



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.



REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA
Parliament

Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

Virtual meeting, 19-20 August 2020
In-person conference, 2021 in Vienna

22 June 2020

Dear Madam Speaker,
Dear Mr. Speaker,

On 20 December 2019 we wrote to you and all other Speakers of national parliaments, inviting you to join us for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (5WCSP), which was to be held from 19 to 21 August 2020 at the United Nations Office at Vienna, preceded by the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament.

Little did we know then that the new year 2020 would be so severely marked by the Coronavirus pandemic. In the course of this year, the Preparatory Committee for the 5WCSP, composed of distinguished Speakers from around the world, met virtually several times in preparation for this major international event. Indeed, the theme that had been chosen for the Speakers' Conference – ***Parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that delivers peace and sustainable development for the people and planet*** – is proving to be more relevant than ever before.

At its last meeting on 2 June, the Preparatory Committee agreed that, under the current circumstances, such a high-level global event could not be held physically this year. In light of the evident need for parliamentary leadership during these times of unprecedented crisis, it was decided that both the World Speakers' Conference and the Summit of Women Speakers would go on as planned on the agreed dates, however in a virtual format (with a reduced programme and two sessions of three hours each).

In addition, the Executive Committee decided at its meeting on 18 June to recommend to the Governing Council that the World Speakers' Conference and the Summit of Women Speakers ALSO take place as full-fledged in-person conferences in 2021 in Vienna. In sum, the 5WCSP would be a two-stage event.

We are pleased to share with you the draft programmes of the two virtual events, as well as the preliminary outcome Declaration, as drafted by the Preparatory Committee. We hope to be able to issue a clear and strong message of parliamentary leadership and solidarity at the close of the virtual Conference on 20 August, and would invite you to carefully review the document and send any proposals for amendments that you may have to the IPU Secretariat (postbox@ipu.org) by 20 July.

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We will come back to you as soon as possible with the technical details concerning these two virtual summits, including on the option of sending video contributions on the overall theme of the Conference, which we would highlight in the weeks leading up to the virtual 5WCSP. In the meantime, we will be circulating the conference documents (reports and panel concept notes) that will also be posted on the event webpage as these become available – <https://www.ipu.org/event/fifth-world-conference-speakers-parliament>. Registration is proceeding according to plan, and we would encourage you to register your delegation as soon as possible, with individual emails that would allow us to send you the access links for the virtual summits.

We look forward to a very successful and productive virtual conference in August and hope to welcome you in person in Vienna next year.



Gabriela Cuevas Barron
President
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Wolfgang Sobotka
President
Austrian National Council