

Madam Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, fellow parliamentarians.

Political decisionmaking needs road contact.

Governments quite often live in a bubble.

Parliamentarians are somehow grass root institutions. We have this contact, and I think it's our obligation to safeguard this contact and to close the gap between state and people.

People want to have better and easier lives. They want to have perspectives and jobs.

And nobody knows that better than parliamentarians. Nobody knows that better than the representatives of local people.

And SDG 16 is exactly about those perspectives. It's decisive for better lives, for people.

And just to mention a few of the sub goals makes it even clearer:

promote the rule of law,

reduce corruption and bribery,

effective, accountable and transparent institutions,

and protect fundamental freedom.

And parliamentarians and parliaments are decisive to reach those goals.

This is crucial for democracy and freedom.

But on top of this it is decisive as well to provide economic perspectives and to fight poverty, which still is a big issue in many countries and for many people. Prosperity can only develop in a safe and reliable environment. Therefore we have to tackle conflicts and terror. Otherwise no one can plant crops, no one can conduct trades. And the speaker from Mali described this for the Sahel-region at this podium very impressively.

But we must perceive security broader. We have to create a reliable environment and to safeguard the rule of law. Otherwise there is not enough investment, not from domestic sources, and not even to speak about international sources. This is an issue all over the world. In many countries there still is a lack of rule of law. But too much regulation can jeopardize investments as well.

But we desperately need more private investments, and especially to tackle climate change makes it really clear: huge investments are necessary to replace fossil fuels. Huge investments in solar, wind and hydrogen are necessary. But this will only happen if the legal framework is reliable for the next many years. The rule of law must be perceived stable and permanent.

But the rule of law is crucial on the international level as well. Unfortunately, often violence is used instead. Putin's aggression against Ukraine brought unbelievable suffering to the people in Ukraine and to countless families in Russia as well. Hamas terrorists killed and tortured hundreds of people in Israel, and combating the originators again killed many, many innocent people. We jointly have to work on peace and reconciliation.

We have to work on SDGs internationally and foster and champion sustainable peace.

At the end of the day, ladies and gentlemen, it depends on people. It depends on people with grass root connections, who know that people want to have peace. That people want to have perspectives. But it depends probably as much as this on people who know each other on an international level, with a strong international network, and that is us.

So let us make even better use of the IPU and foster peace and collaboration and for this.

I close with a big vote of thanks for the initiators of this conference, for the organizers at the IPU office, and especially outgoing President Pacheco, for his great leadership in the past as well. And thank you very much to our great hosts in Angola, in this beautiful country. Thank you very much.