



THE PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK  
On The World Bank & International Monetary Fund



## 2025 Global Parliamentary Forum

**2025 Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG) and International Monetary Fund (IMF)**

[Link to Photos](#)

On April 21-22, 2025, the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & IMF (PN) jointly organized the Global Parliamentary Forum with the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). A forum for the Parliamentary Network's Global Young MP Initiative was then held on April 23. The event thus comprised sessions spanning three days, providing a platform for parliamentarians to engage with senior leadership from both institutions and discuss public policies aimed at achieving a more resilient and sustainable future. The event was held at the World Bank Headquarters and IFC Headquarters in Washington, D.C., with key sessions including discussions on fostering international economic stability, shaping AI governance, catalyzing private capital for growth and jobs, enabling entrepreneurship, and exploring the role of youth in tackling fragility, conflict, and violence. The highlight of the Forum was a townhall with WBG President Ajay Banga and IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva. Additional bilateral regional meetings were also held for parliamentarians to engage directly with World Bank and IMF staff on region-specific issues and priorities. The following pages are a summary of the forum's contents.



## DAY 1 of the Global Parliamentary Forum Opening Session: Discussion with MPs

(In this opening session, participating MPs had a chance to share their priorities with the leadership of the Parliamentary Network and to inform the action plan for the next year.)

**The Rt Hon. Liam Byrne MP, Chair of Business and Trade Committee, UK; Chair of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and IMF** moderated the opening session where parliamentarians shared their priorities with the leadership of the Parliamentary Network to inform the action plan for the next year.

Byrne opened by identifying what he terms "seven giants" confronting global development: poverty, hunger, disease, lost learning, conflict, debt, and climate change, with trade wars emerging as an "eighth ogre." He emphasized that the fight for jobs would be central to the work of both the World Bank and IMF, quoting Franklin Roosevelt's assertion that "jobs are the best social program ever invented." He noted that while "ambition is everywhere, talent is everywhere, opportunity is not," and outlined the agenda for the forum, which would address how parliamentarians can work with the Bank and Fund on critical programs, including AI, automation, private sector capital mobilization, and entrepreneurship.



During the open discussion, parliamentarians from various countries raised concerns about their specific national contexts and priorities. A representative from Côte d'Ivoire emphasized the disconnect between the World Bank, IMF, and parliamentarians, stating that MPs, who serve as the connection between these institutions and the people, are insufficiently informed. The delegate from Nigeria raised concerns about



industrial development, arguing for greater capacity to process raw materials domestically rather than having these resources extracted by other countries.

The representative from Ghana urged greater focus on social impact metrics, particularly how IMF and World Bank Group initiatives tangibly affect people's lives. Cameroon's delegate called for better information sharing and capacity building for parliamentarians by the World Bank. The parliamentarian from South



Sudan highlighted the urgent need for support for youth trapped in wartorn regions, noting that their constituency was currently under bombardment.

More broadly, several speakers addressed structural concerns. One parliamentarian questioned how reforms could be pushed without adequate support from the World Bank and IMF, citing insufficient accountability and transparency. The representative from the Democratic Republic of Congo detailed how the country's vast natural resources (74% of global cobalt and 11% of copper) had paradoxically become a source of danger rather than prosperity, with 62% of the Congolese population living below the poverty threshold. Lithuania's representative emphasized the destruction caused by the war in Ukraine and called for immediate World Bank action rather than delayed response, suggesting a parliamentary visit to Ukraine.

## Session 1: Discussion with World Bank Group and IMF Leadership Parliamentary Engagement and Spring Meetings Priorities of the WBG and IMF

**The Rt Hon. Liam Byrne MP** then engaged in discussions with leadership with several leadership officials from the World Bank and IMF.



**Julie Kozack, Director of Strategic Communications Department, IMF** described the current period as one of profound uncertainty for the global economy. She noted that while recent economic shifts had caused a "notable markdown" in growth forecasts, the IMF was not predicting a global recession. Kozack emphasized that trade policy uncertainty directly affects economic activity and investment decisions, adding that the world continues to face multiple shocks including pandemic aftereffects and ongoing conflicts. She stressed the importance of major

economies—the US, China, and EU—resolving their domestic economic issues as a foundation for broader global stability.

**James Heimbach, Vice-President, External Corporate Relations, WB** highlighted the critical challenge of job creation, noting that while 1.2 billion young people in emerging countries will come of age in the next decade, current projections anticipate only 420 million jobs being created. While acknowledging that "predictions are not destiny," he characterized this gap as deeply concerning. Heimbach outlined how the International Development Association (IDA) was working to address these challenges and emphasized the World Bank's focus on creating conditions for private sector development and job creation.



Regarding future parliamentary partnerships, Heimbach explained that the World Bank had restructured its external affairs unit and was examining ways to enhance parliamentary engagement, including building stronger chapters in new countries. Drawing on his background with the US Congress, he expressed commitment to improving these relationships. Kozack further elaborated on the economic outlook, describing it as "relatively mediocre" over the medium term, with high debt levels largely resulting from recent global shocks. She emphasized the unique value that parliamentarians bring to these discussions, noting that they often provide perspectives different from those of executive governments, particularly in countries with IMF lending programs. Heimbach concluded by underscoring the invaluable nature of parliamentarians' input, from local issues to global concerns, emphasizing that hearing about their specific priorities provides essential context for the World Bank's work.



## Townhall with the WBG President and IMF Managing Director

The Rt Hon. Liam Byrne MP moderated.

**Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, IMF**, thanked the audience for their presence in a time of growing global uncertainty. She recalled the IMF's current position: despite high uncertainty and a series of economic shocks, the Fund does not expect a global recession at this stage. She highlighted three key priorities for countries: implementing sound policies, advancing necessary reforms, and strengthening international cooperation. She said that these actions are essential to correct imbalances, boost economic performance, and support growth and job creation, adding that they also offer a practical way to reduce tensions through constructive collaboration. She concluded by emphasizing that strong and resilient economies are better prepared to manage times of crisis.



**Ajay Banga, President, WBG**, expressed gratitude to the audience and emphasized the critical importance of job creation in development. He highlighted that while 1.2 billion young people in emerging economies will reach working age over the next decade, only about 420 million jobs are expected to be generated, leaving a significant employment gap. To address this challenge, Banga called for targeted reforms, investment that would enable public infrastructures, and the establishment of regulations conducive to private investment. He stressed the necessity of measuring the outcomes of reforms through a shared framework to ensure accountability and effectiveness. Recognizing that 80% of jobs are created by the



private sector, he underscored the importance of public-private collaboration to drive growth and expand opportunities.

Ms. Georgieva highlighted the importance of addressing trade imbalances with nuance. She noted that such imbalances are not inherently harmful and must be viewed through a broader lens, that includes services for instance. She warned that tariffs tend to raise prices, lower consumption, and reduce investment, with an immediate drag on growth. In today's uncertain global environment, where growth is projected at just 3% - well below the historical average - she called for coordinated efforts to open up new drivers of growth and reinforce economic resilience.



Mr. Banga emphasized the critical role of private capital in addressing development challenges in emerging economies. He highlighted the launch of the *Private Sector Investment Lab* in 2023 - a collaborative initiative with the IFC and global private sector leaders - to identify and overcome barriers to private investment in developing countries. Banga underscored the importance of sectors such as infrastructure, agriculture, healthcare, and manufacturing in driving job creation and economic growth. To support this agenda, the World Bank Group is streamlining its guarantee instruments, with the goal of tripling

annual guarantee issuances to \$20 billion by 2030. This reform seeks to offer more accessible and effective risk mitigation tools to unlock greater private sector participation in development. The Rt Hon. Liam Byrne emphasized that multilateral institutions are even more important in periods of uncertainty and conflicts and opened the Q&A session.

During the audience discussion, several participants raised questions about how the World Bank and IMF can make sure multilateral decisions are fair and transparent. Concerns were also voiced about global imbalances and the growing number of bilateral agreements. Despite these shifts, many agreed that international cooperation is still vital in today's interconnected world. Kristalina Georgieva spoke about the importance of staying responsible with fiscal and monetary policy. Ajay



Banga added that engaging with parliamentarians, both globally and locally, is a good way to build trust and make sure reforms are rooted in real-world needs.



## Session 2: Fireside Chats: Fostering International Economic Stability

(The prompt for the session was as follows: In an era of sluggish global growth, high national debt, and pervasive uncertainties, the principles of Bretton Woods and strong multilateralism are more crucial than ever. Parliamentarians play a vital role in upholding these principles, fostering international economic partnerships, stability, and growth. Their decisions on national and sub-national economic legislation, budgets, and reforms directly shape the effectiveness of governments, WBG and IMF policies, lending, and capacity-building advice. This session will explore how parliamentarians, in collaboration with the WBG, the IMF, and other development partners, can reinforce multilateral approaches to promote long-term global economic resilience, stability, sustainable growth and job creation.)

- **World Bank Session**

**Axel van Trotsenburg, Senior Managing Director, WBG** began by addressing concerns about global development, emphasizing the importance of maintaining both physical and mental health while confronting significant challenges. He identified three critical areas requiring international cooperation: peace, climate change, and pandemics. He noted that awareness and willingness to act collectively are increasingly being questioned, and highlighted the essential role parliamentarians play in keeping these collaborative ideals alive.



Van Trotsenburg discussed the World Bank's enhanced capabilities, particularly noting the successful replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA). While acknowledging that even greater resources could have been secured, he characterized the amount raised as substantial. He emphasized that approximately 60% of total contributions come from G7 countries, with the United States currently reviewing its \$4 billion pledge. He stressed the importance of continued cooperation as packages approved by the board of governors will require parliamentary approval.

Looking forward, he predicted extensive discussions about the effectiveness of multilateral funds, noting pressures to demonstrate concrete results. Despite progress in reducing extreme poverty from 60% globally sixty years ago to around 8% today, he emphasized that significant work remains, particularly in Africa where the World Bank has doubled its support to conflict-affected countries over the past five to six years. He noted that while many institutions have reduced their engagement with Africa, the World Bank has maintained its commitment, with 70% of IDA funding directed to the continent.

During the discussion, parliamentarians raised concerns about debt distress in African countries, the potential for funding Ukraine through confiscated Russian assets, and the challenge of inadequate data across Africa. Van Trotsenburg emphasized the need for greater transparency in debt reporting, noting that while the World Bank publishes all its loans online, other creditors do not follow this practice. He clarified the World Bank's role as a development institution rather than a commercial bank, focusing on education, infrastructure, and health rather than profit maximization.



- **International Monetary Fund Session**

**Rex Atish Ghosh, IMF Historian, Strategy, Review and Policy Department, IMF** provided historical context for the IMF's founding, noting that the 80th anniversary of the Bretton Woods conference last year marked a triumph of multilateralism that arose from complex beginnings. He explained how the British Empire's preferential trade arrangements had prompted the United States to pursue an agreement aimed at reducing trade discrimination and minimizing tariffs. Quoting US Treasury Secretary Morgenthau, he emphasized the realization that "the only way to protect our national interests is through international cooperation."



Ghosh outlined the IMF's three fundamental functions: surveillance (conducting economic health checks and examining spillover effects between nations), lending, and debt analysis. He traced the evolution of the IMF's focus, which shifted from Europe in the post-WWII era to addressing oil crises in the 1970s, debt crises in the 1980s, emerging market challenges in the 1990s, the financial crash in the 2000s, and the pandemic in the 2020s. Drawing lessons from the IMF's history, Ghosh emphasized the need to build financial buffers in an increasingly shock-prone world and to consider medium-term debt

consolidation. He demystified the IMF's financing structure, describing it as essentially a credit union between member nations, where creditor positions earn interest and borrowers pay approximately 0.5% annual interest.

During the Q&A session, participants raised questions about addressing debt imbalances without resorting to trade wars, skepticism toward IMF policies, the Fund's ability to predict economic shocks, and strategies for mitigating the potential impact of US-China trade tensions. Ghosh explained that while the IMF was created partly to manage debt balancing, imbalances can become dangerously large, as witnessed in the lead-up to the 2008 financial crisis. He acknowledged that countries might have valid reasons to protect specific sectors, particularly for national security, but emphasized that IMF policy advice generally focuses on fundamental solutions like increasing public savings and reducing fiscal deficits.



Ghosh defended the transparency of IMF lending, noting that funds support government budgets rather than specific projects, and that letters of intention are always published. Addressing the Fund's failure to predict the global financial crisis, he explained that the complex interplay between the US subprime



mortgage market and broader financial systems was difficult to foresee. On technological disruption of employment, he noted that while economists often recommend retraining workers, more realistic solutions are needed, particularly to prevent young people from entering declining industries.

### Session 3: Shaping the Future of AI Governance

(The prompt for the session was as follows: Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents a transformative opportunity to revolutionize industries, boost productivity, drive economic growth, and create jobs. However, its rapid advancement also poses a significant risk: exacerbating existing economic inequalities, both within and between nations. While advanced economies may gain substantial advantages, emerging markets and developing economies risk being left behind due to AI infrastructure and skills gaps. Beyond inequality, AI raises critical ethical, accountability, and transparency concerns. Effective AI governance demands a collaborative approach, involving governments, the private sector, international organizations, financial institutions, lawmakers and civil society. This session will explore perspectives from parliamentarians, the WBG, and the IMF on harnessing AI's potential and shaping its future. The session will discuss strategies to maximize AI's benefits while minimizing its risks, ensuring equitable distribution and establishing robust governance frameworks that prioritize safety, fairness, and ethics.)

**Hon. Sven Clement MP, Luxembourg, and Board Member, the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & IMF moderated.**

**Christine Qiang, Global Director of Digital Core, Digital Transformation, WB** emphasized that artificial intelligence (AI) should not be a luxury reserved for developed countries. She highlighted its transformative potential in key areas such as health, education, and social protection, while warning that poorly governed AI could deepen existing inequalities. Low-income countries currently host only about 1% of global data centers, underscoring the structural gap that risks excluding them from the digital economy. She stressed the urgent need to invest in infrastructure - particularly electricity and connectivity - and to support countries in designing AI governance frameworks that are adaptive, forward-looking, and tailored to real-world challenges.



**Giovanni Melina, Deputy Division Chief (Macroeconomics), Research Department, IMF** presented findings from the study “The Global Impact of AI: Mind the Gap.” He identified three key drivers of divergence: the exposure of sectors to AI, countries’ digital preparedness, and access to AI technologies. The study estimates that AI could boost global GDP by approximately 0.5% per year between 2025 and 2030, though these gains are expected to be unevenly distributed, with advanced economies benefiting more than low-income countries. Melina warned that without targeted policies to improve exposure, preparedness, and access, these disparities could widen further.



**Hon. Sabrina Carlota Ajmechet MP, Argentina** addressed the question of how to legislate and prepare for the future of AI and its societal impact. She noted the lack of consensus in Argentina on how to regulate AI, explaining that while some businesses fear that strict regulation could limit job creation, others are concerned about the risks of unregulated AI. Using her country as an example, she emphasized the importance of ensuring that AI serves the broader public good, and highlighted the need for countries to actively define their positions on AI governance.



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**Hon. Cynthia Lopez Castro, Senator, Mexico** shared her country's experience, where a dedicated commission is working on legislation to regulate AI, with a particular focus on addressing digital violence against women, exemplified by the "Ley Olimpia." Through this example, she illustrated how AI can complicate the way information is understood,

reinforcing the importance of establishing clear regulatory frameworks.

Discussant **Hon. Kevin Vuong MP, Canada** emphasized the need to protect vulnerable groups from potentially manipulative uses of AI, stressing the importance of an ethical and inclusive transition. He highlighted AI's dual potential as a tool for social engineering, noting that while some applications can be positive, others pose significant risks. He argued that it is the responsibility of governments to ensure that societies navigate this transition in the right way.

During the Q&A session, several parliamentarians called for stronger support from the World Bank and IMF to help developing countries design regulatory frameworks and model policies for AI. They emphasized the need for a fair and inclusive global AI governance system that respects fundamental freedoms and accounts for different stages of development. The discussion also highlighted the importance of building national capacity to ensure no country is left behind in the digital transition.





## IMF Meeting with Parliamentarians from Middle East, North Africa & Central Asia

**Jihad Azour, Director of Middle East, North Africa & Central Asia Department, IMF** presented an overview of the region's economic situation, which is heavily shaped by geopolitical uncertainty, financial market volatility, and diverse national contexts. He explained that these uncertainties affect countries in different ways: some, like Sudan and Yemen, are directly impacted by ongoing conflicts, while others, such as Syria and Lebanon, remain structurally fragile. Neighboring countries like Jordan and Egypt face indirect effects, particularly on trade, monetary stability, and investment attractiveness.

Azour emphasized the need to act on both short- and long-term priorities. While many countries are still battling inflation, he stressed the importance of strengthening regional cooperation, particularly through improved economic connectivity, to build resilience. He also highlighted the urgency of structural reforms to boost labor and capital productivity, which is essential for job creation - especially for young people. Since 2020, the IMF has provided over \$40 billion in financing and technical assistance to the region, underscoring its role as a key partner for recovery and stability.

During the discussion, parliamentarians raised questions about the flexibility of IMF programs, the adjustment of policies in response to inflation, and the Fund's support in managing external shocks. Several also expressed a desire for deeper engagement with the IMF to better align reforms with local realities. In response, Azour reiterated that the IMF does not promote a one-size-fits-all model, but rather offers guiding principles tailored to each country's context. He emphasized that reforms must align with national political priorities and that creating a favorable environment for private investment is critical. He concluded by affirming that economic growth must lead to job creation, as stability depends on inclusion.

## DAY 2 of the Global Parliamentary Forum

### Session 4: Catalyzing Private Capital for Growth and Jobs

(The prompt for the session was as follows: To unlock the transformative power of private capital for economic growth and job creation, targeted regulatory reforms, alongside financial and other sectoral adjustments, are essential. This session explores how these reforms, leveraging indicators, data, AI, and other emerging market based technologies, can catalyze this process. Parliamentarians and governments, as policy architects, must prioritize an enabling investment climate by crafting legislation that reduces red tape, ensures regulatory clarity, streamlines bureaucratic processes, and establishes predictable fiscal policies. The WBG and IMF can then provide support that fosters macroeconomic stability, including offering financial, policy, and technical expertise, to mitigate investment risks. This session will delve into the practical steps these actors can take together: identifying key reform areas within the regulatory landscape and other sectors, designing effective implementation strategies, and fostering an environment that attracts private investment, especially in emerging and low-income developing economies, ultimately leading to sustainable and inclusive growth and boosting productivity. Parliamentarians will discuss key reform areas and implementation strategies with WBG and IMF staff.)

**Hon. Neila Tazi, Senator, Morocco; Board Member of the Parliamentary Network** moderated.

**Norman Loayza, Director, Global Indicators Group, WBG** presented key findings from the *Business Ready* report, which highlights the widening gap between investment needs and the





actual quality of business environments. He emphasized that countries do not need to be wealthy to create a climate conducive to private sector growth, citing Rwanda and Georgia as successful examples. He pointed to three critical levers: a clear regulatory framework, efficient public services, and smooth operational governance.



**Ranjit Singh, Assistant Director, Monetary & Capital Markets Department, IMF** highlighted the growing risks linked to the increasing interconnectedness of financial markets, the rise of pension funds, and the growing complexity of digital financial tools. He stressed the importance of closing data gaps, harmonizing regulations, and strengthening national financial stability frameworks. He also called for greater transparency to build investor confidence.

**Hon. Giulio Centemero MP, Italy; President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean**

stressed the importance of financial literacy as a key tool for mobilizing domestic savings, particularly in the Mediterranean region where SMEs often struggle to access bank credit. He also underlined the public sector's role in de-risking investments to channel capital toward productive sectors. He called for concrete actions, such as developing local investment funds and modernizing financial intermediation.

**Discussant Hon. Tony Loffreda, Senator, Canada** expanded on Canada's strategy to attract private capital by ensuring macroeconomic stability, credible institutions, and clear regulations. He emphasized the role of the Business Development Bank in de-risking investments and supporting SMEs, infrastructure, and digital transformation. Private capital, he noted, must deliver not just profit but decent jobs and inclusive growth, guided by confidence and strong partnerships with institutions like the IMF and World Bank.



During the discussion, parliamentarians raised the specific challenges African countries face in attracting private capital. Questions focused on how to transition from informal to formal economies, the need to develop deeper financial markets, and strategies to enhance economic stability. Speakers emphasized that beyond sound finances, trust, predictability, and transparency are key to attracting sustainable investment.

## Session 5: Enabling Entrepreneurship

(The prompt for the session was as follows: Attracting private capital for sustainable growth, job creation, and fostering entrepreneurship demands targeted reforms. Parliamentarians and governments are central to shaping the legislative and regulatory landscape to build investor confidence and support a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem. This includes streamlining bureaucratic processes, enacting clear and supportive legislation that empowers entrepreneurs and workers, ensuring transparent governance, and creating predictable fiscal frameworks. The WBG and IMF play a vital supporting role, providing technical assistance and financial stability, crucial for de-risking investments, particularly in emerging markets where entrepreneurial activity can be a significant driver of growth. This session will explore how these key players can collaborate to



implement specific reforms—from strengthening contract enforcement and modernizing financial regulations to promoting access to finance for startups—that unlock private capital, drive inclusive growth, build resilient economies, and cultivate a thriving entrepreneurial environment.)



**Dr. Ricardo B. Leite, President and Founder, UNITE** moderated the session, opening with an observation about the parallels between parliamentarians and entrepreneurs: both depend on performance for continued employment. He emphasized the need to accelerate entrepreneurship through facilitating access to funding, providing tax incentives for innovation, and rethinking traditional education models to foster critical, adaptive thinking and lifelong learning from an early age.

**Nathalie Kouassi Akon, Director, CGEDR, IFC** focused on women entrepreneurs, arguing that unlocking their full potential is crucial for emerging markets. She used the analogy that "leaving women out of the economy is like choosing to fly a plane with just one engine when you have two," and noted that fully integrating women entrepreneurs could improve world GDP by one-third. She highlighted that 96 out of 190 economies still permit discrimination against women in markets, particularly regarding access to credit.

Akon outlined key targets, including enabling 330 million women to access broadband internet to increase visibility and connectivity, and incorporating 250 million women into social protection programs, especially those who are most vulnerable. She described how the CGEDR works with financial institutions to ensure program inclusivity and with manufacturing and industrial sectors to foster youth employment and female leadership, emphasizing that a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem requires representation across all enterprise types.



**Athene Laws, Economist (Macroeconomics), Regional Studies-Research Division, Africa Department, IMF** presented on "Jobs and Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa," highlighting the unprecedented number of shocks affecting the global economy and rising political uncertainty. She categorized employment in the region into three tiers: formal jobs (19%, offering good pay and benefits), upper-tier informal jobs (13%), and lower-tier informal jobs (68%, characterized by poor pay and high risk, with two-thirds held by young women). Laws emphasized the need to formalize employment and address constraints on firm growth, noting that while firm creation rates are high in the region, many businesses remain one-person operations in the informal sector. She cited

the need to formalize employment and address constraints on firm growth, noting that while firm creation rates are high in the region, many businesses remain one-person operations in the informal sector. She cited



Angola as a hopeful example, where one-third of formal sector firms began as unregistered enterprises. For structural transformation, she recommended prioritizing cost-effective measures that benefit multiple markets and increasing market competition, while avoiding expensive sector-specific interventions.

**Hon. Salim Merah MP, Algeria** emphasized the importance of establishing smart partnerships to transform initiatives into more effective projects benefiting people globally. He described Algeria's experience with laws supporting self-contractors and entrepreneurs, as well as measures to attract foreign investment and establish business incubators. Merah stressed the impossibility of achieving development through imported theories, arguing that solutions must emerge from within countries to reflect their specific needs. He highlighted Algeria's focus on its young labor force, which represents 70% of the population, and the country's \$1 billion investment in the technology sector, including partnerships between universities, startups, and the diaspora to drive innovation aligned with market needs.

**Hon. Anneli Akkermann MP, Estonia** shared Estonia's experience with digital transformation, noting that every Estonian has a digital identity and that bureaucracy is almost entirely paperless, allowing businesses to be established quickly and efficiently. She explained that Estonia's tax revenue is comparable to other EU countries despite having a much simpler system, but acknowledged economic challenges caused by a neighboring state that "makes deals and breaks deals," creating uncertainty.



During the discussion, participants explored strategies for mobilizing private capital to address emerging financing gaps amid declining development aid. Akon emphasized the need for flexible capital, especially for startups, while Laws discussed pathways to formalization through productivity improvements, including low-cost transport, secure property rights, and rural infrastructure such as irrigation and electricity. Akon highlighted capacity building as a critical need for entrepreneurs, including efforts to address gender bias among investors and improve support for women and people with disabilities.

This session brought the 2025 Global Parliamentary Forum to a close.

## DAY 3: Young MP Initiative

### Opening Remarks: The Importance of Young MPs in global development

**Amira Saber MP, Egypt and Co-Presiding Officer of the Global Young MP Initiative** opened the session by welcoming participants and underlining the importance of youth leadership in shaping inclusive and forward-looking development policies. She encouraged young parliamentarians to actively engage in global policy debates and use their platforms to push for concrete solutions to pressing challenges such as unemployment, inequality, and climate resilience.



**Sven Clement MP, Luxembourg and Co-Presiding Officer of the Global Young MP Initiative** also highlighted the unique role young MPs can play in bridging generational gaps and bringing innovation to policy making. He emphasized that youth representation is essential not only in national parliaments but also in international development conversations, where decisions made today will shape the world future generations inherit.



**Sibeso Sefulo MP, Zambia and Steering Committee Member of the Global Young MP Initiative** moderated.

**James Heimbach, Vice-President of External and Corporate Relations, WB** emphasized that supporting young parliamentarians is a key priority for the institution, particularly in the context of long-term development. He began by reminding a critical challenge: over 1.2 billion young people in emerging economies are expected to reach working age in the next decade, while only around 420 million jobs are projected to be created, leaving a major employment gap.



Heimbach underlined that creating opportunities for youth is central to preventing forced migration, social unrest, and long-term exclusion. He stressed that jobs cannot simply be imported or outsourced; they must be created locally through sustained investment in sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and sustainable tourism, areas where youth can play a transformative role.

He outlined three pillars essential to enabling job creation and economic inclusion: first, the availability of basic infrastructure such as roads, energy, and digital connectivity; second, a sound and predictable regulatory environment that reduces administrative barriers and inspires investor confidence; and third, the activation of a strong and inclusive private sector.

Heimbach called on young MPs to champion reforms that enable entrepreneurship, unlock private capital, and ensure access to quality education and vocational training. He encouraged them to use their platforms to promote youth engagement in public policy, and to work closely with local communities to align national development goals with the needs and aspirations of younger generations. He concluded by stating that the creativity, energy, and political will of young leaders will be decisive in delivering inclusive growth and building resilience for future generations.



## Discussion: Delivering Results for Future Generations

**Ravindra Airlangga MP, Indonesia and Steering Committee Member of the Global Young MP Initiative** moderated.

**Elena Ianchovichina, Lead Economist, Jobs and Growth, WB** opened the session by reminding participants that youth represent the future of our societies, but also one of the groups most vulnerable to the weaknesses of labor markets, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. She emphasized that young people, especially young women, face greater barriers to employment, often due to limited experience, poor digital connectivity, or lack of access to capital. To avoid creating a lost generation, she called for more effective investments that deliver both economic and social returns. She outlined several priority sectors for the coming years, including agribusiness, healthcare, sustainable tourism, manufacturing, and infrastructure. These areas, that are regularly identified by the World Bank as key engines of job creation, must be supported by coherent policies and better-targeted financing.

**Christabel Dadzie, Senior Social Protection Specialist, WB** then presented the World Bank's efforts to strengthen social safety nets in low- and middle-income countries, where nearly two billion people remain inadequately covered. She highlighted the Bank's ambitious goal to reach an additional 500 million people through integrated social protection programs. Using Ethiopia as an example, she described the approach of the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), which combines cash transfers, shock response, human capital development, and systems strengthening. She also stressed the importance of women's inclusion in public works programs and in decision-making processes. Dadzie reminded participants that well-designed social protection is not only about reducing poverty but it also supports access to employment and productivity across the life cycle.



**During the discussion**, several questions were raised about how to scale up these programs, ensure long-term financing, and align them with education and digital transition policies. Access to higher education, especially through long-term loan schemes, was also highlighted as a key priority.



## Breaking the Cycle: The Tole of Youth in Tackling Fragility, Conflict and Violence

**Kofi Arko Nokoe MP, Ghana and Steering Committee Member of the Global Young MP Initiative** moderated the session, opening with the observation that while youth are powerful actors in resolving conflict, the question remains whether sufficient space is being created for them to lead. He asked the panelists to outline strategies for addressing conflict, violence, and fragility.



**Shubham Chaudhuri, Director of the Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group, WB** drew on his extensive experience in Afghanistan and Nigeria to highlight how violence and fragility affect young people. He clarified the World Bank's role in supporting governments to eliminate poverty, emphasizing that unlike many international partners, the Bank does not directly implement programs but rather helps finance government initiatives. He noted that the Bank's influence comes through persuasion rather than coercion, requiring understanding from parliamentarians and the development of critical consensus within countries.

Chaudhuri identified conflict and violence as primary risks to development, stating that without stability or security, progress becomes impossible. He highlighted that hundreds of millions of people in extreme poverty live in conflict-affected countries, warning that in ten years, the number of extremely poor people globally could increase rather than decrease. He outlined three essential requirements: peace, security (which he equated with jobs), and justice (defined broadly as equitable access to basic services). He emphasized that many conflicts arise from perceptions of unfairness, citing Nigeria as an example where 3 million young people reach working age annually, but only about 400,000 good jobs are created each year, leaving a gap of 2.6 million people.



**Steven Hill, Executive Secretary, International Institute for Justice and Rule of Law** described his organization's 10-year history of training criminal justice practitioners on issues related to national security and violence. He stressed the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict, particularly systematic feelings of injustice, and outlined lessons learned from parliamentary initiatives on justice. Hill emphasized parliamentarians' crucial role in ensuring accountability, referenced the Brussels Declaration on accountability mechanisms, and criticized siloed approaches that undermine justice initiatives. He advocated for practical tools over theoretical frameworks, sharing an example of a young prosecutor who successfully addressed gender-based violence linked to terrorism.



**Xavier Devictor, Director, World Development Report** reminded participants that the World Bank is owned by their countries rather than being simply a Washington D.C. organization. He emphasized the importance of new technologies and highlighted the demographic reality that the working-age population (15-45) of the future is already born and comes predominantly from Africa, creating urgent development challenges. He also addressed the World Bank's engagement with refugee-hosting countries, emphasizing the need to minimize negative impacts through consultation.



During the discussion, a representative from Kenya highlighted the enormous trust deficit between citizens and government in their country, noting that citizens had even attempted to attack parliamentarians. The representative described how promises of employment following education had gone unfulfilled, leaving educated youth unemployed and angry. In response, Chaudhuri emphasized that sustainable job creation depends more on creating enabling regulatory environments than on direct procurement by international institutions. Hill acknowledged that rebuilding trust requires addressing underlying trauma, noting that mistrust often stems from perceptions that institutions are causing harm rather than providing solutions. Both speakers emphasized the importance of recognizing young people as leaders of both the present and future, not just as beneficiaries of programs.

This session brought the 2025 Young MP Initiative to a close.

For more photos from the event visit: <https://www.flickr.com/people/132645016@N07/>