

**Speech of H.E. Kakha Kuchava, Speaker of the Georgian  
Parliament  
for the 143<sup>rd</sup> IPU Assembly**

November 2021, Madrid, Spain

*Your excellences,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues, friends,*

It is my pleasure to attend this unique platform of the Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and address its honorable participants from around the world.

As we are discussing ambitious future goals, we should not forget that our governing systems face existential threats. Intense political polarization and radical political rhetoric represent a genuine challenge to the functioning of democracy that harms the entire society. There is a critical need to re-establish trust in public institutions and reenergize democratic development.

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

We may disagree on policy issues – which is a normal, useful tension that drives democracy. But we have witnessed in the past decade the degree of polarization as deep as never before.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected political stability in many countries. The virus-related restrictions further contributed to a rise in political polarization.

Polarization runs particularly deep, and the divisive trend continues with no end in sight.

My country is no exception in this regard. Political polarization is a challenge for a society in Georgia as well. Moreover, 20% of Georgia's territory, that is two historic regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region, are under the Russian occupation. Residents of these regions suffer from violence and unjustifiable restrictions on ethnic basis, they fight every day for saving their lives, they do not have access to proper medical treatment, and their lawful interests are blatantly ignored.

*Dear friends,*

I truly believe that innovative, daring, and joint strategies are needed to advance democratic resilience and build strong community and sustainable future. These strategies should include the following:

First, we need to reinforce efforts around building durable communities and the public. Strong local governments, schools, families, societal institutions, and synergy among these actors are necessary for cementing the democracy in its roots.

Second, political actors, media, civil society, all societal actors should play their responsible roles in substantiating democracy – building a citizen-oriented future where every citizen can live and prosper.

Third, we all should reinvent the significant role of parliaments in defending and reinvigorating democracy as well as in preventing strenuous political competition from veering into destructive polarization. The people invested their future, their hopes and dreams in us; this is huge legitimacy and responsibility which should not be lost in vain.

Parliament of Georgia should continue building on Georgia's earlier progress in democratic development, human rights protection, building effective state institutions, and implementing pro-Western foreign policy, and pioneer new substantial reforms oriented on establishing

prosperous and peaceful society. This will also help Georgia to successfully apply for the European Union membership in 2024.

As a Speaker, I made it my priority to stimulate a constructive and inclusive dialogue and atmosphere in the Parliament. We all should engage in meaningful, result-oriented, and constructive parliamentary discussions. This is an interesting process especially now because, based on the 2017-2018 constitutional reform and new Rules of Procedure, the Parliament of Georgia already has robust instruments to practice vigorous legislative and oversight powers in the best interests of the entire nation.

This brings me to the fourth argument that I want to highlight. We are fortunate enough to live in a lively and diverse planet. But future generations deserve the same. We are all negatively affected by climate change, no matter where in the world we live. In order to secure healthy and sustainable future for our children, we need to act, and we need to act now. Parliaments can and should drive the process to meaningful progress in this regard.

And finally, democracy is a matter of and an instrument for global security. Amidst the myriad of challenges of global and local importance, lively democracy – that is, dynamic and effective institutions, governance, and democratic processes – is needed to avoid chaos and meet the needs of our citizens. Joint actions are essential in securing such democracy in dangerous times when undemocratic forces ferociously undermine our efforts. The Parliament of Georgia stands ready to closely cooperate with other parliaments for this purpose.

Thank you.