

**Speech of the Speaker National Assembly
at the
Certificate Award Ceremony
to the
Young Parliamentary Associates (YPA)
on conclusion of YPA Training Programme**

Mr. Pierre Mayaudon,

Chargé d' Affaires of the European Union Delegation to Pakistan!

Honourable Parliamentarians!

Members of the IP3 Team!

Excellencies, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

and the first batch of the Young Parliamentary Associates!

It is my pleasure to join you all at the Certificate Award Ceremony of the Young Parliamentary Associates. I would like to begin by congratulating the Young Parliamentary Associates for successfully completing their training. You all deserve praise for making it through a rigorous selection process and an intensive training programme held at PIPS.

The Parliament of Pakistan is one of the cornerstones of democracy, and as Associates you will be working in one of the most prestigious institutions of the country. Your role, as Young Parliamentary Associates, is not insignificant. Your contributions are important for the strengthening of democracy, and the quality of your services and commitment to the Parliament will bear a reflection in the working of this prime institution. Therefore, you must always keep this in mind, and not take your role lightly.

As you know, Pakistan has most recently witnessed a momentous occasion – the peaceful transfer of power from one civilian government to another. This is indeed an event that should make us all proud. But more than that, this historic event marks the zeal, desire and commitment of our people to the democratic process in Pakistan.

The huge voter turnout on 11th May has amply demonstrated the people's combined will. Now it's upon the elected representatives to protect and preserve democracy, and for this, we have to create an enabling environment by ensuring vibrant Parliamentary institutions. And in this course, we look forward to your meaningful contributions.

This is a great opportunity for you to serve your country. This is an aspect that should always be at the forefront of your mind. As the Custodian of the House, I welcome you to your exciting assignment and hope during this course, you will prove yourselves to be honest; will work with utmost integrity; ensure punctuality and will do your duty with devotion to democracy. Always

remember what our great Quaid-e-Azam advised the nation. On 14th February 1948, while addressing officials in Sibi, Baluchistan, the Quaid said and I quote:

“I can assure you there is nothing greater than your conscience and when you appear before God, you can say that you performed your duty with the highest sense of integrity, honesty and with loyalty and faithfulness.”

Dear friends! I understand that most of you will be assigned to work with the committees of the National Assembly and the Senate. And you would know by now that Committees form the backbone of the Parliamentary system because an effective committee system ensures that the Parliament is functioning properly. No wonder, these are termed as the “engines of the Parliament” and popularly described as the “ears and eyes of the House”.

Your assistance to the committees will contribute significantly in providing Members the background support for reviewing legislation, overseeing the work of the Executive and above all deliberating on the problems and challenges our country confronts today.

Ladies and Gentlemen! As we all mark the beginning of another phase of parliamentary strengthening, I would like to appreciate the efforts of the European Union funded project ‘Improving Parliamentary Performance in Pakistan’ (IP3) in supporting the initiative. The YPA programme is a fine example of donor support for Pakistan’s democratic institutions and a reflection of our joint belief, purpose and commitment to strengthening Parliamentary democracy.

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen! I once again congratulate the Young Parliamentary Associates and welcome them to a wonderful experience of working with the Parliament. I wish you the best in your future endeavors.

THANK YOU. Pakistan Zindabaad