

## 146<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly Speech

**E nga mana, e nga reo, e rau rangatira ma, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.**

**Malo le soifua maua ma le lagi e mama**

**Assalam alai akum, Sat sri akal, Shalom, Namaste and warm Pacific greetings**

Distinguished guests and colleagues

It is a privilege and honour to be here and to share with you, a perspective from a Kiwi-Samoan living in New Zealand.

My name is Dr Anae Neru Leavasa and I'm the MP for Takanini which takes in constituency from South and East Auckland.

We have a diverse population – 41.9% is of Asian origin, 31.9% European, 21% Pacific and 17.2% Maori, who are our indigenous people.

We have a very young population – Just over a third (37.5%) under 24 yrs old and over two thirds (69.4%) are under 45yrs old.

We have Christian churches, Hindu temples, Sikh Temples, Mosques and so forth – I've had a real privilege in building relationships across our faith communities.

I share these things to say that peaceful co-existence and inclusive societies begin at home. Fighting intolerance begins at home.

As a Young parliamentarian, I believe engaging our Youth is one important avenue to promoting peace and inclusive societies. The sharing of ideas, cultures, values and our differences helps in improving understanding and therefore tolerance. We engage our Youth with having Youth Parliament each term however I've extended that to having an active Youth Council for my constituency of Takanini. I asked them what do they want me to share given this international platform as it is my job to represent their voice here as well.

They shared

1. We must find commonality with each other
2. There is unity in our diversity
3. Lets celebrate our differences
4. Everybody needs good neighbours

On that note – fa'afetai mo le avanoa

Thank you for the opportunity to share – we live together, we cry together, we celebrate together, let us laugh together in unity.

Soifua ma ia manuia - Kia ora.