

**Statement General Debate 146th IPU Assembly**  
**Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting**  
**intolerance**

**Bahrain, Manama**

**11-15 March 2023**

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Excellency's,  
Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and gentleman,

Goededag, Good afternoon

At the outset, Mr. president please allow me to express, on behalf of my beloved country Suriname, our deepest sympathy and sincere condolences to Turkey and Syria, following the devastating impact caused by the massive earthquake in February.

Let us pray as one IPU family for strength to overcome this massive natural disaster.

As I turn to address the theme of the general debate, I refer to the following:

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are preserved in the Constitution of Suriname.

All present within the territory of Suriname have an equal claim to protection of person and property.

Suriname's adherence to equality and non-discrimination is based on the very fabric of our diverse multi-ethnic cultural society.

The keen awareness of these profound principles among the many ethnic groups has inspired us to peacefully co-exist with each other. Respect for cultural diversity is a distinct characteristic of the Surinamese society.

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Moreover, Suriname has demonstrated that a multi-ethnic society does not have to be a drama, as long as you can continue to respect

the power of difference. At the same time you must be willing to get to know the other and build a society with the other.

This is an ongoing process that requires addressing all forms of intolerance that may arise, including steps taken towards overcoming challenges, such as an identified increase of hate and hate-related racial speech on social media and other online platforms.

Challenges that could instigate intolerance in our society however, in particular when it concerns inequality gaps related to language barriers, causing delays in the educational process and gender inequalities.

Recently a reform process of the educational system was initiated, whereby children are being educated in their own community language. Furthermore, as a fundamental step towards inclusion, the Parliament of Suriname started to translate its activities.

Dear colleagues, Mr. President,

With respect to gender inequalities the Parliament of Suriname recently enacted labor legislation on parental leave (2019), sexual harassment in the workplace (2022) and equal Treatment in Employment (2022).

With respect to persons with disabilities, Parliament approved the ratification by Suriname of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The Parliament of Suriname contributes to ensuring:

- access to buildings and services for the protection of persons with disabilities

- safeguard the right to health and rehabilitation
- non- discrimination in employment
- the right to property, access to financial services, social protection, right to private life, access to medical data and right to a dignified participation in cultural life.
- Digital inclusiveness: ICT is an important precondition for the development

The factors that promote coexistence between different groups, and how these are encouraged by the Parliament are as follows:

There are different kind of organizations and foundations who encourage inclusiveness in Suriname by carrying out various projects for the different groups.

The Parliament encourages all these factors by holding meetings with various stakeholders, providing presentations, legislations, providing information through our television channels and social media.

Staff members of Parliament include persons with disabilities.

Moreover, there are persons with visual impairment in the operational department where all meetings are recorded and a person with hearing impairment in another department.

Recently the speaker of Parliament has appointed a well-known talented young person from our community with physical disability as Ambassador of the Parliament for one year.

As ambassador he gets the opportunity to encourage other youth with disabilities and combatting bullying for people with disabilities. This will be done by sending short video messages on our television channels.

The National Assembly of Suriname can promote inclusiveness in the parliamentary work through different ways, including further encouraging transparency and access to public information, accountability and citizen's participation.

The role collective parliaments could play in helping address drivers of intolerance or promote inclusion and peaceful coexistence are:

- Supporting the implementation of the SDG's, especially SDG 10
- Exchanging best practices amongst parliaments
- Working with NGO's and other international Organizations
- Encouraging other countries that have not yet acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to do so.
- Encourage implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by countries who already ratified it.

At least but not last Mr. President. I would like to thank the kingdom of Bahrain for hosting this IPU Assembly in Bahrain. This is my first IPU assembly meeting, many more to go, thank you Suriname, once again thank you Bahrain for the warm welcome.

Ladies and gentleman, Shukryana, dank u.

I Thank you for your attention