

Ladies and gentlemen, first of all I would like to express my thanks and congratulate Angola to hosting and organizing such an important global event. It is a big task and you have been able to deal with it very well. Great job!

Our presence here has - for me - as well as for my country - a deeply symbolic meaning. It is now 40 years after a group of Czechoslovaks was kidnapped here in Angola and the IPU has adopted a resolution demanding their release. I may have easily been amongst them as my father was working here in Alto Catumbela and the whole family was in Angola with him, including me, a two years old boy. We left not a long time before this. The rest of the group went through a lot of struggle and suffering before their final release. Due to my stay here as a child, I feel a personal connection to Angola and thus I am very happy that the country now lives and develops in peace.

And peace, justice and strong institutions are also amongst the topics of interest of our assembly. Due to the present situation in the world, something I would call an outbreak of wars, there is probably not a more urgent topic nowadays. Human rights are violated at large scale and atrocities happen all over the globe. Let me for instance mention Russian aggression in Ukraine or Hamas terrorist attack in Israel. It seems we are not able to prevent or bring and enforce justice for such horrible acts.

Without peace we are in danger of not being able to achieve many of our SDGs. This is an overwhelming task on its own with many social and economic challenges. And by wars we put the humankind long term future under a serious threat. It is a threat that is very tricky as wars may easily lead to other wars and harms. As we have seen in the history again and again, such vicious cycles are very difficult to break.

It is our obligation as representatives of the peoples to find instruments to improve the situation, both in our home countries and internationally. We hoped that institutions like the United Nations or international courts would be able to do it. It seems that it is not enough and we would need to work further on the improvement of international law.

But to be successful, we also need to work on ourselves as humans to be able to overcome our differences, put aside hatred, prejudices and find a common ground for the future, not the past. Because we are in Africa, I would like to pinpoint one African experience from which we can - and should - learn a lot. A year ago on the IPU Assembly I was deeply moved by the way how people in Rwanda were able to recover after the genocide. And in this respect, I am sure that the future president from Africa could do a lot in helping us find better ways to end wars, bring so needed peace and successfully recover as humanity.

At the end, let me also thank Duarte Pacheco for his work and effort for the parliamentarism as the IPU president. Under his mandate, the IPU has come a long way forward. Hopefully, we will be able to move even further in the future.

Thank you for your attention!