

IPU 144th ASSEMBLY
Speech of Senator Pier Ferdinando CASINI
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Today all of us take it as given that environmental questions have an impact across the board, and that they belong to ordinary citizens as such, and that they are of eminent interest to the general public. The level of sensibility towards the environment is continuing to soar in society at large, and especially in the perception of younger people.

This new awareness requires not only proper scientific information but also an all-round culture of the environment. In order for this to happen, there needs to be a profound change of mentality involving the institutions, businesses, and individual people.

It is estimated that between 3.3 and 3.6 billion people worldwide – almost half the world's population – live in contexts that are highly vulnerable to climate change. Progress in actions to adapt to Climate Change is not uniform, as noted by the report by the IPCC (*Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*), observing that the biggest gulfs exist between low-income populations and developing nations, which shoulder at least 75% of the costs of the climate crisis, despite the fact that they only generate 10% of global CO2 emissions. As recently reaffirmed in Dubai in the context of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, chaired by Gennaro Migliore.

These considerations tell us much about the complexity of the environmental transition, and especially about the real meaning of the word "sustainability" in its various, almost infinite aspects: environmental, energy, food, demographic, health, and social. **(The emergencies are bound up with each other, and are coming one on top of the other).** The challenge for politics is to understand how they are interdependent, without losing sight of the objectives, the most important of which is the health of the planet, but this cannot be achieved by underestimating the other goals.

Europe's *Green New Deal* was an opportunity to steer the economy in a more sustainable direction. However, just over 100 days since the COP26 in Glasgow, Russia's invasion of Ukraine risks making policies to contain global warming take a leap backwards. Indeed, any conflict is a tragedy with

enormous costs, not just in terms of human lives and the economic repercussions, but also on the ecosystems involved, leaving indelible marks in the territories that are theatres of conflicts.

It is inconceivable that in 2022, less than 80 years since the end of that terrible tragedy that was the Second World War, any nation in Europe should decide to resolve its strategic security concerns, however legitimate, by means of war, moreover brandishing the spectre of a nuclear catastrophe.

Our dismay in having to witness a conflict in the heart of Europe, with the declared aim of using armed force, and without concealing the intention of redrawing the idea and the geography of the European continent, demands that we shoulder a responsibility.

(The Inter-Parliamentary Union has always constituted a privileged forum for discussion and dialogue, with the aim of supporting peace and cooperation between peoples, and promoting the ideals and values that are their shared heritage).

Faced with the unacceptable military aggression against Ukraine, we cannot look the other way and close ourselves off in a selfish silence, we have to give voice to a spirit of solidarity that is not only virtual but also concrete.

This common approach – one that I hope will get the broadest possible support – is a choice in favour of courage and propriety that we have to make, in the face of an explicit violation of the principles of the IPU, of the Charter of the United Nations, and of other international obligations.

In this situation, we cannot afford any weak links in our determination, and we in the IPU have a duty to firmly reassert the close link that exists between peace and the principles of democracy, freedom, respect for the rights of people, and the self-determination of peoples.