



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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## IPU Address

**Hon. Ms Paddy Torsney  
Permanent Observer to the  
United Nations**

**Nelson Mandela Peace Summit  
United Nations  
New York, 2 October 2018**

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

*‘If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy.  
Then he becomes your partner.’*

This memorable quote from Nelson Mandela is a clear example of his wisdom and illustrates the value of his legacy.

We are all different. Each of us has a particular point of view and concrete proposals to address the challenges our world is facing today.

But staying entrenched in our positions will not contribute to long-term, sustainable solutions.

Working together, as partners, putting aside our differences, is the only way to move forward.

That is what the United Nations does: promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

That is also what we do at the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the global organization of national parliaments: we foster dialogue; we build bridges between peoples and promote peace and understanding among parliamentarians from around the world and from all political factions.

The IPU, and its 178 Members, welcomes this Peace Summit in honour of Nelson Mandela.

The world needs more leaders like Madiba who are guided by ideals of equality, understanding and compassion.

The IPU will celebrate the centenary of his birth and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at its 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly, in a few weeks in Geneva. The global parliamentary community will then pay tribute to the legacy of Madiba and will recommit to the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration.

Excellencies,

The human race is on a course toward self-destruction.

The drivers of this are many but can be summed up in a few points: a global competition for resources and markets, a senseless arms race, and rising inequality and economic insecurity around the world.

As a result, people are growing angry and see enemies where friends should be found.

Increasingly, governments are elected that reflect that anger and search for opportunities to win what they perceive to be a zero-sum game. In the process, they exploit racism, xenophobia, and other fears to fuel even more anger and division among the people.

Let us take one minute to think about it.

Globally, we are producing and consuming more than nature can generate. Our economic model is tilted toward growth as an end in itself and does not value human well-being – which at the end of the day, is really all that matters.

Can we sleep calmly when we know that we are contributing to the inexorable and tragic end of humanity?

As individuals, we have a responsibility as our actions have concrete impact on other people and on nature.

We also have a *collective* responsibility, as communities and nations.

Our first responsibility is to work resolutely toward the SDGs as they represent our best option to achieve environmental sustainability together with social and economic justice.

Importantly, we need to recognize the value of democracy and human rights as the bedrock of peace.

Democracy empowers people and provides them with a way to work through their differences and find solutions to their problems whatever they are.

Inspired by Nelson Mandela's legacy, let's all work together - governments and parliaments - *as partners*, for peace in a sustainable world.

Thank you.