

IPU General Debate

Judith Tielen (List C)

Mister President, thank you.

The Netherlands is a small country, it belongs to the most densely populated in the world and in parliament not one political party ever has an absolute majority. As a result, we in the Netherlands know that working together is essential.

We are not only aware of the importance of cooperation, it is in the essence of political and parliamentary work. We are a 'coalition-country'. It is the Netherlands that has created the polder model: a method of consensus decision making. We always look for ways to find common ground, to discover common interests, and build bridges between conflicting opinions and expectations.

In all cooperation, freedom is a fundamental requirement. Freedom of speech, freedom of information, freedom of religion, freedom of association, and freedom of press.

But freedom of press hasn't been a main subject during this assembly. While and I quote "In wars and armed conflicts the first one dying is the truth" unquote.

That is a well-known saying, that also stresses the importance and responsibility of free press to deliver factual information. And although the Netherlands are back again in the top 10 of countries with freedom of press; also our journalists are intimidated and threatened, especially when they are female.

Please join us in stressing the importance of freedom of press. Let's work together to build and maintain it. I invite you to share your learnings and successes with us.

And let us, together, put this important issue on the agenda of the next Assembly.

Thank you!