

Salamu alaykum
Shalom
Good afternoon

It is a great honour to stand in front of this conference of parliamentarians. Thank you to our Bahraini hosts for their hospitality.

As a student of Arabic, as a human rights diplomat in the Middle East, in Egypt and Syria, as a senator from the Netherlands, as a feminist who has worked her whole life on gender equality, as a mother whose daughters namesake Soraya is an amazing professor in antropology from Jeddah Saudi Arabia.

All of us bring many different layers from many cultures of our identity in to our work as a parliamentarian that will help us to serve our citizens.

I would like to share my sincere belief that we can all learn from each other in how to achieve peaceful coexistence.

One of the most beautiful sentences from the holy Quran

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ٥٤

O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may 'get to' know one another

So here we are getting to know one another. How can we also know from each other when it comes to inclusive law making and legislation.

And how can we learn from eachother to peacefully disagree

as in a real democracy we of course will differ on how to solve the great challenges for our people such as good education, a house for our family and a clean environment to live in.

I thank all the colleagues for sharing their experiences and insights in this debate.

My dear colleagues as politicians we are serving the people. We have to be aware that we are not always doing it right. It is as our Danish colleague said: we all have to do our homework when it comes to human rights, tolerance and inclusion however tough it sometimes is to look into the mirror and see that we are making mistakes, as politicians, as human beings.

Please allow me to share an experience from the Netherlands

Two years ago the Dutch Senate (our upper house) decided to investigate the relationship between anti-discrimination legislation and its effects in practice.

The Dutch Senate has taken on this inquiry after a child care subsidy scandal in which government bodies have found to be discriminatory on the bases of ethnicity and racial background.

In the report doing justice our parliamentary committee focused on four major domains to investigate in the field of anti-discrimination law

the labour market, education, social security, and the police, for a thorough understanding of the dynamics of discrimination. We spoke to a wide variety of experts, academics, civil society activists.

In summary

we found that the this gap between the law in the books and law in practice is connected to the persistence of 'organisational and other cultures';

insufficient consideration of citizens' vulnerability in legislation and policy;
the use of algorithms;
and discretionary power of public bodies responsible for the implementation of legislation in the absence of sufficient accountability.

Conclusion; while drafting and assessing laws we should use an assessment framework that includes six main themes: trust, attention, standards and use of language, simplicity, responsibility and leadership, and clear and effective procedures and complaints procedures.

Of course, the effectiveness of this approach will greatly depend on the extent to which the framework will actually be used during the legislative process.

We are happy to share the outcome of this inquiry with you if you are interested, please connect with the secretary of our delegation.

One lesson is that in democracies we have to be open to outside criticism, from our citizens, from experts and from non governmental organisations.

We also have to find a way to peacefully disagree in our democracies
Therefore on behalf of the Netherlands delegation

we would like to underline the concerns raised in the letter of the 12 plus group to the president of the IPU
about the fact that the visa for the Human Rights Watch delegation were withdrawn two days before the start of this IPU meeting.

Human Rights Watch defends core IPU values on which we cannot compromise in any way.

As the Netherlands we agree with the request of the Twelve Plus Group to the president to make an official statement clearly denouncing this course of events on behalf of the entire IPU.

Thank you.