

Dear Colleagues,

“We need to demystify power. Leaders are there to serve the people.”

These are the words, aptly put by the Secretary General of IPU at the opening ceremony.

If Mr Chungong would allow me to add to his quote. Leaders are there to serve ALL the people. Not the majority. Not the ones that look like us or agree with us. But ALL THE PEOPLE.

And for people to have trust in our institutions, they need to feel that they belong.

Last month, the Maltese Parliament brought together LGBTIQ+ Parliamentarians from around the world to discuss a more equal and just representation.

My colleague from Ireland Jerry Buttimer was present, and I would like to join the call he made this week for IPU to work harder to promote and defend the rights of LGBTIQ+ Parliamentarians.

Today is Intersex Awareness Day and I would like to salute my new friends Dimakatso and Sharon Rose, two intersex youths brought up in South Africa; and praise them for sharing their experience in their new film “WHO I AM NOT”. You should watch it.

Dear Colleagues,

Our efforts here should be focused ONLY on one goal. That’s the pursuit of peace.

That’s why we need less weapons & weapon financing.

We need less tactical voting, and a greater will to find common ground.

A greater will so that one day, the people of Palestine and Israel will be able to live next to each other without fear of violence and intimidation.

But today, I would like to share with you, my dream.

I dream that I will witness a time when we do not see proposals for emergency items on violent conflicts here at the IPU.

Not because we close our eyes on any conflict happening around the world.

Because let’s be honest. We do tend to ignore tens of violent conflicts and speak only about a few, and we speak only when it suits us.

I dream that we would live in a world based on RESPECT for one another.

Where faith is used to spread love and not prejudice or hatred.

Where we embrace diversity, and not be afraid of it.

You might think I'm too naive to talk this way.

But YES, I have the AUDACITY to dream about world peace.

And I ask you to share this audacity with me, before taking your decisions.

Otherwise, the nice speeches we heard this week condemning violence will be worthless, if we go out of the room and return to our tactical decisions.

How can people have trust in us when we couldn't even agree whether to discuss the pink elephant in the room this week?

Dear colleagues,

if we continue to focus on who will win – we will keep on getting the same result.

A result where the innocent loses.

A result where the world loses.

A result where humanity loses.

Thank you.