

**Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament**  
**Virtual meeting, 19 and 20 August 2020**  
**Parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that delivers peace**  
**and sustainable development for the people and planet.**

Prepared text on the overall theme  
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We are facing a turning point in our history. Further to the disastrous health implications, the dramatic COVID-19 pandemic has created one of the most severe global recessions. It is an unprecedented wake-up call for the international community regarding the urgent need to address widely spread inequalities and poverty, protracted issues and climate change.

Whether the current crisis was unexpected or whether it should, in fact, have been predicted, we are provided with a unique opportunity to rethink and rearrange our approaches in preparation for similar and other disasters in the future.

Therefore, the parliaments should take the initiative to propose reorganization of the global institutions, supranational organizations, and government mechanisms in order to be more responsive, efficient and effective in dealing with global, peripheral or domestic challenges. New approaches are needed based on solidarity, synergies and pre-emptive actions, achieving ready action plans for solutions. After all, democracy is incomplete if it stops at the rhetoric and does not provide real solutions to real problems.

The pandemic must under no circumstance turn into an excuse to halt the joint endeavours to achieve the SDGs. On the contrary, SDGs should be completed with more common targets and used as a basis for our recovery by more efficient actions. We are called to gear up our efforts and demonstrate a real solidarity with the most vulnerable and hence most exposed to the impact of global crises. The IPU can significantly and decisively contribute to this course of action.

If we want to be successful in this endeavour, we must ensure that the international community and the IPU member parliaments identify the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to invest in a new development model which complies with sustainability and circular economy principles. For this reason, we call on the international community and the UN, as the global multilateral actor, to resolutely come together on solid actions, such as debt relief for developing countries, investments and reconstruction. It is now time for a systemic shift towards a more sustainable and inclusive economy, for more resilient, just and equal societies, to the benefit of people and the planet. In this context, we fully support the text of the Draft Declaration, to be presented to the United Nations in the framework of the UN75 Summit.

In this respect, as parliamentary leaders we have a pivotal role to play. With the SDGs as our blueprint, we can turn the recovery into a window of prospect to redesign a more sustainable and resilient world. Our role is crucial in this process as it is parliaments which approve budgets for governments, hold them to account and serve as the connection between them and the people.

Global challenges require global solutions and especially as we strive towards recovery from the current crisis, supporting multilateralism and international solidarity is the only way forward. A truly multilateral system cannot be realized without full enjoyment of human rights and adherence to international law, as set out in the United Nations Charter.

Regrettably, the failure of the international community to uphold international law and respect of human rights has undermined the efforts of humanity on many occasions. The case of my own country, Cyprus, is indicative of the deficits in international cooperation and global accountability, as 46 years after the invasion of Cyprus by Turkish troops, my country's people are still suffering the consequences of the violation of their basic human rights. Despite numerous UN Resolutions and other international and European decisions, Turkey has not been held accountable, to this date, for its gross violations of international law in Cyprus and its continuing occupation of over a third of the island. Furthermore, during this challenging time which is calling for the international community to stand together, Turkey's escalating provocations and illegal activities in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone, which are in grave violation of the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus, further destabilize the already tormented Eastern Mediterranean region, threatening peace and stability.

Times ahead will be difficult. Now is the time to translate rhetoric into action. We need to demonstrate our strongest parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that will bring about peace and a more just world.