

His Excellency Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, the Deputy Prime Minister and representing the Patron of the Ceremony:

In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

May peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

On behalf of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, I have the honor to deliver HM the King's address on the occasion of the Inter-Parliamentary Union 146th Assembly and related meetings.

**His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's address to the
Inter-Parliamentary Union 146th Assembly and related
meetings in Bahrain**

**“Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies:
Fighting intolerance”**

11 March 2023

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Your Excellency Duarte Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Your Excellency Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Your Excellency the Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations

Your Excellency Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam,
Speaker of the Council of Representatives

Your Excellency Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh,
Chairman of the Shura Council

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Guests,

Peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you today on the occasion of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's 146th Assembly and its related meetings.

We wish you a pleasant stay in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the country of love and tolerance and the meeting point for religious, cultural and civilizational harmony and coexistence.

We are also pleased that the 146th Assembly General Debate will focus on the overall theme of "Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance" as it reflects our common awareness of the importance of establishing the values of tolerance and peace, rejecting division and hatred, and consolidating human solidarity as basic pillars for enhancing security, stability, prosperity and sustainable development.

We affirm our pride in your trust in choosing the Kingdom of Bahrain to host the largest and most prestigious international parliamentary Assembly and related meetings.

We express to you our best wishes of success in the global event reaching outstanding results that reflect the will of the peoples of the world and their aspirations for living in societies that enjoy security, stability and peace, and thrive on justice and respect for human rights.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests

Your Assembly and related meetings are being held amid exceptional circumstances in which the world is struck by waves of hatred, enmity, wars, natural disasters such as earthquakes and inundations, crises related to climate change, water and food security issues, the exacerbation of extremism and terrorism, and other challenges that are impacting the present of humanity and threatening the future of the next generations.

Such challenges impose on all of us, leaders, governments, and parliaments, far greater responsibilities in achieving a more just, equitable, and cohesive global political, security, and economic system built on robust foundations of friendship, mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and international partnership in maintaining international peace and security, and advancing the principles of the United Nations Charter and international laws.

Here, the significance of parliamentary diplomacy under the Inter-Parliamentary Union in raising awareness of current issues and challenges is highlighted.

Parliamentary diplomacy should encourage cooperation and the exchange of experiences among national parliaments and it should strengthen the parliament's oversight and developmental role in urging governments to develop and implement more effective measures and procedures in the interest of human security and prosperity.

In this regard, we look forward to joint action on two levels.

The first level is the consolidation of justice and the rule of law, adherence to the principles of responsible parliamentary action, and the protection of human rights, freedoms and dignity in

accordance with modern legislation consistent with international human rights conventions.

The second level is adopting foreign policies that respect the sovereignty of the state and its cultural and civilizational specificities, unity and territorial integrity, without tutelage or external interference.

The diplomacy should be keen to settle disputes through diplomatic means, and revive opportunities for just, comprehensive and lasting peace in all parts of the world.

It should also consolidate the values of human solidarity and dialogue among civilizations, religions and cultures, as well as cooperation in combating extremism and terrorism, and preventing the dangers of weapons of mass destruction.

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,

The Kingdom of Bahrain, while appreciating the opportunity to host this global parliamentary forum, affirms its pride in its civilized approach based on coexistence, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and cultural and religious diversity.

They have been essential pillars since the national consensus on the adoption of the National Action Charter, and the consolidation of the state of law and constitutional institutions.

In this regard, we are proud of the success of our bicameral Parliament, with its Shura Council and Council of Representatives, over six legislative terms, and for more than two decades, in presenting an example of the vibrancy of our

development process as an honest expression of the will of our citizens, men and women.

This is particularly evident in the success of the parliamentary elections in November with a popular turnout of more than 73 percent and the continuation by the Parliament of its legislative and monitoring duties as per the separation of powers and cooperation stipulated in the Kingdom's Constitution.

Thanks to constructive cooperation and effective partnership between the legislative and executive branches, we have been able to enact advanced legislation that strengthened respect for human rights and political, civil, economic, social and cultural freedoms in the presence of a judiciary and fully independent human rights and civil institutions.

While we affirm our determination to continue our democratic and human rights achievements, we do reiterate our full commitment to peace as a strategic choice and an imperative necessity to achieve security, prosperity, comprehensive development, and the protection of rights and freedoms, in accordance with inherited religious and historical values, well-established constitutional principles, and sustainable legislation and policies.

These are clearly reflected in the "Declaration of the Kingdom of Bahrain", the initiatives of the King Hamad Global Center for Peaceful Coexistence, the signing of the "Declaration in Support of Peace" agreement, and diplomatic and parliamentary initiatives that have affirmed our permanent commitment to advancing the values of peace and tolerance, and promoting harmony among all peoples of different religions, cultures and civilizations.

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,

With hope and anticipation, we look forward to your Assembly and related meetings in Bahrain reaching a consensus on decisions that enhance the spirit of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, deepen international partnership in achieving security and peace, ending wars and crises by peaceful means, supporting sustainable development goals through just solutions to environmental issues and climate change, securing international navigation and energy supplies, and economic cooperation in ensuring water and food security, facilitating trade exchange, and investing in renewable energy projects, digital transformation and future sciences.

In order to face the current challenges, we also need to encourage international humanitarian action in assisting the least developed countries, providing relief to millions of afflicted refugees, displaced persons, and victims of wars, disasters and epidemics, optimizing the use of financial resources for developmental purposes, putting an end to conflicts and preventing the waste of wealth on spreading enmity and hatred.

In line with the theme of the 146th Assembly, we reiterate our call to the international community to enhance legislative and technical cooperation in approving an international agreement to criminalize religious, sectarian and racist hate speech in all its forms, and to prevent the abuse of media and digital freedoms and platforms to disrespect religions or incite fanaticism, extremism and terrorism.

We also call for collective action to spread a culture peace, understanding and acceptance of others, strengthen the bonds of fraternity and friendship among nations, and integrate and

disseminate these values in educational curricula and religious, cultural and sports activities, guided by the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the call of all religions for tolerance and love.

We extend once more our welcome to your second home, the Kingdom of Bahrain, and we hope that your meetings here will present an opportunity to learn more closely about the reality of civilizational development in our country and its developmental and civilizational achievements and religious and cultural coexistence.

We wish you success in ensuring security, peace, tolerance and prosperity to all members of the human family.

Thank you and peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests

On behalf of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, I declare the Inter-Parliamentary Union 146th Assembly and related meetings open.

With the best wishes of success