

Check against delivery!

**Contribution of Ms. Mónika BARTOS (HUNGARY)
during the Genral Debate of the 146th IPU Assembly in Bahrein**

Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies:

Fighting intolerance

The concept note summarising the topic of the General Debate, contains the following statements: 'The world is becoming a more divided and less tolerant and peaceful place. There are numerous indicators that peaceful coexistence and inclusion worldwide are in decline, and that intolerance and discrimination are on the rise.'

These statements, in my view, prove that we are doing something very wrong. There are international policies in place. And, in many cases, resolutions and decisions arising from such policies, that seek to eliminate or reduce intolerance manifesting itself for any reason. It is also true that international efforts are largely also reflected in national legislations. Yet, we are not succeeding. In fact, numbers and surveys show that we are actually failing.

We must ask ourselves the question: Why is the quality of human coexistence deteriorating? Why do we tolerate each other less and less?

Looking at the foundations, we cannot but conclude that there is increasing competition between groups and members of mankind for natural resources, for the basics of life and for energy - in other words, for our life-giving Planet Earth. In February - together with many of my peer MPs present today - I participated in the UN hearing in New York focussed on 'water'. Csaba Kőrösi, President of the UN General Assembly, stressed that we are not doing very well at all with the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. The mid-term progress review on SDGs will take place in September this year; however, the signs are worrying. In the meantime, the human population is growing, the impacts of climate change and overconsumption are increasing in severity, and there is more intense competition among us. The frustration arising from competition leads to anxiety, tension, intolerance, scapegoating and selfishness.

In my view, it follows that we can only halt and address the intolerance crisis if we can make progress towards the achievement of SDGs.

The frustration arising from increasing competition is being felt at individual, community, national and international levels. Unfortunately, we live in an uncertain world. Mankind has been shocked by the COVID-19 pandemic. And we must also remember that there are currently 28 wars raging across the Globe, which are practically live-streamed to our homes. Death has become part of our daily lives. Mankind is permeated by fear and anxiety. And fear is not a good advisor. Not even for nations or countries. We often experience the confusion of fundamental concepts. While complementary ideas are portrayed to be in opposition with each other. Freedom is often confused with immorality disguised as freedom. Rights are often placed above obligations, if self-interest dictates so. And double standards also often prevail. As it is always easier to criticise someone else than to exercise self-criticism.

Is there a solution?

I believe there is. As in so many other areas, it requires a change of attitude.

When it comes to the foundations, we must make every effort to effectively achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. As we stressed at the time of their adoption, each of us must do our utmost in our own individual fields, and rely on the retention power of the international community with the same dedication.

As for the way forward, and the imbalance that has arisen – we must establish a dialogue based on mutual respect. We must not just listen to, but also hear each other, and aim for joint success.

Dialogue is one of the most cherished core values of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We must insist on this fundamental value, and return to it, when required. So that we can improve the quality of human coexistence by building upon this foundation.