‘Parliamentary Diplomacy: Building Bridges for peace and understanding’

Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha
148th Assembly of the IPU, Geneva

Hon’ble President
Hon’ble fellow Parliamentarians

• It is indeed an honour to address this distinguished gathering on the theme of this Conference.

• In this era of increasing interdependence and inter-connectedness, the world today is faced with several transnational challenges.

• While addressing these complex challenges, parliamentary diplomacy offers one more avenue for fostering collaboration, dialogue and peace among nations.
As we embark on this discourse, I am hopeful that it will afford us the opportunity to adopt a forward-thinking approach on how we can harness the transformative power of parliamentary diplomacy to shape a more harmonious and peaceful world.

'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (वसुधैव कु तुंबकम्) i.e. one earth, one family is the core value of Indian civilization. The theme of India's G20 Presidency was 'One earth, One Family, one future'.

The theme of this debate i.e., building bridges for international peace, is reflected in this concept.
• As the 'Mother of Democracy', deliberative and advisory bodies have worked in India since ancient times.

• These deliberative bodies received foreign emissaries including those from Greek and Roman empires even in the 3rd Century BC. The famous Buddhist King Ashoka around 220 BC sent several Ambassadors from India to South-East Asia to spread the message of peace and non-violence. Further, in 48 AD, princess of Ayodhya went to South Korea to establish diplomatic relations and married their crown Prince.

Friends,

• The importance of Parliamentary diplomacy in promoting international peace can hardly be overemphasized.
• Parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to influence government as well as the public opinion. Indian Parliament plays important role in shaping India's bilateral and multilateral relations, effectively.

• Members of Indian Parliament engage, as elsewhere, actively in various diplomatic activities. They, thereby, have contributed to promoting global peace and prosperity by fostering dialogue and collaboration.

• India's G20 Presidency in 2023 began with the theme, 'One earth, One family, One future' at a time when the world as well as the G20 grouping was indeed very divided.
• India decided to put the interests and issues of the Global South right at the heart of G20 with an ambitious agenda with a view to nudging, the otherwise binary discussions towards consensus.

• India successfully brought the weight of the Global South to G20 which, in turn bridged the divide at the New Delhi Summit.

• The future indeed belongs to the Global South both demographically as well as economically and our vision for future must have this at its core.

• The 9th P20 Summit hosted by India during its G20 Presidency underscored our commitment to shaping the global order through consensus and collaboration.
• While inaugurating the Conference, our Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi said, "A divided world cannot provide solutions to the major challenges facing humanity".

• This convergence of global leaders and parliamentarians highlighted the significant influence wielded by the collective voice of Parliamentarians worldwide.

Friends,

• Our parliamentary delegation, in various bilateral and multilateral fora, have highlighted the need for reforming international governance structures
including UN Security Council and International Financial Institutions to reflect ‘contemporary realities’.

• In recent years, multilateral cooperation has encountered unprecedented crises. While in the United Nations, the crisis has manifested in the form of fund cuts and ever-increasing policy paralysis in its Security Council, other institutions, like Bretton Woods, have faced skepticism of effectiveness.

• The COVID-19 pandemic has also exposed vulnerabilities of the international system, particularly those of multilateral institutions.
• Besides, we should work for promoting and facilitating the showcasing of good practices on legislation and oversight.

• India believes in nurturing parliamentary partnerships at the regional and international levels and is also ready to help other countries in capacity building by sharing its knowledge and experience.

• I reiterate the commitment of the Indian Parliament in extending cooperation to international efforts towards maintaining peace and security.

Thank You.