MEETINGS

15-16 APRIL 2024

On 15th and 16th of April 2024, the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & IMF (PN) jointly organized with the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) the 2024 Global Parliamentary Forum. The Forum comprised sessions spanning two days, providing a platform for discussing public policies aimed at achieving a more resilient and sustainable future. Topics of focus included 1) the opportunities and challenges of Artificial Intelligence, 2) accelerating climate action solutions, 3) investment in the International Development Association and the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust, 4) enhancing accountability in governance, and 5) empowerment of MPs in implementing effective gender strategies. Additional meetings were held on the topics of creating green jobs for young people and on global health financing for pandemic preparedness. The event brought together members from 43 parliaments around the world for a conference in Washington, D.C., the United States of America.

Monday, 15 April:

Opening Session



*THE RT HON. LIAM BYRNE MP,
THE UNITED KINGDOM*

The Rt Hon. Liam Byrne MP, Chair of Business and Trade Committee, UK; Chair of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and IMF opened the Global Parliamentary Forum 2024 with a keen awareness of the significance of the forum in today's ever-evolving global context. He acknowledged the importance of these discussions for paving the way towards sustainable green energy transition, poverty eradication, socio-economic development, and highlighted the imperative need for enhanced international cooperation. Reflecting on the Network's recent accomplishments, he underscored efforts to enhance communication and expand outreach, citing the establishment of new chapters, the McGill University co-partnership capacity building program, and the success of the parliamentary podcast series with 38 million impressions. Recognizing the necessity of collaborative efforts to confront these pressing issues, he concluded his address by emphasizing the vital role of solidarity among parliamentarians and their influence on shaping global outcomes.

The Hon. Marlene M. Forte KC, MP, Minister of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Jamaica; Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and IMF began her address by recognizing the dedication and perseverance demonstrated by all parliamentarians in facing today's most pressing challenges. Encouraging an atmosphere of inclusivity and engagement, she called on parliamentarians to affirm their commitment to making a positive impact, thereby reinforcing the overarching purpose of the forum. She emphasized unifying factors transcending differences, highlighting the imperative for governments to accurately represent the needs of their constituents through enhanced transparency and accountability measures. Concluding with an optimistic message, she underscored our collective capacity for improvement and positive transformation.



*HON. MARLENE M. FORTE KC,
MP, JAMAICA*

Discussion with World Bank and IMF Leadership

The parliamentary townhall discussion at the Global Parliamentary Forum featured remarks from the leaders and senior officials of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and responses and questions from parliamentarians. **The Rt. Hon. Liam Byrne, MP** and **Hon. Marlene M. Forte KC, MP** moderated.

Julie Kozack, Director of the Strategic Communications, Communications Department, IMF explained that while the global economy is resilient overall, there is a divergence whereby rich countries have exceeded pre-pandemic growth trends while emerging markets lag behind. She emphasized the need to focus on lifting medium-term growth in emerging markets and enhancing international cooperation to address this divergence. Kozack sought feedback from parliamentarians on whether the IMF's assessment of global trends and reform priorities resonates with them. She then highlighted the new Resilience and Sustainability Trust aimed at supporting low-income and vulnerable middle-income countries and explained the role of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)—an international reserve asset made up of the 5 most major currencies—play in the IMF's efforts to stabilize countries most in need of help.



JULIE KOZACK, IMF



JAMES HEIMBACK, WBG

James Heimback, Vice-President, External Corporate Relations, World Bank, presented the institution aims to scale up operations and become a bigger, better bank. He underscored the importance of deeper engagement between the World Bank and parliamentarians to jointly tackle development challenges, as well as collaboration between different stakeholders: parliamentarians, CSOs, civil society, the private sector, etc. He also expressed his desire to increase transparency concerning investments and the resources available to the offices that the World Bank has in 130 countries.

Ajay Banga, President, World Bank, stressed the *interlinked* nature of challenges like climate change, poverty, and lack of energy access, especially in Africa. He stressed that time is of the essence, especially given that hundreds of millions are coming of working age in the global south. If we can address these challenges quickly and effectively, we will have a generation that is engaged and that will exponentially alleviate our problems. He zoomed in on access to energy in Africa and better healthcare across the world. The World Bank's strategic priorities now are in delivering tangible outcomes. To do this, Banga underscored the pressing need for an ambitious replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA) to support the poorest countries.



AJAY BANGA, PRESIDENT, WBG



KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA, MANAGING DIRECTOR, IMF

Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, IMF warned that the next five years will be especially difficult for low-income and fragile middle-income countries with rampant inflation. She stressed, we must secure funding especially for these countries as, in the correct conditions, they too can support IDA. We should try to support IDA in any indirect way that we can. She emphasized the necessity of boosting productivity through investment in human capital to boost growth, and hailed the work done to increase the quotas of the World Bank and the IMF in recent years to help in this. However, she stressed vigilance: the Bank and the Fund must work together and have transparency to all chapter countries. If international monetary institutions do not provide benefits, no one will want to allocate funding for them.

Both Kristalina Georgieva and Ajay Banga emphasized the importance of deeper engagement with parliamentarians to understand country-specific contexts, build support for their institutional mandates, and promote effective multilateralism amid an increasingly fragmenting global governance model. In open discussion with the floor, parliamentarians raised issues around conflict prevention, transitioning to clean energy while ensuring energy security, recovering from economic shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing water scarcity, food insecurity, and tailoring policy advice to national circumstances. The World Bank and IMF leadership, in response, reiterated the imperative of bold reforms and long-term policy actions to put economies on a sustainable development path and stressed the valuable role parliamentarians can play in shaping these efforts through legislation, oversight, and outreach to constituents.

Opportunities and Challenges of Artificial Intelligence: A Call for Global Legislative Governance

Hon. Sven Clement MP, Luxembourg, Board Member of the Parliamentary Network, and **moderator of the session** welcomed participants and introduced the topic of Artificial Intelligence.

Florence Jaumotte, Division Chief, Research Department, IMF, outlined how Artificial Intelligence is expected to transform the global economy akin to a new industrial revolution. She explained how AI may complement some jobs—such as judges, for example—but entirely risk replacing others—dishwashers, for example. Exposure to AI,



Antonio Spilimbergo, Deputy Director, Research Department, IMF, emphasized the necessarily uncertain productivity composition of AI. Some productivity gains may come within existing industries (intensive margin) but most impact will come from new sectors enabled by AI (extensive margin). New sectors are difficult to predict (with given examples of the creation of internal combustion engines and electricity). He called for a framework to regulate AI, and noted the many concerns that need to be considered— copyright concerns, privacy concerns, anti-monopoly concerns, bias concerns, and ethical concerns.

however, is not consistent among all countries. Exposure is about 60% in Advanced Economies while about 40% worldwide. Thus, Advanced Economies are most at risk; within these economies 27% of jobs are estimated as highly complementary with AI while 33% are lowly complementary. She explained how the AI Preparedness Index measures adoption readiness across 4 areas: 1) Digital infrastructure, 2) Innovation and economic integration, 3) Human capital and labor market policies and 4) Regulation and ethics.



ANTONIO SPILIMBERGO, IMF



CHRISTINE ZHENWEI QIANG, WBG

Christine Zhenwei Qiang, Director, Digital Development Global Practice, World Bank, highlighted how digital technologies are being adopted globally at an increasingly rapid pace. Telephones, she remarked, took about a hundred years to reach 100 million users. The mobile telephone took 14 years to reach the same amount of users. The Apple app store took 2 years and ChatGPT took 2 months. She thus reaffirmed the need for a regulatory framework and noted the speed with which we must work to keep ethical restraints in line with technological expansion.

Julian Mueller-Kaler, Director of the Strategic Foresight Hub, Stimson Center, raised two further concerns about the field of AI. First, he said, the US-China competition over computing power and chips enabling AI is developing dangerously quickly and leaving other countries very vulnerable. And second, AI's ability to manipulate audio and visuals could undermine our understanding of truth itself and erode public trust in governance. Thus, again, he also expressed, regulation is necessary as trust is hard to gain, but easy to lose.



JULIAN MUELLER-KALER, STIMSON CENTER

Hon. Neema Lugangira MP, Board Member of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and IMF, Tanzania outlined her country's goals for internet connectivity (by 2025, 85% of Tanzania to have internet security) and potential AI use cases, while also highlighting risks around inequality, gender/racial bias and dangers like deepfakes against female politicians. She questioned how the World Bank and IMF will regulate data extraction from poorer nations.





HON. GIULIO CENTEMERO MP, ITALY; PAM

Hon. Giulio Centemero MP, Italy, Co-Chair of the PAM Panel on Trade and Investments, expressed skepticism about the European Union's steps in AI regulation, arguing that major tech players like the US, China and India lack such rules. In regulating individually, he argued, the smaller actors on the global stage will be left even further behind and inequality between countries in trade will grow still larger. He reaffirmed the call for a global governance approach to AI.

Hon. Collins Adomako-Mensah MP, Ghana, Board Member of the Parliamentary Network, presented a Ghanaian perspective on the inequality. 10.5 million citizens of Ghana, he said, do not have access to internet, nor access to data. The United States, by contrast, is spending hundreds of billions on Artificial Intelligence which is more than the GDP of most African countries. Ghana, thus cannot compete, and it feels like they are late to a game that has already past them by.



HON. COLLINS ADOMAKO-MENSAH MP, GHANA

Dr. Ricardo B. Leite, President and Founder, UNITE, appealed to the need for human connection, and for an understanding of new AI technology as co-pilots to us. He also noted the massive risk that exists in rich countries having more access to AI technology and continuing to grow while poorer countries are left unable to compete. He called for global legislation that make sure that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) stand a chance in the near future.



DR. RICARDO B. LEITE, UNITE

Debt and Growth: Investing in the International Development Association and the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust

Hon. Tony Loffreda, Senator, Canada, and **moderator of the session** welcomed participants and introduced the topic of Debt and Growth.



H.E. EMMANUEL SINZHAGERA, SENATOR AND SPEAKER OF THE SENATE, BURUNDI

His Excellency, Emmanuel Sinzhagera, Senator and Speaker of the Senate, Burundi, gave opening remarks. He thanked the IDA for its work supporting women and SMEs in developing countries and called on donors to make the next IDA replenishment an historical success. However, citing the 2030 agenda of the United Nations, he encouraged IDA to work still harder, especially in vulnerable African countries. He highlighted India has an example of successful development. By investing in developing countries' mining industries, especially, he said, the IDA can transition recipient countries to donor ones.

Akihiko (Aki) Nishio, Vice President of Development Finance, World Bank, gave remarks on the key role parliamentarians play in securing support for an ambitious IDA replenishment. IDA, he made clear, is the largest source of concessional borrowing for 75 of the world's poorest countries and 60% of IDA countries are at high risk or already in debt distress in 2023.



AKI NISHIO, WBG

He also outlined the advantages of IDA; it offers more concessional financing than it receives in repayments, proactively mitigating debt vulnerabilities (IDA committed \$111.8 billion in FY21-23). And it is cost-effective for borrowers and donors because it holds global policy influence, financial efficiency, and cross-sectoral knowledge. He finished by calling for solidarity, partnership and ideas towards an ambitious IDA21 conference.



Guillaume Chabert, Deputy Director, Strategy, Policy and Review

Department, IMF, stressed that a strong IDA replenishment is mandatory given that over half of countries in the world are at debt distress risk. In terms of debt stock, Chabert reported that there are early signs of stabilization but stated that a multi-pronged approach is necessary. He argued, funding must come from many different places—including external partners like the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust—and understand that debt restructurings has become more complex.

GUILLAUME CHABERT, IMF

Xochitl Sanchez, Director of the Secretariat, ACTION, reported that ACTION has expanded to include 14 institutions across 5 countries that advocate for low-income countries and has partnered with agencies that focus on wiping out tuberculosis. She made clear, there hasn't been a time as critical as this one to talk about IDA replenishment because of the great number of elections coming in the next few months and the fact that 1 in 3 IDA countries is poorer than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic. Parliamentarians must hear that IDA needs not only a great quantity of resources, but also a great quality of resources. She finished by arguing that we must address the 'urgent' but cannot forget about the 'important': the basics of human capital, education, and healthcare.



XOCHITL SANCHEZ, ACTION



THE HON. ESTELLE YOUSOUFFA MP, FRANCE

Hon. Estelle Youssouffa MP, France, made clear that while she hails from a donor parliament, she represents Mayotte, a poor region, far away from the mainland. She cited challenges such as the lack of clean water infrastructure and her struggles in obtaining an actual infrastructure paid for by the French taxpayer. Thus, she argued, we must think of ways to frame our investments that are as financially viable for the average citizen. Moreover, these investments must be environmentally beneficial. At the current time, she observed, we are still far away from being there on the African continent and in Mayotte.

Hon. Volkmar Klein MP, Germany stressed the need for real investment, good governance, and job creation. That is to say, people need jobs but for jobs, investment is needed, and we cannot sit around doing nothing. He noted that this was discussed at the last IPU16, but that change has not happened to the extent that is necessary and that the World Bank and IMF can contribute more money. He went on to say that poor countries need to regain the market access they lost during the pandemic and that international monetary institutions must have tailor-made solutions for every single country. He also highlighted the importance of grassroots institutions' voices in national-level conversations.



HON. VOLKMAR KLEIN MP, GERMANY

Accelerating Climate Solutions in a Fragile World

Hon. Neila Tazi, Senator, Morocco, Board Member of the Parliamentary Network and **moderator of the session** welcomed participants and began the session by highlighting the interconnected challenges of climate change, the imperative for global legislative action, and the compounding effects of the COVID-19 crisis on debt and poverty levels. She underscored the significance of the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust, stressing that its efficacy hinges upon international cooperation and robust accountability measures. She underscored the recent impact of climate change on African nations, emphasizing the urgency of collaborative responses.

H. E. Dr. Tulia Ackson MP, President of IPU, Speaker of the National Assembly, Tanzania opened her address by shedding light on the pressing issues facing Tanzania, notably the challenges posed by floods, underscoring the urgent need for concerted action and implementation efforts. As the President of the IPU, she emphasizes the imperative of accelerating climate solutions in the face of the most timely and menacing global issue: global warming. She highlighted the alarming trend of escalating temperatures, emphasizing the existential threat it poses to human rights and global stability. She drew attention to the result of COP 28 in Dubai and the significant gap between current efforts and the targets outlined in the Paris Agreement, stressing the critical need for collective action to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. She emphasized the borderless nature of climate change and underscores the necessity of immediate action and robust implementation to safeguard the interests of future generations.



*H. E. DR. TULIA ACKSON
MP, TANZANIA*



SOUKEYNA KANE, WORLD BANK

Soukeyna Kane, Director of the Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group, World Bank, began by drawing attention to the disproportionate impact of climate change on certain countries, noting that some nations experience three times the usual effects, resulting in devastating consequences. She emphasized the urgent need for action against conflict and poverty, particularly in low-income countries which receive inadequate funding. Ms. Kane underscored the pivotal role of the International Development Association (IDA) in providing crucial financing for early crisis response, with 875 million dollars already allocated to countries to help mitigate shocks. She highlighted limited knowledge and coordination in public finance management systems as a

key challenge, while stressing the importance of addressing fragility and conflict through diagnostic improvements, exemplified by enhanced country development reports.

Ananthakrishnan Prasad, Advisor and Unit Chief, Climate Finance Policy Unit, Monetary and Capital Markets Department, IMF, addressed climate change as a macroeconomic challenge, highlighting its high intensity of national disasters and significant socioeconomic costs. He warned that no nations were exempt from its repercussions given its adverse effects on financial stability, including impacts on fiscal stability. Mr. Prasad emphasized the substantial financing required for climate mitigation, however, he observed that available financing from both public and private sources fell short of meeting the extensive requirements, necessitating risk-sharing mechanisms. He also stressed the importance of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, because prevailing business policies had led to an actual increase in emissions by 2030, demanding immediate action. He also highlighted the complementary role of IMF programs in addressing macroeconomic challenges and mobilizing financial resources efficiently.



ANANTHAKRISHNAN PRASAD, IMF



PETER SCHLOSSER, ASU

Peter Schlosser, Vice President and Vice Provost of Global Futures, Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory at Arizona State University, underscored the commencement of the Anthropocene era leading to unprecedented challenges. Using visuals, he identified energy consumption, predominantly derived from fossil fuels, as a principal contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming, highlighting the inadequate adoption of renewable energy sources as a mitigation strategy. He drew attention to concerning trends such as record-breaking temperatures and the intensification of extreme weather events, resulting in widespread societal upheaval. Emphasizing the urgency of recognizing and respecting planetary boundaries, he advocated for a transition towards sustainable practices to ensure a viable future for humanity and gave his insights to

countermeasures such as carbon collect and investments in new innovations.

Furthermore, he proposed enhanced collaboration between scientists and policymakers to leverage academic insights and evidence-based decision-making in addressing the pressing challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation.

Hon. Rosa Galvez, Senator, Canada, addressed the pressing need for solutions to climate change, noting the strong public support in Canada for climate action yet highlighting the inertia in the financial sector's investment habits towards renewable energy. She emphasized the concept of "double materiality," where the costs of infrastructure destruction and environmental damage remain unaccounted for, resulting in financial strain on insurance companies and pension plans. She stressed the urgency for further action, noting that despite 110 countries committing to net-zero emissions by 2050, more needs to be done. As a member of the Environment, Energy, and Natural Resource Committee, she provided insights into Canada's economic dependence on nature and the increasing



HON. ROSA GALVEZ, SENATOR,

frequency of climate-related events such as forest fires. She underscored the **CANADA** financial sector with climate goals, advocating for legal compliance with international agreements such as the UN Climate Convention and the Paris Agreement, as well as implementing carbon tax measures to accelerate progress.



*HON. MADJARA TIEGBANA
COULIBALY MP, CÔTE D'IVOIRE*

Hon. Madjara Tiegbana Coulibaly MP, Côte d'Ivoire, Board Member of the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank and IMF, emphasized the critical nexus between energy, cocoa production, and economic progress in Cote d'Ivoire, highlighting the need for regulatory and institutional reforms to effectively manage the impacts of climate change and foster resilience. She outlined the collaborative efforts between the government and the IMF to implement a program aimed at enhancing resilience, with approximately 1.3 billion dollars allocated to support adaptation, agriculture, transportation, and public fiscal management. She reiterated the country's commitment to the goals outlined in the Paris Agreement, emphasizing a holistic approach centered on socio-economic sustainability to improve living conditions and enhance resilience across all sectors. Reflecting on decades of international cooperation, including participation in the Kyoto Protocol, she reaffirmed Cote d'Ivoire's ongoing dedication to combating climate change.

Hon. Amira Saber MP, Egypt, shed light on the principles of the World Bank, warning that maintaining the current pace of action could exacerbate the situation. Reflecting on her attendance at last year's event, she expressed concern over the limited progress achieved and questioned how to translate actions into effective implementation, particularly in the context of COP 28. She underscored the importance of addressing the needs of fragile and conflict-affected states to ensure equity and social justice, noting that 43% of the world is facing the crisis of climate change, exacerbated by escalating conflicts globally. She highlighted the urgent need for technology transfer from developed to developing countries and advocated for debt swaps to alleviate the financial burdens of debt-ridden nations. She called for greater engagement of major financial institutions and highlighted initiatives like the McGill program as valuable tools to bridge the gap between academia and policymakers.



*HON. AMIRA SABER MP,
EGYPT*

15 April:

Enhancing Accountability and Governance for Better Development Results: The Role of Parliamentarians

Hon. Fadil Aliyoum MP, Cameroon and **moderator of the session**, extended a warm welcome to the participants and speakers and introduced the context and significance of this session, emphasizing the pivotal role of parliamentarians, the World Bank, IMF and local institutions in addressing pressing global challenges. He asserted that by reinforcing governance and accountability, we can create positive differences and come up with a new strategy to mitigate global risks.

H. E. Kandia Camara, Senator and Speaker of the Senate, Côte d'Ivoire, highlighted Cote d'Ivoire's decade-long socioeconomic challenges, noting a revitalization of governance since 2011 with a commitment to transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability. She outlined five pillars of governance: transparency, accountability, citizen involvement in decision-making, rule of law, and decentralization, with notable improvements reflected in Transparency International rankings. She emphasized the importance of citizen engagement and strengthened territorial governance to empower local communities. While acknowledging the ongoing journey towards good governance, she stressed the necessity of collaboration between government, civil society, and stakeholders for a more prosperous future. Ultimately, she expressed confidence in Cote d'Ivoire's ability to continue building upon its achievements for the collective well-being of its citizens.



*H. E. KANDIA CAMARA,
SENATOR, CÔTE D'IVOIRE*

Orsolya Szekely, Secretary, Accountability Mechanism, World Bank, underscored the importance of accountability at the World Bank, emphasizing its integral role in promoting environmental well-being and sustainable development. She highlighted the robust accountability mechanisms in place at the World Bank, which allow affected voices to be heard and ensure transparency and participation in project implementation. Ms. Szekely commended the powerful work of civil society in holding institutions accountable and stressed the positive impact of fostering an environment where individuals feel empowered to voice their concerns and needs. Recognizing the challenges posed by operating in complex environments, she encouraged discussions on how to further enhance contributions to accountability, particularly in conflict-affected regions like Ukraine and Kosovo, emphasizing the importance of resilience.



ORSOLYA SZEKELY, WORLD BANK



RHODA WEEKS-BROWN, IMF

Rhoda Weeks-Brown, General Counsel and Director, Legal Department, IMF, underscored the fundamental mission of the IMF, which revolves around fostering accountability and transparency, both crucial for sustainable economic growth. Considering the current economic landscape characterized by increasing divides and persistent high levels of debt, she emphasized the imperative of avoiding economic repercussions resulting from governance errors. She stressed that the enhancement of accountability mechanisms is pivotal for ensuring economic stability. She highlighted the significance of partnerships in addressing governance challenges, particularly in combatting corruption, which poses significant risks to macroeconomic stability and entails substantial economic costs. Drawing attention to successful initiatives in the Nordic-Baltic regions, she emphasized the importance of collaboration between the IMF and stakeholders in addressing governance issues through diagnostic

assessments and recommendations.

Nadishani Perera, Executive Director, Transparency International, Sri Lanka, conveyed a crucial message to parliamentarians centered around the concept of the Public Trust Doctrine, emphasizing that they are entrusted with the responsibility of using resources legitimately for the best interests of their countries and constituents. As custodians of public trust, parliamentarians are expected to prioritize the welfare of the people and act as their voice in governance. She highlighted the detrimental effects of corruption, citing a landmark judgment in Sri Lanka where former government officials were held accountable for an economic crisis caused by abuse of entrusted power. She urged parliamentarians to ensure transparency in campaign financing, asset declaration, and project implementation to maintain public trust. She emphasized that promoting and implementing reforms to address budgeting uncertainties and policy-making processes is crucial, particularly to empower the voiceless and protect democratic rights.



NADISHANI PERERA, TI



CORINA REBEGEA, NDI

Corina Rebegea, Advisor, Anti-Corruption, National Democratic Institute, highlighted the National Democratic Institute's approach to working with parliamentarians, emphasizing the importance of transparency and democratic governance in achieving sustainable development goals. She reiterated the institute's commitment to transparency, participation, and closing development gaps to ensure that basic needs are met and communities are resilient to crises like COVID-19, debt, and climate change. She emphasized the need for better policy-making and oversight mechanisms, particularly in light of the pandemic, urging a reassessment of government programs to ensure resources reach those in need and to address information asymmetry. She underscored the role of parliaments in ensuring accountability and recovery measures, highlighting collaborative efforts with political pillars to establish oversight committees and investigate fraud and corruption.

Hon. Jeta Statovci MP, Kosovo, articulated the legislative aim of fostering better development outcomes through robust governance practices, political stability, and adherence to the rule of law. Reflecting on Kosovo's democratic journey, she underscored efforts to ensure accountability within the executive office, resulting in commendable evaluations by organizations like Freedom House and Transparency International for high levels of democracy and transparency. She highlighted the tangible economic impacts of improved governance, citing notable increases in tax collection rates and the significant rise in women's representation within public enterprises, contributing to Kosovo's positive economic growth projections. She also emphasized ongoing endeavors to bolster institutional capacity through digital governance initiatives, with a focus on promoting transparency and accessibility of government data to the public. Despite recognizing the challenges inherent in such endeavors, She reiterated the importance of sustained commitment to reform efforts to ensure continued progress and prosperity for Kosovo.



HON. JETA STATOVCI MP, KOSOVO



*HON. IAROSLAV
ZHELEZNYAK MP,
UKRAINE*

Hon. Iaroslav Zheleznyak MP, Ukraine, provided insights into Ukraine's economic trajectory, illustrating the country's progress through visuals, notably showcasing the growth of GDP by 5.7% in 2023 following a significant drop in the previous year. Despite challenges such as inflation, Ukraine remains resilient, particularly in its prioritization of military spending amid ongoing conflict. He emphasized the need for substantial financial support, estimating Ukraine's requirement of \$37 billion USD in 2024 for various sectors including education and infrastructure. He outlined four avenues for acquiring these funds, including IMF programs, World Bank's Development Policy Loans, EU facilities, and Ukraine's own strategic plan, each accompanied by a set of conditions for implementation. He underscored the vital role of parliament in securing additional funds for the state budget, highlighting the importance of monitoring and controlling the execution of international financial support programs to ensure compliance with deadlines and conditions. He also emphasized the parliament's ability to initiate reforms, provide crucial information to international partners, and utilize investigative tools to uncover violations and address budgetary issues, citing successful case studies from Ukraine's legislative efforts in tax evasion closure and revenue recovery.

Championing Equality: Empowering MPs to Implement Effective Gender Strategies

Hon. Marlene M. Forte KC, MP, Jamaica, and **moderator of the session** welcomed participants and opened by highlighting World Bank data showing the significant progress countries make with increased female representation in government.



*H.E. BEATRIZ ARIGIMÓN, VICE-PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT OF THE
GENERALY ASSEMBLY, URUGUAY*

Her Excellency Beatriz Argimón, Vice-President, President of the General Assembly, and President of the Senate, Uruguay, delivered an introductory presentation. She stated that women's right and empowerment transcend political parties but are in fact, a human rights issue, and that we have to move forward with this idea as a premise. She emphasized the need for female legislators, but specifically ones who truly understand gender issues, and cited data that showed the outsized contributions to national GDP with gender equality. Poverty, she noted, disproportionately affects women across all continents and so she urged strategic international partnerships in passing laws

advancing women's economic empowerment and care policies. Uruguay, for its part, has women from across the political spectrum that come together in a committee by bi-parliamentary mandate. This committee has passed bills that gives power to who is in the room when giving birth, bills against domestic violence, and on sexual and reproductive rights.

Hana Brixi, Global Director for Gender, World Bank, demonstrated that achieving better gender equality accelerates economic development, reduces poverty, and deepens social cohesion, estimating that addressing gender barriers in employment practices could increase the average country's GDP per capita by 20%. She then introduced the World Bank's new gender strategy that includes three key objectives: 1) Ending gender-based violence, 2) Expanding economic opportunities, and 3) Engaging women as readers. Those three objectives would be tackled with three primary solutions: 1) Innovation: harnessing data that already exists to mobilize action, 2) Financing: helping governments manage their budgets, and 3) Action: working directly with people such as parliamentarians and local leaders who have an efficient platform for fast change.



HANA BRIXI, WBG



MONIQUE NEWIAK, IMF

Monique Newiak, Deputy Unit Chief, Inclusion and Gender Unit, Strategy, Policy, and Review Department, IMF, made clear that gender gaps exist in every country, negatively impact economies, and that gender is not a standalone issue but should be integrated into considerations of every issue. For example, how does tax reform affect men and women differently? She also showed that bringing down fertility rates and ending child marriage could hugely boost GDP in African countries, and that on the flip-side, countries with aging populations like Japan could benefit massively from bringing in more women to the labor force.

Norman Loayza, Director, Global Indicators Group, World Bank, began by asking parliamentarians if they were familiar with the report, "Women, Business, and the Law". Not many were. He encouraged parliamentarians to read it as it contains data spanning 15 years on the legal rights of women. He also noted that the 2024 report was unique because it expanded upon new indicators—women's safety, childcare—and looks at policies that help implicate laws that help women. With these new indicators, the report found that the gender rights gap should be thought of as much larger than previously recognized, women holding only 66% of men's legal rights globally. He then gave two examples of the work that the World Bank had done in Sierra Leone to help them identify gaps in their law and address their reform.



NORMAN LOAYZA, WB



AMANDA ELLIS, WRIGLEY GLOBAL FUTURES LAB

Amanda Ellis, Senior Director, ASU Wrigley Global Futures Lab, elaborated on the power of partnerships in gender equality. She brought attention to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliaments for the Planet Campaign. She encouraged conference participants to look up “SDG5 Parliamentarians”, which brings us to a site that provides education for parliamentarians on how to work on gender equality. The website contains short videos on themes of “Women and Climate”, “Laws”, “Leadership”, “Women, Peace, and Security” and “Violence against Women and Girls”. She agreed, it is absolutely critical to have a gender lens when approaching any issue, and particularly to have a gender lens when we are shaping our economic policy.

Hon. Esther del Brio, Senator, Spain, reaffirmed: any socio-economic issue can and should be approached from a female perspective. She noted that there is a massive lack of financial literacy among a large part of the global population—and particularly women. The concepts that we look at—such as inflation—many do not understand, and it is pivotal that we educate better. After all, she concluded, “if inflation kills the present, debt kills the future”.



HON. ESTHER DEL BRIO, SENATOR, SPAIN



HON. KAREN MELCHIOR MEP, DENMARK

Hon. Karen Melchior MEP, Denmark, described how despite 100 years of working towards gender equality, true equality has still not been achieved. She cited the current discussion around filling 3 out of 5 top EU leadership jobs with women facing an “uproar”, despite men holding the majority for decades. She then stressed the importance of establishing the Women Parliamentarian Council this year because of the quantity of work left to be done. For example, she criticized the lack of an EU-wide legal definition of rape based on consent after 5 years of attempts and argued that women cannot have true equality without reproductive rights like access to birth control and abortion.

Hon. Sahar Albazar MP, Egypt, reported on Egypt's journey towards gender equality. In recent years, she said, Egypt has passed 23 laws in favor of gender equality (such as prohibiting the disclosure of domestic violence identities and criminalizing bullying) and that other developing countries must follow its lead to make gender equality the norm, not the exception. At the end of the session, Hon. Albazar launched the Women Parliamentarian Council—the first parliamentary platform specifically for women since the establishment of the Parliamentary Network in 2000 and the World Bank and IMF in 1944. She hailed the achievement as a symbol of progress in the journey towards gender equality and empowerment and stated the aims of the initiative: to foster collaboration among women parliamentarians globally, empower each other and share knowledge.



HON. SAHAR ALBAZAR MP, EGYPT

Planting Seeds of Growth: Creating Green Jobs for Young People and the Planet

Opening session

Amira Saber MP, Egypt and Co-Presiding Officer of the Global Young MP Initiative, welcomed participants and acknowledged speakers. She opened the session by introducing the co-initiatives, with a particular focus on harnessing the best practices and enthusiasm of young MPs. She underscored the importance of addressing current employment structures and facilitating structural transformation, highlighting the role that young lawmakers can play in advocating for and implementing legislative actions to tackle pertinent issues.

Sven Clement MP, Luxembourg and Co-Presiding Officer of the Global Young MP Initiative, as the co-organizer of the Global Young MP Initiative, emphasized the significant demographic shift towards a younger population in many regions, highlighting the imperative for parliaments to consider and incorporate the voices of young people. He stressed the importance of electing and increasing the representation of younger individuals in parliament, advocating for a holistic approach to ensure their perspectives are effectively integrated into decision-making processes.

After the introduction of 2024-2025 Steering Committee Members from Hon. Saber and Hon. Clement, **Jamele Rigolini, Senior Advisor, Social Protection and Jobs, World Bank**, provided introductory remarks, drawing on his extensive experience in US politics to highlight the importance of addressing job creation, particularly in the context of green jobs for sustainability. He encouraged active participation from all attendees, opening the floor to every participant. After questions were raised, Mr. Rigolini addressed these concerns by discussing efforts to measure outcomes and engage with youth through initiatives like the global youth summit and dedicated projects for youth development.

Pathways to Boosting Green Jobs for Youth

Jeta Statovci MP, Kosovo and Steering Committee Member of the Global Young MP and moderator of the session opened the session by highlighting the importance of addressing current youth employment trends, opportunities, and innovations.

Jamele Rigolini, Senior Advisor, Social Protection and Jobs, World Bank, initiated the discussion on social protection at the World Bank by framing the question around the pressing issue of youth unemployment, which stands at 14%, with one out of five youths facing challenges in securing employment. He posed questions regarding the suitability of green jobs for young people and emphasized the importance of providing job opportunities. He highlighted the concept of green skills and underscored the significance of starting skill development from an early age. He emphasized the necessity of offering youths a good first job to provide them with essential experience and foundational skills, focusing on climate change adaptation and the importance of equipping workers with the necessary techniques and flexibility to navigate evolving environmental challenges.

Ronit Avni, Founder and CEO, Localized, discussed her organization's approach, which involves connecting university students with industry and employers to address the issue of talent retention. She highlighted the challenge of retaining talent, with 30% of top talent leaving countries, exacerbated by factors such as automation and the rapid pace of technological change. Despite challenges, she emphasized the importance of creating opportunities for early-stage talents and leveraging legislative measures to promote sustainability reporting and carbon accounting. Avni also discussed the potential for countries in the MENA region to emulate India's success in developing green jobs and emphasized the role of start-ups and educational initiatives in driving sustainability and talent development. She underscored the need for organizations to adapt to changing roles and incorporate sustainability into existing curricula and management practices.

Hon. Statovci outlined Kosovo's efforts to transition towards renewable energy sources despite being rich in lignite coal reserves. She highlighted initiatives such as agreements with the German government to implement solar power plants and solar district heating in the capital city, addressing both energy needs and environmental concerns. Additionally, she emphasized the importance of incorporating social aspects into energy projects, including gender empowerment measures such as scholarships for students interested in this field.

Hon. Sven Clement shared insights on the challenges faced by the Global South in transitioning to green economies, acknowledging their economic development history. He recounted collaborating with a German company to establish solar power plants in Africa, emphasizing the role of access to technology and modern amenities in encouraging people to remain in villages. Additionally, he proposed strategies such as subsidizing companies in Luxembourg to hire young people and providing financial support for training programs to address financial concerns. He also highlighted the importance of electrifying and decarbonizing mobility as part of the green job initiative.

In conclusion, the session witnessed a dynamic and engaging exchange of ideas among the participants, with numerous thought-provoking questions being raised. The discussion was vibrant and interactive, allowing all attendees to gain fresh insights and share valuable experiences and knowledge.

Health is Wealth—Parliamentarians as Key Players in Health Financing for Pandemic Preparedness

Dr. Ricardo Baptista Leite, President and Founder, UNITE, and moderator of the session, and the Rt. Hon. Liam Byrne, MP, welcomed participants and acknowledged speakers. In his opening remarks, Leite underscored the need to invest in restructuring overburdened health organizations like WHO and emphasized their benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, he made clear, because of a number of factors—most notably, the emergence of violent conflicts—health organizations that made their benefit known are now being forgotten and are at dire risk of not standing to the potential they should. The topic of the discussion, he explained, will be to make sure that we invest deeply in health organizations to make sure that we can prevent the next pandemic.

The Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown, Ambassador for Global Health Financing, WHO, began his remarks by advocating for the proposed WHO pandemic treaty. Everything we can do to push the treaty is of incredible help, he said, especially because disinformation among the press on the pandemic treaty has been so effective. We were ineffective and unprepared on the last pandemic and that resulted in us failing many of the poorest countries of the world on vaccination. The rich countries hoarded vaccines instead of sending them to poorer countries free of charge. To ensure fair distribution of resources to vulnerable countries, he argued that we must move away from ad-hoc donations. After all, only a small proportion of global health organization funding comes in advance. He concluded, that although it may not seem like it, global powers that appear to hate each other can come together to fix great issues, but only through great people.

In a video message for the meeting, **Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization,** delivered a video message highlighting the crucial importance of sustainable financing for global health security and pandemic preparedness. He urged support for the ongoing negotiations around the Pandemic Treaty and finished with an appeal for political leadership to prioritize health security through legislation, funding, and crucially, through community engagement—making constituents everywhere aware of health issues and the necessity of preventative funding.

Ignacio Ibarra, Regional Advisor for Health-Related Law, Pan-American Health Organization, discussed the extremely interconnected nature of the two great negotiations we are in the midst of: the new Pandemic Treaty and the International Health Regulations. These two should work together, he stated. He made participants aware particularly of article 44.2 of the International Health Regulations and article 22 of the new Pandemic Treaty as they relate to sustainable financing. He argued, we must not only discuss preventative healthcare but also health promotion—we must become healthier.

Nick Carroll, Technical Assistance Advisor, IMF, reported that the IMF thinks health spending is very important and that there is a range of pressure from older generations, particularly from middle-high income countries. The fact that this share of the population over 65 is set to rise from 25 to 30% by 2050 will put strains on pension resources and gives him hope that countries will turn to international health institutions. He described the three elements that he thought were necessary in every conversation about health funding. First, are there sufficient resources to provide health services? Second, are there ways to lift health funding in a way that doesn't crowd out other sectors such as education? And third, are there ways to improve the efficiency of pharmaceutical procurement?

Ellen Van de Poel, Senior Economist, World Bank, praised the current push in many countries towards the goal of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) but critiqued that often, these publicly funded health benefits are not comprehensive enough to ensure total accountability. She advocated for pooled, prepaid financing models—insurance schemes—rather than inefficient, impromptu payments when personal disaster strikes. However, she noted, insurance schemes require extremely high implementation capacity to work well. Indeed, in most countries, she said, a lot of health resources are being wasted. Not only are they doing the wrong things (using services with low cost-effectiveness), but they are also doing things in the wrong place (putting their provision of services at too high of a level) and spending badly (on things such as unnecessary medicines, tests and procedures). She concluded, because poor quality of care is now a bigger barrier to reducing mortality than insufficient access, our best bet is to invest more, and better, in *primary* care.