

Excellency Duarte Pacheco, President of the IPU,

Honourable colleagues,

Distinguished parliamentarians,

The world changed dramatically since we met in Madrid last November. No one thought back then that war will return to Europe in a few months' time. We are living during challenging times and once again the victims of war are people dying in the streets of Ukraine, women and children fleeing their homes and crossing their borders towards safer and more peaceful countries. It is indeed a humanitarian tragedy.

War does not stop at borders of those countries directly involved. It is sending shock waves across Europe and the rest of the globe. It is also hitting our efforts to address the climate crisis. For example, the invasion of Ukraine is hampering scientific efforts to undertake vital research on climate change when it comes to permafrost in Russia which covers 60% of its territory. We are talking about a vast area of frozen ground which is estimated to hold twice as much greenhouse gas as there is in the atmosphere.

One major shockwave that we have seen in recent weeks is the sudden spike in the price of fossil fuels on which we are all still very much dependent. We all know that energy prices based on fossil fuels are very volatile, but we can also learn from this experience that such volatility is not sustainable. We also know that such volatility is non-existent when using renewable sources to generate our economies for example.

I come from a small island state in the Mediterranean and apart from the obvious threat of rising sea levels, we are also very much dependent on sea and air transportation. The increase in costs of transportation in recent months and weeks,

which is mainly attributed to the increase in price of fossil fuels, has been phenomenal.

Therefore, the transition to a green economy is not only required to save our planet but it is also necessary for our economies.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is not a matter of choice but a matter of action. Let's be honest with ourselves, it is not an easy way forward, but we must take the same direction together. Of course, it is easier said than done. The global economy, since World War II in particular, has based its economic generation on fossil fuels. The large majority of our investments during the last century have been centred around the provision of fossil fuels, be it cars, airplanes and ships; be it power to generate electricity. Therefore, we need strong political will. We need a change in mentality. However hard it was, the world had to adapt swiftly to the changes brought by the pandemic. We need the same approach when it comes to climate change.

The transition towards a green economy should be also fair. Its success can only be achieved if no one is left behind. Decisions will not always be popular, and they can affect some areas and some sectors more than others; and therefore we need also to be sensitive when deciding and implementing reforms.

Malta took the initiative to request the inclusion of climate change on the Agenda of the 43rd session of the United Nations General Assembly, proposing that an appropriate high-level mechanism be established to address the cause and effects of this phenomenon on humankind. This mechanism would be tasked to propose legal and political measures to address global warming and its environmental and socio-economic implications.

On 6 December 1988, Malta's Resolution on the "Protection of Global Climate for Present and Future Generations of Mankind" was unanimously adopted in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

Ladies and gentlemen, the role of politicians and Parliament is crucial. In 2015 Malta enacted the Climate Action Act. The act establishes a Climate Action Board, a body in which all sectors of Maltese society are represented, aiming to mainstream climate action, monitor implementation of international and EU commitments to reducing Green House Gas emissions, and facilitate preparedness and adaptation to climate impacts. The Climate Action Act also requires the government to prepare a low-carbon development strategy and a national adaptation strategy that will be reviewed and updated at least every four years.

Parliament is also the institution that can hold the executive to account. It is important to pass laws. However, laws need to be implemented on the ground in an effective way. It is the role of Parliaments that must make sure that implementation of laws is done as it should be and that targets are met on time.

Climate change is a horizontal issue and cannot be tackled through a single sector alone. Let me conclude with a concrete proposal: I urge you to go back to your parliaments and works towards the setting up a parliamentary committee with a specific aim of scrutinising the implementation of measures relating to climate change. A specific committee solely dedicated to climate change matters in which all sectors can coordinate all the perspectives within one mechanism can prove to be more effective.