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**ENSURING RESPECT FOR AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN ALL RELIGIOUS  
COMMUNITIES AND BELIEFS IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD**

***Preliminary draft resolution submitted by the co-Rapporteurs  
Mrs. Salwa Damen-Masri (Jordan) and Mr. Peter Bieri (Switzerland)***

The 116<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Affirming* that tolerance for cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity, as well as dialogue among and within civilizations, is essential for respect, peaceful coexistence and cooperation among individuals and people in their diversity of belief, culture and language, while neither fearing nor repressing differences within and between societies but cherishing them as a precious asset of humanity,
- (2) *Observing* the importance of promoting understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and friendship among human beings in their diversity of religion, belief, culture and language, and *recalling* the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable human rights and fundamental freedoms of all members of the human family, which all States have an obligation to observe, protect and encourage universal respect thereof,
- (3) *Recalling* the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,
- (4) *Recalling* that the IPU, through the resolutions it adopted at the 102<sup>nd</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Berlin in 1999, at the 103<sup>rd</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Amman in 2000, and at the 110<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Mexico City in 2004, has inter alia resolved to promote dialogue among civilizations and cultures, has emphasized the potential contribution of parliaments to the peaceful coexistence of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities and to international reconciliation and has called upon all States to adopt appropriate measures to ensure mutual respect and cooperation among ethnic, cultural and religious communities,
- (5) *Recalling* the adoption of the 2005 United Nations World Summit Outcome, which acknowledges the importance of respect and understanding for religious and cultural diversity throughout the world,
- (6) *Further recalling* the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as the principles contained therein,

(7) *Commending* the valuable contribution of various initiatives at the national, regional and international levels, such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the Bali Declaration on Building Interfaith Harmony within the International Community, the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures, the strategy of Enlightened Moderation, the Informal Meeting of Leaders on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and the Islam-Christianity Dialogue, which are all mutually inclusive, reinforcing and interrelated,

(8) *Recognizing* that interreligious dialogue and understanding, including the awareness of differences and commonalities among peoples and civilizations, contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and disputes, reduce the potential for animosity, clashes or violence and enable people to perceive ethnic, cultural or religious diversity as a source of cultural enrichment,

(9) *Affirming* that dialogue among civilizations is a process between and within civilizations, founded on inclusion, and a collective desire to learn, uncover and examine assumptions, unfold shared meanings and core values, and integrate multiple perspectives through dialogue,

(10) *Emphasizing* that dialogue among cultures and civilizations should primarily focus on what they have in common at the practical level instead of what divides them at the doctrinal level, and serve the purpose of resolving practical problems while avoiding the entrenchment, or even creation of artificial ethnic, cultural or religious identities or fault lines within society and between societies,

(11) *Stressing* that a focus on dialogue between civilizations and cultures must not be invoked to justify discriminatory laws and practices within cultures and civilizations, especially regarding women, and that respect and tolerance for other cultures and civilizations must always be rooted in the overarching principle of respect of human rights, which protect the individual human being, regardless of sex, race, religion or political affiliation,

(12) *Emphasizing therefore*, the need, at all levels of society and among nations, to strengthen freedom, justice, respect for human rights, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, respect for diversity of culture and religion or belief, dialogue and understanding, which are important elements for peace,

(13) *Alarmed* that serious instances of intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, including acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by religious intolerance, are on the increase in many parts of the world and threaten the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

(14) *Condemning* any display of xenophobia, racism and intolerance towards immigrants and ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, and *emphasizing* that combating hatred, prejudice, intolerance and stereotyping on the basis of religion or culture represents a significant global challenge that requires further action,

(15) *Recalling* that parliament is the institution par excellence that embodies the diverse attributes and opinions of society and reflects and channels this diversity in the political process, and that its mission is to defuse tensions with the aim of strengthening social cohesion and solidarity,

(16) *Underscoring* the particular obligation of parliaments and their members to defend and promote the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, thereby creating a society in which every individual enjoys all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights,

(17) *Reaffirming*, at the same time, that persons belonging to minorities should exercise their rights in good faith and with loyalty to the State in which they live, without prejudice to the principle of the sovereignty and integrity of States, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law,

(18) *Convinced* that parliaments can help facilitate understanding and cooperation among States and peoples and promote dialogue, tolerance, mutual respect and understanding among civilizations, thus contributing to the prevention and countering of armed conflicts and terrorism,

(19) *Recalling* that, according to its Statutes, one of the purposes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is to work towards peace and cooperation among peoples, and *recognizing* the significant role that the IPU can play in enhancing interaction between societies and peoples and promoting dialogue among different civilizations,

(20) *Reiterating* that freedom of the press is one of the pillars of democracy, however, that freedom of expression is not an absolute right that can justify inciting hatred, racism, xenophobia and the violation of human rights, and that therefore, in addition to its legal rights and obligations, the media has an ethical responsibility to citizens and society, at a time when information and communication play an important role in the development of society and democratic life and are recognized fora for non-violent dialogue,

(21) *Stressing* the crucial role of education in promoting a better understanding of other cultures and civilizations and a spirit of tolerance and the principle of non-discrimination towards all persons,

**A. Role of parliaments in ensuring respect for and peaceful coexistence between all religious communities and beliefs on the national level**

1. *Calls on* parliaments and their members to use all means available to them to promote peaceful coexistence and constructive cooperation between different communities and to prevent any unfavourable or discriminatory treatment arising from belonging to an ethnic, cultural or religious group, in a spirit of tolerance and dialogue;
2. *Recognizes* that mutual respect and cooperation among ethnic, cultural and religious communities are expressed, for the most part, not in special laws but, more effectively, in the framework of a constitution guaranteeing the freedom of individuals;
3. *Calls on* parliaments to therefore take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, economic, political, social and cultural life and to make all efforts to enact, or repeal where necessary, legislation prohibiting such discrimination, and to take all appropriate measures to combat intolerance on the grounds of religion or belief;

4. *Urges* all parliaments to take effective measures to combat incitement to, or acts of, violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by hatred and intolerance based on culture, religion or belief, which may cause discord and disharmony within and among societies, in compliance with relevant international obligations;
5. *Calls on* all parliaments and their members to take appropriate measures so that the national political and legal systems reflect the multicultural diversity of society and, where necessary, democratic and political institutions, organizations and practices are more participatory and avoid the marginalization and exclusion of, and discrimination against, specific sectors of society;
6. *Encourages* parliaments to ensure, as appropriate, that, in the course of their official duties, members of law enforcement bodies and the military, civil servants, educators and other public officials respect different religions and beliefs and do not discriminate against persons professing other religions or beliefs, and that the necessary and appropriate education or training is provided;
7. *Urges* parliaments to ensure that international and regional agreements to preserve the identity of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities are ratified or signed by the States concerned which have not yet done so;
8. *Calls on* parliaments to ensure that religious and cultural sites are fully respected and protected in compliance with international obligations and in accordance with their national legislation, and to adopt adequate measures aimed at preventing acts or threats of damage to and destruction of these sites;
9. *Invites* parliaments to take effective measures to protect the freedom of the press and freedom of expression, and *calls on* parliamentarians to help the media assume the ethical responsibility that goes with this freedom by collaborating with and making use of the media in a responsible manner;
10. *Calls on* parliaments, as appropriate, to promote policies designed to nurture understanding, tolerance and friendship among human beings in their diversity of religion, belief, culture and language, including through education, as well as the development of progressive teaching curricula and text books, which will address the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance, and to mainstream a gender perspective while doing so, in order to promote understanding, tolerance, peace, mutual respect and friendly relations within and between societies and all racial and religious groups, recognizing that education at all levels is one of the principal means of building a culture of peace;

**B. Role of parliaments in ensuring respect for and peaceful coexistence between all religious communities and beliefs in a globalized world**

11. *Recognizes* that respect for religious and cultural diversity and dialogue between different religions and cultures in an increasingly globalized world promotes enhanced understanding among religions, cultures and civilizations and contributes to international cooperation;

12. *Acknowledges* that respect for the diversity of religions and cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation in a climate of mutual trust and understanding, can contribute to the combating of ideologies and practices based on discrimination, intolerance and hatred and help to reinforce world peace, social justice and friendship among peoples;
13. *Also recognizes* that, despite intolerance and conflicts that are creating a divide across countries and regions and constituting a growing threat to peaceful relations among nations, all cultures and civilizations share a common set of universal values and can all contribute to the enrichment of Humankind;
14. *Welcomes therefore* the efforts of States, relevant bodies within the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations and civil society, including faith-based and other non-governmental organizations and the media in developing a culture of peace and in promoting understanding, tolerance among human beings in their diversity of culture, religion, belief and language, and *encourages* them to continue such efforts, including the promotion of interreligious and intercultural interaction within and among societies through, inter alia, congresses, conferences, seminars, workshops, research work and related processes;
15. *Calls on* parliaments to take all necessary action to combat incitement to or acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by hatred and intolerance based on culture, religion or belief, which may cause discord and disharmony within and among societies, in compliance with relevant international obligations;
16. *Invites* national parliaments and parliamentarians to take an active part in the programmes of the United Nations and UNESCO for the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and to encourage their governments to contribute to such programmes, in particular to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the High-Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations;

**C. Role of inter-parliamentary cooperation in ensuring respect for and peaceful coexistence between all religious communities and beliefs in a globalized world**

17. *Expresses* the need for a more intensive inter-parliamentary exchange of information and experience in respect of the implementation of effective measures in this field, and *stresses* the supportive role played by the IPU;
18. *Urges* parliaments and parliamentarians to establish a parliamentary dialogue among civilizations and cultures, within the framework of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and through initiatives such as the establishment of inter-parliamentary friendship groups;
19. *Recommends* that the Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and national parliaments, in coordination with the United Nations Secretariat, UNESCO and other relevant organizations, prepare the contribution of IPU to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the High-Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations.