



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

Intervention by

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“Parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law”

Madam President,
Mr. Speaker,
Mr. Secretary General,
Ms. Susan Kihika, President of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians,
Mr. Rafael Yuste,

Dear colleagues,

If education is relevant for people of all ages, it is a must for youth.

Since the creation of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, access to education and education policies have been high on the agenda of the young MPs at the IPU.

Twenty years ago, Kofi Annan said that *“Education is peace-building by another name.”* I couldn’t agree more. Why you may ask? I narrow it down to one simple reason: No one is born a hater. No one is born a violent extremist. Hate is learned. To nip hate in the bud, we need to solve the problem at its root: in the minds and aspirations of young people. Education is the most powerful way to achieve this.

Before I tell you how we do it, I will first tell you what we know doesn’t work. Peace and security is **not** won at the barrel of a gun. When military responses are needed, it is only because we have failed to address root causes. They address the symptoms, not the disease. Yet in 2018, the world spent 1.7 trillion dollars on the military. Kofi Annan also said that *“Education is the most effective form of defence spending.”* What could be achieved if just a fraction of this money was redirected to education? How many children, young girls, and refugees would not be left behind anymore if we gave our militaries a pay cut?

When it comes to our own children and grandchildren, we would pay any price for their future. But when we need to translate this into laws and policies, we are failing to deliver.

The following are some of the proposals made by young MPs to make education accessible and youth responsive:

- First and foremost, education must leave no one behind. This includes girls, disabled people, victims of conflict, and so on. As MPs, we can do this by adopting legislation and allocating funding for free and compulsory education for all. In today’s world, this should extend beyond secondary education. Universities and trade schools must also be made accessible.
- Education today must be adapted to tomorrow’s jobs. We update our smartphones every few years, we should do the same with our schools. Not doing so can result in unemployment, which can lead to marginalization, unrest and a fertile environment for conflict. Curricula must train people for future jobs by emphasizing science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Girls and young women must be equally represented in these fields. Better

linking of our schools and universities with industry, including through enhanced apprenticeship programmes, is another important way to help update our schools.

- Education is not only about skills, but also about nurturing global citizens. Textbooks must teach diversity and cooperation, not hate. Curricula that promote peace and human rights, gender equality, and help counter violent narratives, are essential. Schools should also prioritize training in digital literacy and civic engagement.
- Education must be life-long. Young people today will work several jobs before they retire. To have an agile job market, we need an agile education. We must also prepare for the shift towards greater online education, which will one day overtake traditional programmes.

Dear colleagues,

In addition to these proposals, I wish to leave you with one last message. Education by its very nature involves young people. No matter which laws and policies we pursue, we must make sure that young people are part of their design, implementation and evaluation. As young MPs and representatives of our country's youth, we are ready and willing to work with you. It is a win-win proposition. I trust that you will give us our rightful voice.

Thank you.