

Honorable Chair,
Dear Colleagues,

This week we have all had the privilege of working together in person as we deliberated in our respective committees and held discussions in this Assembly. Over the last 2 years such in person meetings have become a real luxury in all parts of the world and in all parliaments.

As parliaments moved online, thanks to the blessings of technology, parliaments have also become closed off from those they represent. Isolation from the people is a new self-imposed, albeit necessary, challenge to democracy.

Lack of openness and the opportunity to meet and speak freely feeds another enemy of democracy: fake news.

As information travels through social media at unprecedented speed and newsmakers often lack the capacity of time to do the fact checking, it becomes increasingly easy to provoke and spark tensions in society.

And From this in turn comes the divide, the fragmentation and the polarisation in parliament. It is with unease that we observe today how some political groups use constituencies as an excuse for dividing rhetoric.

As the world recovers from the pandemic we must do more to re-open parliaments to the people they represent. We must remind ourselves that our institutions are places for debate and solution finding. And for this to be effective we must include people of all walks of life in the discussion.

Youth and women participation in national and international politics and policies must be renewed and reinforced. Glass ceilings must be shattered and social barriers must be destroyed.

But to achieve this we must unite efforts and adopt an uncompromising attitude towards all states and parties that put parliamentary democracy in jeopardy, exploit the freedom of speech to spread fake news and use war, aggression, energy resources and as of recent even people to exert pressure and tear the democratic fabric apart.

I end my intervention by thanking all for your attention.