



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Speech by Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

The United Nations Summit on Biodiversity

Virtual presentation, 30 September 2020

Mr. President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I'd like to thank the President of the UN General Assembly for the invitation to participate in this Biodiversity Summit. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the global organization of national parliaments. 179 countries are members of the IPU.

It is up to parliaments to protect the planet. Not only from the human perspective but also in all its biodiversity. Yet we are seeing pollution, climate change, changes in land use, overexploitation of natural resources, excessive contamination of rivers, soils and seas.

All this is undermining the biodiversity of our planet.

Today's COVID-19 pandemic is a major wake-up call. A few months ago, we were celebrating clear blue skies, fish in Venice's canals, and wildlife in urban parks. This pandemic should also be a call, as the UN has said, to build back better. To build back in an inclusive and sustainable way.

For legislators, and especially for the IPU, biodiversity conservation is a priority. We've been working on it since 2004. At our 111th Assembly we unanimously adopted a resolution undertaking to preserve, defend and work for biodiversity.

But international resolutions should translate into national and local solutions and agreements. That's why law-making, budget allocation and oversight must be a priority. They must translate into realities and solutions.

Tackling poverty is a must, so that, for instance, people never need to chop down trees. So is protecting endangered species. And alternative farming methods. We need to enact clear laws, which governments can comply with. And, of course, do the budget work that makes it possible to find alternatives and solutions in policymaking.

We are the generation that can make a difference. We can be the generation that saves the planet. Or we can be the generation that ends up destroying it. We can be the generation that decides to halt climate change. Or the generation that turns away.

At the IPU we've chosen to be the generation of change. We will continue working to save biodiversity.

Thank you.