



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

145th IPU Assembly

Kigali, Rwanda
11-15 October 2022



145th IPU ASSEMBLY
2022 | Kigali, Rwanda

Speech by Mr. Duarte Pacheco President of the IPU

11 October 2022

Your Excellency, Mr. President of the Republic of Rwanda,
Mr. President of the Senate of the Republic of Rwanda,
Madam Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Republic of Rwanda,
Mr. Secretary General,
Honourable Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour to address you all at this inaugural ceremony of the 145th IPU Assembly. Let me first thank the Republic of Rwanda and its Parliament, and especially Madam Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies. You were amazing; your hospitality and the work you have done for weeks to welcome us was amazing. You did a great job. Thank you so much, Madam.

A second word needs to be to the President of the Republic. Mr. President, your presence here represents something important for all of us: you and your government's support of multilateralism and parliamentarism.

We have come here after a long health crisis. We should have been here two years ago, in October 2020, but the pandemic appeared and it was not possible to come. We needed to postpone our meeting two years. In the meantime, millions of citizens and many parliamentarians died in the pandemic. But we are here and it represents not just the commitment we made to the authorities of Rwanda to come, but also the victory of humankind, against this small virus, that killed so many people. It is a victory of cooperation between all of us: scientists from different countries, continents, cultures and religions worked together to find the solution to the pandemic. It should be an example to us politicians: we should always work together to solve the problems of humankind.

Also Mr. President, I need to congratulate you because the results of your fight against the pandemic show that a country in Africa, without the resources that so many rich countries have, understands what is important. Allow me to congratulate you also for the economic results achieved by your country and by the spirit of reconciliation that it is possible to identify in all the persons we have met, not just parliamentarians but when we walk on the streets. We understand that here in Rwanda, after something that is not possible to imagine in our own lives, it was possible to get reconciliation and work to have a new country, a safe country and a healthy country. Congratulations Mr. President.

And finally, my sincere gratitude to every one of you that decided to travel for so long, some of you for more than 24 hours, but you came to Rwanda to achieve the success of this Assembly because you are committed to the objectives of the Organization, and want to work together to find solutions to the global problems of humankind. Thank you so much for your presence here in Kigali.

#IPU145

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, we are in a special moment in our world. Unfortunately, we don't have the world we were waiting for when we last met in Nusa Dua. Climate change is growing and the consequences of it are killing thousands of people – unbelievable floods have happened in Pakistan, where more than 3000 people died a few weeks ago; hurricanes have killed people in Florida, the Philippines and Venezuela; heat waves and forest fires have happened as never before in Europe and Australia; and deserts are growing in Africa.

And with that, we have people suffering, more poverty and more inequalities. People have worse lives than before. We need to do something now, not tomorrow. TODAY. It is not possible to wait longer. The people we represent, never forget it, are tired of speeches. People wish for action. We need to act now. We need to understand the feeling of the people. Otherwise we are not doing our job. On the other hand, we have seen in recent months that human rights have continued to be violated. In Afghanistan, where women and girls are losing their rights, in Iran, where women and girls are killed just because they do not cover their hair properly. Mahsa Amini will be an example to all of us. In Myanmar, where the repression is growing, colleagues of ours, members of parliament have been executed.

The Committee of Human Rights of Parliamentarians has never received so many cases – more than 700 from 43 countries. Terrorism subsists in the Sahel but, for instance in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, murderers attack innocent people, women, children, old people and kill them without any compassion. Migration movements persist in South America and in Mediterranean, where every day people are dying just looking for a better life. A global economic recession is in front of us, with inflation, and will bring more poverty and more inequalities.

And finally, war and conflicts. Not just the forgotten war in Yemen that subsists and causes the suffering of so many people. But especially the war in Ukraine, that is having a global impact and may be transformed into a global conflict. It is not possible to accept the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. It is impossible to justify the illegal annexation of territory of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. It is against international law. Just talk about the use of nuclear weapons is something impossible to accept.

The situation in Palestine has not developed positively and the peace process is at an impasse. It is an awful world in which we are living.

But Mr. President, dear Colleagues,
In this grey world there are also – unfortunately just a few – examples of hope.

Inter-religious dialogue is increasing after important meetings in Kazakhstan or in a few days in Bahrain. Use of sport as a key to unite people will happen during the football World Cup in Qatar, where the stadiums were built to have zero carbon emissions and some of them will be given to developing countries. The participation of young people in politics is increasing, as is their representation in parliaments. The representation of women in parliament is also increasing, and the IPU gives a lot of attention to that, not just with words but also helping empower women by setting good examples.

I don't know if you have noted, but the last Assembly before the pandemic in Belgrade was hosted by a Parliament with a woman Speaker. After the pandemic, we met in Madrid: with another woman Speaker of Parliament. Then, we went to Nusa Dua and we had a woman Speaker of parliament. Now we are in Kigali and we have a woman Speaker of Parliament. Next March we will go to Bahrain, and we will have a woman Speaker of Parliament. And after that we may go to Angola, with woman Speaker of Parliament again. We need to support women Speakers, because they are so few, and maybe one day the majority of Speakers will be women.

And allow me to give the example of Rwanda where more than 61% of members of the Chamber of Deputies are women. Congratulations, Madam Speaker.

And this is the background of our Assembly. I hope that the spirit of Rwanda may influence the work of our Assembly. A country that suffered something impossible to imagine just 28 years ago, and understood that reconciliation and dialogue is the way to achieve peace, and economic and social development – and this is the key to Rwanda's success. If you have any doubts, I may invite you to visit the Genocide Memorial here in Kigali, as I did two days ago, and after that, walk a little bit in the streets of Kigali. You will understand that the people of Rwanda learned from their past and decided to build a new country. All of us should learn from the past.

Ban Ki Moon, the former UN Secretary General, said: "We, the international community, failed in Rwanda". All of you – all of us – are world leaders. We must not fail again, that's why we are here. We should work together with dialogue, to identify solutions to the problems of our world, to promote a better life to the people we represent, to leave a better, peaceful, inclusive and sustainable world to our children.

So, please start to work and only stop after we achieve the results we are looking for.

Thank you so much for your attention.